

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SHEEP AND GOATS

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The Committee met on October 18, 2006 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Duluth room in the Hilton Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Committee began with opening remarks by the Chair/Vice Chair, followed by the introduction of Committee members and guests

John Andrews, Kim Hannafious and Steve Hennager, Western Slope Laboratory, presented *Brucella ovis* Testing Progress, Issues and Plan. Staff determined that the best approach to contend with background levels was to use the polysorp vs. maxisorp plates. The staff also addressed the need to adjust control sera dilutions to achieve accurate titers. At the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL), great progress has been made in developing and evaluating the Blue Phos ELISA test using the REO 198 antigen and NUNC polysorp plates. Plans are underway to complete the test validation by doing a repeat interlaboratory comparison planned for early 2007. NVSL also indicated that they will be developing and evaluating the Western Blot for confirmatory testing as part of ongoing work with other *Brucella* species.

Cleon Kimberling presented Tapeworms in Sheep and Resulting Condemnations. *Taenia ovis* and *hydatigena* infections in sheep result in carcass condemnations due to cyst formation in muscle tissue. There is a need to seriously educate producers and veterinarians about this condition and control strategies. Kimberling has developed literature aimed at producer education which was critiqued by the Committee.

Issues Regarding Internal Parasite Resistance was presented by Seyedmehdi Mobini. The history of and the factors contributing to nematode resistance to dewormers were covered. New approaches to parasite control were reviewed. The Web site, [www.scsrpc.org](http://www.scsrpc.org), contains much of this information

Judy Lewman discussed the Voluntary (Ovine Progressive Pneumonia Virus) OPPV Test and Control Pilot Study. Judy reviewed this pilot project that is underway in Minnesota. The material developed is professionally done. There has been 25% response to a postcard survey expressing interest in this producer-funded project. There are currently seven flocks enrolled and tested with a goal to increase participation to 15. The Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Lab and Minnesota Board of Animal Health are supportive of this project.

Predicting Clinical Diseases in OPPV-Infected Sheep was presented by Lynn M. Herrman-Hoesing, PhD, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Research Service (ARS) and Washington State University (WSU), Pullman, WA. The objective of this study is to identify a predictive tool for identifying which OPP-infected sheep are going to develop clinical disease. High peripheral

proviral loads were found in sheep with high scores on pathologic examination for OPPV. One allele of the DRB1 gene, \*1101 was found good frequently in sheep with high proviral loads. This work is being expanded across more age groups but has valuable potential implications for industry.

During the business meeting, USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and USDA-ARS responses were reviewed, along with last year's resolutions. The Committee then discussed, and made the following recommendation about a proposed approach to studying the Unknown Factors in Big Horn Sheep Die-offs. In summary, it is premature and inappropriate based upon the complete body of literature, limited surveillance and limited research to allow domestic sheep to be the only focus as a major cause of big horn disease and herd decline. It is time to encourage appropriate research and increased surveillance activities on which science-based policy decisions can be made.

### **Recommendation**

The United States Animal Health Association urges collaboration and coordination of efforts between agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Agriculture Research Service, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services and Veterinary Services, the Department of Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management and State wildlife agencies. The focus of these efforts should include: enhanced surveillance, diagnostics and epidemiology defining the health of introduced animals as well as existing populations and herds experiencing declines and die-offs; research into multiple aspects of big horn health and disease risk factors; and policy development based upon scientific facts.

A motion was passed to support the resolution from the Transmissible Diseases of Swine to encourage stakeholder involvement in the development of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF).

The Committee would like to send letters to NVSL and other cooperating laboratories thanking them for their work this past year with *B. ovis* test development and evaluation.