

PARATUBERCULOSIS

Johne's Disease

Johne's disease, also known as paratuberculosis, is a fatal gastrointestinal disease affecting sheep and other ruminants, including goats, cattle, elk, deer, and bison. It is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies paratuberculosis (MAP). This contagious infection can spread within your flock, and the primary mode of transmission is through the manure of infected adult animals. Lambs often contract the disease by ingesting contaminated water, milk, or feed. Owners are often caught off guard when the infection is diagnosed, realizing too late that it has already affected multiple animals within the flock.

CAUSES OF JOHNE'S DISEASE

Johne's disease often enters a flock when an apparently healthy sheep, carrying the *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies paratuberculosis (MAP) in its small intestine, is introduced. The infected sheep sheds the organism in its feces, contaminating the pasture and water shared by the other flock members. Sheep, particularly those under 6 months old, are at risk of contracting the disease as they repeatedly ingest the organism. Infection can occur through in utero transmission from infected ewes, as well as from ingesting milk, colostrum, or contaminated teats, feed, grass, or water contaminated with MAP-containing feces.

PREVENTION OF JOHNE'S DISEASE

Preventing Johne's disease involves:

1. Test and cull infected animals promptly.
2. Practice strict biosecurity to minimize introductions of infected animals and materials.
3. Maintain a clean environment by regularly removing manure.
4. Ensure lambs receive colostrum from disease-free ewes.



***This is a
Notifiable disease***

Sources

Google. (n.d.). Google drive: Sign-in. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QkkXwLJ59fc-IiMbXEvWW44OJp2bDeuR>

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SYMPTOMS OF JOHNE'S DISEASE

Symptoms of Johne's disease in sheep can include:

- Progressive weight loss despite a normal or increased appetite
- Diarrhea, often chronic and watery
- Poor body condition and muscle wasting
- Reduced milk production in ewes
- Lethargy and decreased activity
- Rough, dull coat

It's important to note that symptoms may vary, and some infected sheep may not display clinical signs until the later stages of the disease.

TREATMENT OF JOHNE'S DISEASE

There is no cure for Johne's disease. A vaccine that is available in other countries is not approved for use in sheep in the United States.

Factsheet provided by:

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Health Board**

