



Nutritionally Related Diseases of Sheep

Acidosis-Grain Overload

Cause: Excessive eating of grain above normal amount. Lowers rumen pH to damaging levels.

Clinical signs: History of grain ingestion 6-12 hours previously. Lethargy, bloat, diarrhea, dehydration. Incoordination, collapse, coma, death.

Treatment: Empty rumen, antacids, mineral oil. Remove offending cause. Manage feeding and bunks properly.

Bloat

Cause: Interactions in rumen-Excess gas produced and/or produced in a form that can't be eructated. Associated with lush pastures; changes in diet.

Clinical signs: Swelling of upper left paralumbar fossa area.

Treatment: Remove offending cause. If moderate-of little consequence. If severe-pass stomach tube, treat with surfactants, trocharization.

Calcium Deficiency

Cause: Low calcium forages to pregnant ewes. Lack of free choice calcium mineral.

Clinical Sign: Weakness, inappetance, muscle tremors, inability to rise. Occurs late in pregnancy.

Treatment: Dramatic 60-100 ml of Calcium Gluconate slowly IV or SQ. Untreated-die in 6-12 hours.

Prevention: Free choice limestone, nutritionally balanced diet.

Goiter

Cause: Iodine deficient diet of dam

Clinical Signs: Enlarged defined swelling in ventral throat area of newborn. Born weak, often starve.

Treatment: Iodine supplementation of diet.

Polioencephalomalacia

Cause: Usually a digestive condition that impairs thiamine absorption.

Clinical signs: Lethargy, weakness, incoordination, depression, blindness.

Treatment: Thiamine B1 is the specific treatment under supervision of a veterinarian. Animals severely affected respond in varying degrees to treatment.

Pregnancy Disease Pregnancy toxemia

Cause: Inadequate carbohydrate (concentrate, energy) intake during late pregnancy. Common in both older ewes with poor teeth and ewe lambs carrying twins, Overconditioned ewes carrying twins or triplets. Stress, storms, transport, fasting, excessive heat, etc., aggravate the adverse effects of poor nutrition.

Clinical Signs: Affected ewes exhibit signs of impaired nervous function: listlessness, lack of appetite, aimless walking, grinding of teeth, progressing to paralysis, coma and death.

Treatment: Seldom effective but can try propylene glycol and supportive treatment.

Rickets

Cause: A disease of the young resulting from Calcium, phosphorus Vitamin D imbalances.

Clinical sign: Swellings at end of longbones, lameness, deformities of long bones that bear weight. Fractures due to weakened demineralized bones.

Treatment: Accurate diagnosis-Careful correction of dietary imbalances.

Urinary Calculi

Cause: Primarily a disease of rams and wethers from mineal salts deposited within the urinary organs. Becomes clinical especially when ureters or urethra becomes plugged with mineral deposits causing plugging of urinary passages.

Clinical Sign: Straining to urinate, tail twitching, arched back, stiff standing or walking, ruptured bladder.

Treatment: Re-establish ability to urinate. Ammonium chloride may help in prevention and treatment. Consult with veterinarian.

Prevention-Free choice water. Carefully monitored nutrition. Veterinary Consultation Ammonium Chloride in diet at vet recommended levels may help to prevent.

White Muscle Disease-Selenium Deficiency

Cause: Selenium deficient area with insufficient selenium supplementation.

Clinical signs: Often triggered by vigorous exercise. Lambs affected by WMD move slowly with arched backs, may be down, as paralyzed and may experience sudden death.

Prevention and Treatment: Consists of administering selenium by injection under the supervision of a veterinarian.