Zoonotic diseases are contagious diseases that spread between animals and humans. It is estimated that approximately 75% of recently emerging infectious diseases affecting humans are diseases of animal origin; approximately 60% of all human pathogens are zoonotic. Humans can contract zoonotic diseases through direct contact with infected animals, and also by consumption of contaminated food or water, inhalation, arthropod vectors (such as flies, ticks, and mosquitoes) and pests.

Below is a condensed list of sheep and goat diseases that can be transmitted to humans. The diseases are grouped in alphabetical order within groups of common routes for human infection. Many of these diseases, whether in animals or humans, are reportable to State and Federal Authorities. Contact your State Veterinarian or your State/Local Health Department for information about State disease reporting requirements in animals and humans, respectively.

**Rabies**

Rabies is a severe, viral disease that can affect all mammals, including sheep and goats. People most often get rabies from the bite (direct contact) of an infected animal, but can also be exposed to the virus by entry of saliva, brain or spinal cord fluid of an infected animal into cuts or breaks in the skin or mucous membranes. Early human symptoms include fever, headache, confusion and abnormal behavior (neurological signs). Once signs begin, recovery is very rare. If you are bitten by an animal, immediately contact local animal control so the animal may be tested or quarantined, and contact your physician immediately to determine whether post-exposure treatment is indicated.

**Contagious Ecthyma (Soremouth)**

Caused by the Orf virus, contagious ecthyma in people is called Orf. People become infected by direct contact with skin lesions or scabs usually on the face and mouth of infected animals. In people, usually only one single lesion (local sore/wound) develops.

**Ringworm (Dermatophytosis)**

Ringworm is a common fungal disease caused by dermatophytes. People can become infected by direct contact with the spores on an infected animal. The spores may be on the animal’s hair/wool or skin, and can even be on fomites such as brushes or clippers. Dermatophytosis tends to be more common in show lambs than production flocks. Itchiness is the most common
symptom, and the spots are generally inflamed at the edge with redness, scaling, and occasionally blistering.

**CHLAMYDIOSIS**

Chlamydiosis is a bacterial disease in sheep and goats is caused by *Chlamydophila abortus*. Pregnant animals can shed large numbers of *C. abortus* in the placenta and uterine discharges when they abort or give birth. Although rare, people can be infected by direct contact with birthing tissues, but there are additional ways to be infected. In people, animal-associated chlamydiosis causes flu-like signs (fever, body aches, headache), reddened eyes, and pneumonia. Pregnant women should avoid contact with pregnant or aborting animals.

**CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS**

A major cause of enteritis in humans, *Campylobacter spp.* (e.g., *C. jejuni* and *C. coli*) often infects people by the consumption of contaminated or undercooked meat and unpasteurized milk or dairy products (oral). People can also be infected by untreated water or contact with infected animals or feces. People infected with campylobacteriosis can have diarrhea, fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, headache and muscle pain. People with compromised immune systems are at higher risk for severe or recurrent infections.

**CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS**

Cryptosporidiosis results from infection by *Cryptosporidium parvum*, a coccidian parasite common in the environment and carried by many animals without symptoms. People often become infected by ingestion following contact with objects contaminated with feces or unwashed hands after contact with ill animals. Infections in people can cause stomach cramps, watery diarrhea, nausea and a poor appetite. Vomiting, fever, and muscle aches may also occur.

**LISTERIOSIS**

*Listeria monocytogenes* causes listeriosis, a bacterial disease in ruminants and humans. Most infections in people occur by eating raw meat or unpasteurized dairy products (oral), but there are additional ways to be infected. Animals can shed *L. monocytogenes* in the feces, milk and uterine discharges. Pregnant women or immunocompromised people should take special care to avoid unpasteurized dairy products. Unlike other bacteria, *L. monocytogenes* can grow in cold temperature, including in the refrigerator. A skin infection form of the disease can occur in people who handle sick animals.
SALMONELLA

People most commonly get salmonellosis from eating (oral) improperly cooked food, such as meat, eggs or unpasteurized milk/dairy products. People can also get salmonellosis by direct contact with feces/diarrhea from infected animals. People with salmonellosis may have diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramping.

Q FEVER (QUERY FEVER, COXIELLOSIS)

Q fever results from infection by the bacterium, Coxiella burnetii, which can infect people who inhale aerosolized organisms, or by additional routes. Most human infections are associated with cattle, sheep and goats, and often occur when the animal gives birth. Symptoms of Q fever include fever, chills, night sweats, headache, fatigue and chest pains. Q fever can cause abortion or premature delivery in pregnant women, so pregnant women should avoid contact with pregnant or aborting animals.