Udder Problems in Sheep & Goats

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• **HARDBAG**
  
  – Results from an accumulation of fibrous tissue in the udder
  
  – Caused by a virus, the same one which causes ovine progressive pneumonia, (OPP) (“lungers”)
  
  – Mostly at lambing and at weaning
  
  – Can blood test for virus on sheep
Blue Bag (Mastitis)

- Blue Bag
  - Form of mastitis and is caused by bacteria
  - Bacteria enter the teat canal and cause infection
  - Interferes with blood supply to the udder
  - Occurs within a couple months of lambing or shortly after weaning.
  - Treating early with antibiotics is usually successful
Mastitis in the Doe

• The most common bacteria that causes mastitis in goats are:
  – Coagulase-negative staphylococci bacteria, including *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus agalactiae*, *S. uberis*, *S. dysgalactiae*, and *S. caprae* Mycoplasma capricolum; Enterobacteria such as *Escherichia coli* coliforms (*Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, and *Clostridium spp.*)

• Also associated with viral, bacterial or fungi and their toxins
Mastitis in Goats

- The caprine arthritis-encephalitis virus (CAEV) causes mastitis in goats.
- Mastitis can result from yeast infection
  - associated with the frequent use of penicillin
  - prolonged and repetitive use of systemic and intra-mammary infusions.
- Mastitis is generally associated with poor hygienic practices and caused by the bruising of mammary tissue or teats from traumas.
Mastitis Clinical Symptoms

• **Subclinical Mastitis**
  – No swelling of udder detected or observable abnormalities in the milk

• **Mild Clinical Mastitis**
  – Abnormality in the milk such as flakes, clots, and a watery or other unusual appearance
  – Swelling of udder, may be hot and sensitive

• **Severe Clinical Mastitis**
  – Hot, hard sensitive udder
  – Ewe may become ill showing signs of fever (105° -107° F) rapid pulse, depression, weakness and loss of appetite

• **Chronic Mastitis lumps in udder**
Preventing Mastitis

• Clean fresh bedding in the corrals and in the jugs to keep udders clean
• Avoid placing on lush feed too quickly after lambing or kidding
• Provide adequate feed for lamb size
• Control respiratory infections in lambs (pasteurella) causes respiratory & mastitis
Preventing Mastitis

• Prevent lambs “bumming” milk from ewes
  – Spread infection to other ewes
• Prevent soremouth, lesions allow bacterial growth nursing lambs can infect ewe
• Restrict water and feed intake of ewes for 24 to 36 hours during weaning
• Prevent foot rot and foot scald since foot infection has been attributed to mastitis.
Preventing Matitis

• Management at drying off is key to preventing mastitis in your flock
• The feet and udder should be routinely checked at drying off
• The udders of ewes should be examined physically for hard lumps after weaning and before breeding.
Treatment of Mastitis

• Treatment of ewes with acute mastitis is usually done with antibiotics, frequent milking, and oxytocin.
• Consult veterinarian for extra label use of antibiotics
• Disinfect the teat end with alcohol and infuse a tube of mastitis antibiotic through the teat canal.
Treatment of Mastitis

• Give the ewe an injection of a combination of penicillin, dihydrostreptomycin, dexamethasone and an antihistamine.
  – The antibiotics should affect the microorganisms and the dexamethasone and antihistamine should help the tissue heal and reduce inflammation.
Example of Mastitis Infection
Questions

• Sources
  – Mastitis in the Ewe by Helen A. Swartz, Ph.D, State Sheep, Goat and Small Livestock Specialist, Lincoln University
  – How to prevent ewe mastitis at weaning Aly Balsom DVM
  – Ewes That Don’t Milk June 20th, 2008 William P. Shulaw, Extension Veterinarian, The Ohio State University
  – Udder Diseases of Sheep, Clell V. Bagley, DVM, Extension Veterinarian, Utah State University, Logan UT 84322-5600
  – National Goat Handbook, University of Maryland
  – Mastitis in Goats publication UNP 102, Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities