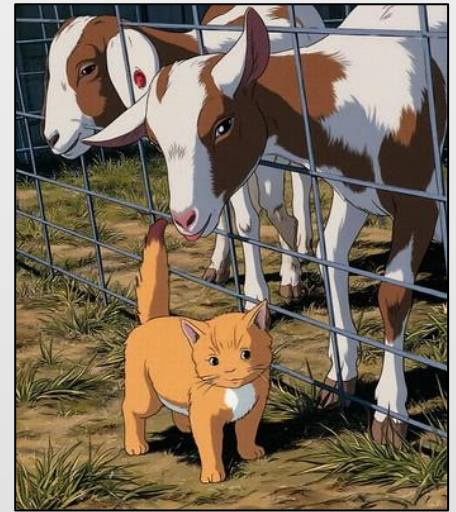


ABORTION

in sheep & goats

Abortion is when the ewe or doe's pregnancy is terminated, and she loses her offspring or gives birth to weak or deformed babies that die shortly after birth. There are many causes of abortion in sheep and goats, both infectious and non-infectious. The most common causes are Enzootic (*Chlamydia* spp.), vibrio (*Campylobacter* spp.), and toxoplasmosis (*Toxoplasma gondii*). Brucellosis, leptospirosis, listeriosis, Salmonella, and Q fever are other causes. Viruses can cause abortion, too (e.g., border disease and Cache Valley Virus). Several of the abortive diseases in sheep and goats are zoonotic.



While **vibriosis** is more common in sheep, it can still affect goats. Vibrio causes late term abortions. It is spread orally via contaminated feed and water, and birth fluids.

Chlamydia causes late-term abortions in sheep and goats. It is usually spread through ingestion and inhalation of contaminated material.

Goats seem to be more vulnerable to **toxoplasmosis** than sheep, but both can experience early or late-term abortions. Cats, especially kittens, are the carrier. Sheep and goats get infected when they consume feed or bedding contaminated with cat feces (and oocysts).

In the event of an abortion storm

- Isolate aborting ewes and/or does
- Properly dispose of aborted material
- Remove bedding
- Disinfect area
- Give antibiotics (tetracyclines; Rx)
- Diagnosis via fetal and placental tissues and blood testing of ewes/does.

Ewes/does which abort due to vibrio, chlamydia, or toxoplasmosis develop immunity and don't usually abort in future pregnancies.



Preventing abortion

- Maintain closed flock
- Quarantine new animals
- Control vectors
- Good hygiene
- Dispose of contaminated materials
- Pre-breeding vaccination for vibrio and chlamydia (sheep, esp. young)
- Coccidiostats in feed (for toxo; Rx)
- Antibiotics (tetracyclines; Rx)