

Pregnancy Toxemia

What is it?

- Typically occurs in the last trimester of pregnancy (last month)
- Usually in females carrying multiples (twins or more) and can result from an inability to consume enough energy
- With multiples inside of them the female has less space in her guts to consume enough food
- When the ewe is unable to consume enough to meet energy demands she goes into a negative energy balance, which then affects the liver and causes the ewe to mobilize energy from her body's reserves. The liver can be overwhelmed attempting to produce enough energy from the body's reserves that ketones build up in the body, which lead to the clinical signs we see in the ewe (similar to ketosis or acetonemia in cattle)
- Obese or thin ewes are at risk as well

Clinical Signs – What you will see

- Depression, dull
- Down, unable to stand, weak
- When left untreated can progress to neurological signs:
 - Tremors
 - Stargazing
 - Incoordination
 - Circling
 - Grinding of the teeth

Treatment – What you should do

- Must be immediate and aggressive!
- Ideally fetuses should be immediately removed, either by C-section or by inducing labour
- IV (intravenous) administration of 100-250ml dextrose (sugar), usually done by your veterinarian
- Drench with glycol or ketamalt
 - Glycol for mild cases
 - 22.5ml morning and evening by mouth. Can repeat for up to 3 days
 - Glycol for severe cases
 - 45ml morning and evening by mouth. Can repeat for up to 3 days
 - Ketamalt for mild cases
 - 40ml morning and evening by mouth. Can repeat for up to 3 days
 - Ketamalt for severe cases
 - 80ml morning and evening by mouth. Can repeat for up to 3 days
- 2ml of Vitamaster or Newcells IM (intramuscular) for 3 days
- If decreased calcium is suspected can give 50ml of calcium borogluconate SC (subcutaneously)
- If you do not see improvement or have a severe case it is recommended to call your veterinarian immediately

Prevention –How to avoid it

- Provide good nutrition (adding grains or pellets to the diet) and decrease stress (ie: workloads, parasites)
- Adding ionophores to the feed can help
- Shearing pregnant sheep

Increase plane of nutrition for ewes carrying multiples, may need to feed separately from the rest of the flock.

If you have any further questions about Pregnancy Toxemia, or if you would like more information about a more complete Flock Health Plan, please call or email the office at 705-722-3232 and info@centralontariovet.com.