

ENTEROTOXEMIA

By

Tommy Ruderer

What is Enterotoxemia?

- ▣ A bacterial disease caused by *Clostridium perfringens* found in sheep and goats of all ages.
- ▣ Two types of *Clostridium perfringens*, Types C and D.
- ▣ Also called “Overeating Disease” even though it is not caused by overeating.

What Causes It?

- ▣ Change in diet that causes unusually high amounts of nutrients to reach the intestines, causing exponential growth of bacteria. Which then causes the release of very harmful toxins.

What are the signs of it?

- ▣ Animals abruptly come off feed and become lethargic.
- ▣ Affected animals may show signs of stomach pain, kicking at their belly, repeatedly laying down and getting up, laying on their sides, panting, and crying out.
- ▣ Diarrhea in some cases, blood visible in loose stool.
- ▣ May lose ability to walk or move, toxins interfere with brain functions.
- ▣ Death, can occur within minutes to hours.

Treatment

- ▣ Treatment of enterotoxemia may not be successful in severe cases.
- ▣ Mild cases with analgesics, probiotics (gels or pastes with “good bacteria”), oral electrolyte solutions, and antisera, a solution of concentrated antibodies that neutralize the toxins that these bacteria produce.
- ▣ Severe cases may require intravenous fluids, antibiotic therapy, and other types of supportive care, such as supplemental oxygen.

Prevention and Vaccination

- ▣ Prevention of enterotoxemia is far more likely to be successful than trying to treat the disease.
- ▣ Multiple vaccines available that induce immunity to the toxins generated by *Clostridium perfringens* types C and D.
- ▣ Usually requires two doses, 10 to 14 days apart. Usually a three way vaccine that includes Tetanus.