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Ram Epididymitis

Epididymitis of the ram is a clinically important disease. It is rare in the goat (buck). It is a specific, infectious bacterial disease that occurs in the United States and all over the world. Epididymitis in adult rams should be considered to be caused by the bacteria *Brucella ovis* until proven otherwise. (Lamb epididymitis is different in that it can be caused by a number of different organisms such as *Histophilus*, *Actinobacillus*, *Haemophilus* and *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*.) The primary means of transmission is by direct contact among rams or from recently infected ewes; venereal and oral-nasal transmission.

The initial presenting sign will be swelling of the epididymis. The disease in rams can also cause orchitis (infection of the testicle), sperm granuloma secondary to obstruction of epididymal ducts and decreased fertility. In ewes the disease can cause failure to conceive, placentitis, abortion, stillbirth and weak lambs that may develop septicemia and result in perinatal mortality. Infected rams may shed the bacteria in semen for more than four years.

- Recommendations on control and prevention:
- Buy virgin rams and keep quarantined until serologically tested negative.
- Test all rams for *Brucella ovis* prior to breeding.
- Cull any *Brucella ovis* positive rams.
- Retest all rams in flock 60 days after any rams are found positive and culled.
- Perform breeding soundness exams yearly on all rams and cull all rams with epididymitis before the breeding season.

In flocks where *Brucella ovis* has been a problem, vaccination of breeding rams may be a helpful option. The downside to vaccination is that these vaccinated rams will test positive on serology tests; therefore, it is ideal for producers who do not intend to sell these rams to other breeders.

Colorado Serum Company proudly produces **Ram Epididymitis Bacterin**. Contact your local distributor or veterinarian for this and other fine products from Colorado Serum Company.

