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Zoonotic Sheep and Goat Diseases

Last Modified:



Some sheep and goat diseases are zoonotic, meaning they can cause infection in people. Animal caretakers, veterinarians, slaughter plant workers, and farm personnel are all at a greater risk. Diseases can also be carried from the farm to your household without proper biosecurity. Below is a condensed list of these diseases, grouped by common routes for **human** infection.

List of Diseases and Common Routes for Human Infection

For more details, view our explanation of terms and click on the disease names in the left-hand column. You can also download this list as a full-color handout (175.66 KB).

	Direct Contact	Fomites	Airborne	Ingestion	Vector	Fecal-Oral
Anthrax	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brucellosis	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Campylobacteriosis	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Caseous Lymphadenitis	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Chlamydiosis	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Contagious Ecthyma (Orf)	✓	✓				
Cryptosporidiosis	✓	✓		✓		✓
Cysticercosis/Taeniasis		✓		✓	✓	✓
Dermatophilosis	✓	✓			✓	

	Direct Contact	Fomites	Airborne	Ingestion	Vector	Fecal-Oral
Ringworm	✓	✓				
Echinococcosis	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
E. coli	✓	✓		✓		✓
Giardia	✓	✓		✓		✓
Leptospirosis	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Listeriosis	✓	✓		✓		✓
Mange	✓	✓				
Q Fever	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rabies	✓					
Salmonellosis	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Streptococcosis	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Screwworm					✓	
Toxoplasmosis	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Tuberculosis, Bovine	✓	✓	✓	✓		

	Direct Contact	Fomites	Airborne	Ingestion	Vector	Fecal-Oral
Tularemia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vesicular Stomatitis	✓	✓		✓		

See More See Less

Explanation of Terms

Below is a quick overview of terms used in the table. For more information on disease exposure routes, visit the Center for Food Security & Public Health.

Direct Contact: Coming into contact with the bodily fluids of an infected animal, such as saliva, blood, urine, mucus, or feces
Fomites: Surfaces or objects—such as vehicles, farm equipment, and people's clothing, shoes, or hands—that become contaminated with the bodily fluids of an infected animal
Airborne: Disease pathogens contained in aerosol droplets are passed through the air, most often through coughing and sneezing
Ingestion: Consuming contaminated food or water, including raw milk
Vector: Insects or pests acquire the pathogen and pass it on to other animals or people through bites. Fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes are common vectors.
Fecal-Oral: Direct contact with infected animal feces or soil, or fecal contamination of fomites, food, or water sources

Report Signs of Disease

Many of these diseases, whether in animals or people, are reportable to State and Federal authorities. Contact your State veterinarian or your State/local health department for information about disease reporting requirements in animals or people.
Find Your State Veterinarian
Find Your State/Local Health Department

Learn More

Biosecurity Tool Kit

Visit the American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners to view and download resources on best practices in biosecurity when working with sheep and goats.

Infection Control and Prevention

Visit the Center for Food Security & Public Health to find resources on zoonotic disease prevention, farm biosecurity, and more.

One Health

The One Health approach recognizes that the health of animals, people, and the environment are linked. Learn about APHIS' One Health work.

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