PERACUTE STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS MASTITIS IN EWES

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Introduction: The increasing demand for ewe's milk and milk products has been reflected in recent years in fresh interest in raising SMALL RUMINANTS. With increasing production and the introduction of more intensive breeding methods, questions connected with inflammation of the udder and the quality of milk from SMALL RUMINANTS have become more actual in the last decade.

Objective: The objective of the present study was to describe an outbreak of peracute gangrenous MASTITIS in a separate sheep flock, to elucidate the causes and to establish reasonable treatment regimes.

Material and methods: At the time of weaning and start of milking (6-8 weeks after parturition) in a flock of 180 dairy ewes, 29 cases of peracute gangrenous clinical MASTITIS appeared, during a 10 days period. In 26 cases (90%), Staphylococcus aureus was determinate as the causative agent. In the described case, diseased animals were treated intramammary and parenteral with a cephalosporin preparation designed for cows, immediately after detection of inflammatory changes in the mammary gland.

Results and discussion: Staphylococcus aureus is the predominant organism isolated in ovine clinical MASTITIS, while coagulase-negative staphylococci, traditionally considered as non-pathogenic or of low pathogenicity for the mammary gland of domestic ruminants, are the most prevalent isolates in subclinical intramammary infections. The annual incidence of clinical MASTITIS in ewes is usually lower than 5%, however severe MASTITIS outbreaks caused by Staphylococcus aureus are not uncommon. Antibiotic therapy regimes generally formulated for the bovine mammary gland are often unsuccessful in eliminating existing Staphylococcus aureus udder infections. In our survey, despite of immediate treatment, which was based on results of laboratory findings, 9 of the animals (31%) died, 14 (48%) lost the affected udder half and only in 6 cases (21%) functional recovery was achieved.

Conclusions: Considering the achieved recovery rate in the present study, the average MASTITIS treatment costs exceeded the culling value of the animals. Because of the unpredictable course of the disease and consecutive low cure rates concerning ewes MASTITIS, permanent and effective prophylaxis is even more important than in other animal species

Keywords: Clinical MASTITIS, ewes, Staphylococcus aureus, treatment