

Health and Disease Issues

Polioencephalomalacia

Also known as Vitamin B1 deficiency, Polio, PEM or Star Gazing Disease.

Polioencephalomalacia is induced through thiamine or Vitamin B1 deficiency.

Predisposing Factors:

Sudden changes to or high grain diets can result in the production of thiaminases which break down and destroy thiamine, predisposing the animal to thiamine deficiency.

Signs and Symptoms:



Sheep may appear 'blind' with a 'star-gazing' posture and/or move in circles. Most outbreaks involve less than 5% of the mob, deaths often occur over a period of weeks.

Control and Prevention:

Supplements containing Thiamine, subcutaneous injection or oral drenches may help prevent the disease. Provide additional roughage and/or change feed type.

Treatment:

Treatment must begin early in the course of the disease as irreversible brain damage will occur if the disease progresses.

Response to treatment (injections) is generally good if it is given early in the course of the disease. Mildly affected animals generally respond within 6-8 hours and may fully recover within 24hrs.

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (July 2013). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the user's independent adviser.

