



Animal Health & Welfare NI

**Sheep Health**

# Iceberg Diseases Bulletin #5

## Caseous Lymphadenitis (CLA)

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This is a chronic contagious skin disease that can be seen in sheep and goats. It is caused by a bacteria (*Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*). It's usually characterized by the formation of abscesses appearing on superficial lymph nodes but can also be found in internal lymph nodes. It's endemic in Northern Ireland.

### Signs You May See In Your Flock

In the UK abscesses are mainly seen in external lymph nodes:

- At the base of the ear
- Below the jaw
- At the hindleg or foreleg

However, infection can occur within lymph nodes of the chest and internal organs (lungs, spleen, kidneys and liver). This can cause:

- Chronic weight loss
- Coughing
- Nasal discharge
- Fever

### How Infection Spreads

- Rams fighting, causing skin lesions on the head where the bacteria can then enter
- Contamination of surfaces from draining lesions
- Can be transmitted via nasal discharge or coughing by animals with internal lesions

### Disease Diagnosis

- Physical examination of external abscesses
- Culture from abscess material- most accurate, but cannot be used for subclinical cases
- Blood tests- most useful for screening a flock rather than individual cases
- Ultrasound examination- to detect internal lesions, could be used in conjunction with OPA scanning