

# Necropsy Notes

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*About 25% of abortions can be diagnosed through laboratory tests. Talk with your veterinarian or diagnostic lab about what samples to submit and how to submit them. Use extra precautions when dealing with aborted tissues.*

## Precautions

- Wear gloves and protective clothing
- Disinfect tools and surfaces
- Dispose of carcass carefully
- Wash hands

## Necropsy of Neonates

- Premature? (immature placenta, small size, immature fleece)
- Stillborn? (never took a breath)
- Starvation? (poor body condition; no fat; empty stomach)
- Hypothermia? (hand-in-hand with starvation)
- Trauma? (bruising, fractures, bleeding, wounds from mother or predators)
- Navel ill? (infected navel, bladder, liver and/or joints)
- Evidence of human intervention (medications in stomach; injections)
- What does placenta look like?
- Is dam ill?

## Necropsy of Older Lambs and Adult Sheep

- Develop a system and stick with it
- Avoid opening intestines and chest cavity when opening abdomen
- Don't forget to look at free fluids within abdomen and chest
- Look into at least two joints
- Look, smell, touch and listen (don't taste!)
- Ask vet how to submit samples for specific diseases
- Wash intestinal walls and look carefully for parasites
- Look at intestinal lymph nodes for enlargement from Johne's Disease
- Look at tongue, heart and hind quarter muscles for signs of White Muscle Disease

## Tools

- Hand saw
- Medium-sized sharp knife
- Scalpel blade
- Pruners or hedge trimmers
- Water

## You Can Often ID These Diseases Yourself

Toxic mastitis	Blackleg	Pneumonia
Toxic metritis	Overeating disease	Pregnancy toxemia
White muscle disease	Water belly/urinary calculi	Choke
Parasitism	C.L.	Some plant toxicities
Johne's Disease	Cancer	Atresia ani and coli

## Resources

[www.cvms.colostate.edu/ilm/proinfo/necropsy/notes/table.html](http://www.cvms.colostate.edu/ilm/proinfo/necropsy/notes/table.html)

[www.cvms.colostate.edu/ilm/proinfo/necropsy/notes/calfnecropsy.htm](http://www.cvms.colostate.edu/ilm/proinfo/necropsy/notes/calfnecropsy.htm)

Color Atlas of Diseases and Disorders of the Sheep and Goat

***Practice! To know the abnormal, you must know the normal***