

October 2018

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Visit your local Animal Health Office

BIOSECURITY SA  
PIRSA

## Ovine Brucellosis

Ovine brucellosis (*Brucella ovis*) is a venereal disease in sheep that can cause infertility in rams, resulting in loss, primarily through reduced lambing rates.

Producers need to be fully aware of the health status of any potential ram being purchased, particularly in regards to ovine brucellosis, as the disease is incurable in rams leading to them usually being culled.

The [National Sheep Health Declaration](#) should provide information as to whether the rams are from a flock that is in an ovine brucellosis accredited scheme. In South Australia this occurs under the [ovine brucellosis-free accreditation scheme](#) a voluntary scheme through which ram flocks can be tested and monitored to become accredited as ovine brucellosis-free.

### Spread between animals

Transmission occurs during mating, ultimately affecting the reproductive organs, particularly in rams. While ewes do not usually become permanently infected, if they have recently mated with an infected ram they can then spread the infection to a clean ram.

### Spread between farms

Ovine brucellosis is usually introduced into previously uninfected flocks through infected rams.

### Testing rams for ovine brucellosis

All rams in all flocks should be examined for any signs of ovine brucellosis such as lumps or other abnormalities in the testes.

Any abnormalities detected in the testes that cannot be otherwise explained should be further investigated to ensure that they are not due to ovine brucellosis. This can be done by:

- Blood testing - to detect antibodies that can indicate the ram has been infected with ovine brucellosis
- Semen examination – to detect the bacteria and/or sperm abnormalities

### **Ovine brucellosis-free accreditation**

To be accredited as ovine brucellosis-free in South Australia you need to enrol in the voluntary [ovine brucellosis-free accreditation scheme](#).

[One Biosecurity](#) will also recognise the management practices required to achieve ovine-brucellosis free status under this above accredited scheme.

### **Contacts**

If you suspect any form of exotic disease in your animals immediately contact the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888, a Biosecurity SA Animal Health officer or your vet.

**For more information about Ovine Brucellosis:**

[http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/animal\\_health/sheep/health/ovine\\_brucellosis](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/animal_health/sheep/health/ovine_brucellosis)

**For more information and to pre-register for One Biosecurity:** <http://pir.sa.gov.au/1biosecurity>