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EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON OVINE SARCOCYSTOSIS

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Sarcocystosis is a common recurrent infection in ovines but routine immuno-diagnosis of outbreaks of illness is hindered by the lack of serological tests which does not allow to discriminate between the severe acute infection and the intercurrent asymptomatic infection due to non pathogenic Sarcocystis spp.. A series of serum-epidemiological investigations done on sheep-farms in Umbria (Italy), where recurrent episodies of abortions and premature deliveries occurred, were able to verify serum-positivity for Sarcocystis spp. in 70% of 4.200 tested animals. To clear up this problem an experimental protocol to specify the common antigenic fractions of S.ovicanis and S.ovifelis responsible of the cross-reaction phenomena was prepared. N 2 dogs and N 2 cats were fed on muscular tissue containing respectively cysts of S.ovicanis and S.ovifelis. The dogs' faeces were collected daily and the sporocysts separated by salt flotation. N 4 lambs were picked up from mothers at birth before taking colostrum and were then infected with 30.000 sporocysts of S.ovicanis and sacrificed on the 87th day p.i.. N 2 lambs were infected with 30.000 sporocysts of S.ovifelis and sacrificed on the 220th day p.i.. The cysts collected from infected tissues were studied by electronic microscopy. The protein extracts obtained both from S.ovifelis and S.ovicanis were then studied by electrophoretic blotting procedures. A common proteic fraction in the range of 95,5 KDa in both lysate tested can be of some interest for immunological and diagnostic researches.