EIMERIA AND CRYPTOSPORIDIOUM IN LITHUANIAN CATTLE FARMS

Brian Lassen1, Toivo Järvis2

1Estonian University of Life Sciences, Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences, Kreutzwaldi 62, 51014 Tartu, Estonia, tel.+372 5288411; fax: +372 731 3230; e-mail: lassen@emu.ee
2Estonian University of Life Sciences, Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences, Kreutzwaldi 62, 51014 Tartu, Estonia; tel.: +372 7313210; fax: +372 731 3230; e-mail: toivo.jarvis@emu.ee

Summary. Infections with Eimeria and Cryptosporidium in cattle are globally prevalent. However, little is known on the prevalence and species of these infections in Lithuania. The objective of the study was to determine the levels of infection of coccidia at 7 Lithuanian cattle farms. We aimed at establishing an estimate of prevalences of animals shedding coccidia oocysts and species as well as infection intensities from different age categories. Quantitative flotation of 15 faeces samples from each farm, stratified on cattle <3, 3-12, and >12 months of age, were investigated for Eimeria with the modified McMaster technique. Cryptosporidium samples were investigated using acid fast contrast staining (Ziehl-Neelsen) and given a semi-quantitative oocyst count. Eimeria oocysts had been sporulated and morphologically differentiated. All farms had both coccidia. Cryptosporidium was evenly distributed in the different age groups, while Eimeria was found mainly in animals >3 months. Oocyst counts were generally low for both pathogens. Eleven species of Eimeria were identified, mostly pathogenic species. Coccidia are heavily integrated in Lithuanian cattle farms in all ages and call for more attention.

Key words: coccidia, Cryptosporidium, Eimeria, cattle, Lithuania.