

EIMERIA AND *CRYPTOSPORIDIUM* IN LITHUANIAN CATTLE FARMS

Brian Lassen¹, Toivo Järvis²

¹*Estonian 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*

²*Estonian 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.