

## TOXOPLASMOSIS & ABORTION IN GOATS

**Toxoplasmosis is one of the major infectious causes of abortion in goats**

### **What is it?**

Toxoplasmosis is a protozoan parasite and is spread by oocysts shed from (feral) cats. The oocysts are very resistant in the environment and are normally ingested by the goats in contaminated feedstuffs (eg hay). Limited recent research has been done but back in 1991 around 37% of the NZ of goats in one study across 7 farms were positive for the parasite. Opel et al. (1991)

### **What you see depends on the stage of pregnancy:**

Early pregnancy	Early embryonic death = no abortion or visible signs, low pregnancy rates, high return rates
Mid-pregnancy	Foetal death and abortion; dead kids may be found on the ground
Late pregnancy	Stillborn kids or weak kids that fail to thrive

### **Treatment**

No treatment is available, the protozoa affects the placenta causing the abortions

### **Prevention**

- A highly effective vaccine is available and provides lifelong protection
- All breeding females should be vaccinated, preferably at least 6 weeks before their first mating
- The vaccine is made to order and needs to be ordered well in advance of the desired use period
- Controlling stray/feral cats on farm may help break the chain of transmission