

Identification of infectious abortion issues and the changes in flock performance before and after diagnosis

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Introduction & Objective

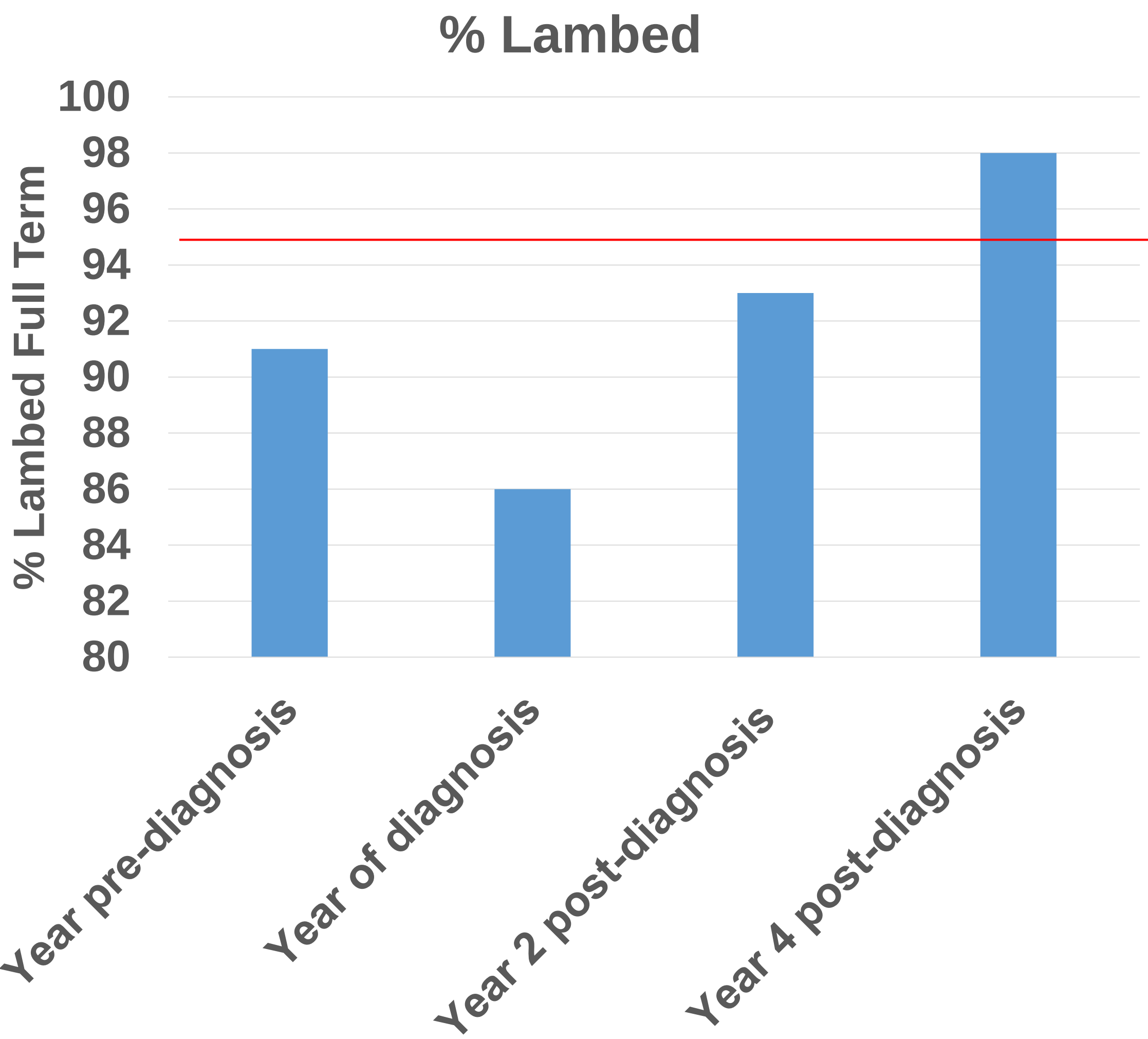
- Abortions caused by infective agents cause significant issues for sheep through reduced pregnancy rates and increased veterinary costs
- For many flocks the diagnosis of an infectious abortion agent only comes after a significant abortion event
- This study aimed to track the changes in lambing percentages before, during and after an abortion diagnosis to understand the effect of abortion outbreaks on flock performance

Materials & Methods

- 160-ewe commercial cross bred flock
- Commenced lambing indoors from March 10th
- Target of >95% of mature ewes (ME; >18 months of age) mated lambing
- Target > 80% yearling ewes (YE; <18 months of age) mated lambing
- Aborted foetus and placenta samples were submitted to an Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine veterinary laboratory for diagnosis

Results

- During the year of causative agent diagnosis, 86% of ME mated lambed at full term while 62% of YE mated lambed at full term
- Toxoplasmosis and Chlamydia abortive agents were identified on the farm
- During the year prior to diagnosis 91% ME ewes lambed full term
- Four years after diagnosis and implementation of a management plan involving vaccination and antibiotic treatments the number lambed exceeded the targets when 98% of ME and 85% of YE ewes lambed at full term



Discussion & Conclusion

- This case study clearly demonstrates the long-term effects of abortion issues due to infective agents even after the introduction of a treatment strategy
- Infectious abortion issues can be identified at low levels initially where monitoring of pregnancy rates and lambing rates takes place
- Decreases in pregnancy rates should be investigated immediately

