

NEOSPORA

Neospora caninum is a protozoan parasite (single-celled, and microscopic). The disease is seen in cattle and can be a major cause of abortion. In the dog, it is most often seen in puppies, and young dogs.

Typically, it causes hind limb paralysis, or ataxia (loss of muscle co-ordination). This can progress to affect the fore limbs, as well as swallowing and breathing. In many cases, this can progress to rigid hyperextension (over extension of a limb). Other reported clinical signs are fore limb ataxia (weakness), head tremors, myocarditis, (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pneumonia.

The disease can and often does prove fatal, and many litter mates can be affected. The infection can be acquired from the dam (mother) via the placenta, the signs in her can be sub-clinical. This condition can have devastating effects upon breeding programs.