

# WINGHAM & VALLEY VETS

Newsletter

September 2017

Volume 6

## *Vaccinate Bulls & Valuable Stock for Three-Day Sickness: contact us now to order your vaccine*

We are currently ordering bovine ephemeral fever (BEF) vaccine to ensure that our clients have the vaccine in time, before the arrival of the "three-day sickness" season. BEF is a viral illness of cattle transmitted by insects and it results in fever, inappetence and lethargy for approximately 3 days.

Deaths are uncommon, however BEF cases in 2015 were particularly severe in the Manning Valley, with higher numbers of cattle dying of the disease than in previous years. For cattle that have not been vaccinated in previous years, two doses of vaccine are required to achieve long lasting protection. Animals

Three-day sickness season will soon be here and so it is essential you vaccinate all bulls and any other valuable stock. Cattle that have never been vaccinated will require two doses 4-6 weeks apart.

Usually the season lasts from January to April, with the worst outbreaks in March; but we can see cases as early as December, hence the importance of vaccinating early. The vaccine is very effective and we recommend that you vaccinate your bulls and valuable stock. Bulls tend to show more severe signs of illness and may become infertile for 3-6 months following infection, due to the extremely high fever. Bulls are also more likely to die from the infection and some can be rendered permanently infertile. Dairy cattle drop their milk production by over 50%, and usually it is the highest producing cows that are worst affected. Cows affected in late lactation may dry off and pregnant cattle may abort.



may be vaccinated from 6 months of age and should then be revaccinated once each year in Spring to ensure continued protection. Some producers may decide to vaccinate only their more valuable, heavy animals, such as bulls and stud cows. Due to the severe drop in milk production, vaccination is often worthwhile in dairy herds and in general, vaccination of bulls and very high producing cows is strongly recommended.

## *Cases of the Month*

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Septic Pyothorax (dog)  
Tick paralysis  
Milk fever  
Metritis  
Theileriosis  
Left Displaced Abomasum  
Cat Flu  
Hypomagnesemia (Grass Tetany)

## *Run Dates*

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Krambach: every Tuesday  
Comboyne: second Thursday of every month  
Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> September  
Thurs 12<sup>th</sup> October  
Oxley Island: fourth Thursday of every month  
Thurs 28<sup>th</sup> September  
Thurs 26<sup>th</sup> October  
Cooperook, Lansdowne & Hannam Vale: third Thursday of every month  
Thurs 21<sup>st</sup> September  
Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> October

To book a job, please call us by 5pm the day before a run.

Emergencies will be accommodated.

**6557 0000**

## *Upcoming Events*

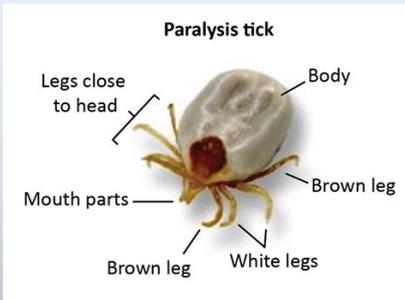
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Cattle Lameness Workshop coming soon!

*In the spotlight:  
Tick paralysis season is here...*



We have already had several tick paralysis cases in dogs not up to date with tick prevention. Most cases have been working dogs that spend a lot of time in the scrub. When treated early, tick paralysis has a reasonably good prognosis and so if you see signs in your pet, you should take them to the vet urgently. Symptoms of tick paralysis include incoordination ('wobbliness'), regurgitation or vomiting, paralysis, difficulty breathing or a change in their bark or meow. If you find a paralysis tick, pull it off immediately in one quick movement. It is a good idea to place the tick in a jar and bring it to the clinic for identification.



*Exciting News: we now offer cattle pregnancy ultrasound!*

To further expand the services that we offer to local beef and dairy farmers, we have purchased a state-of-the-art cattle ultrasound machine for pregnancy testing. Advantages of ultrasound include: speed (herds can be preg tested on a rotary during milking), accurate aging of the foetus, the potential for foetal sexing and less discomfort for the cow and operator. The optimum time for pregnancy testing with ultrasound is before 14 weeks gestation and pregnancies can be detected as early as 30 days. Therefore, it is recommended that a monthly pregnancy test is performed. This enables optimum reproductive management of the herd, as well as accurate aging of the growing foetus, meaning we can confidently differentiate between AI & bull matings.



**To ensure accuracy, cows diagnosed as empty with the ultrasound probe will ALWAYS be checked manually to confirm the diagnosis. This is essential for accuracy, and many non-veterinary ultrasound pregnancy testers do not do this.** We would highly recommend ultrasound pregnancy testing as an important tool in managing your herd's reproduction. We advise talking to Michael about your individual needs to arrange a pregnancy testing process that best suits your business.



*Introducing cattle to your herd? Then you should be worried about Theileria.*

We have recently seen several cases of Theileria (pronounced Tie-leer-ee-a) in cattle recently transported to the Manning Valley from inland areas. Theileria are tiny parasites called 'protozoa', which infect cattle and 'parasitise' and destroy red blood cells. This leads to anaemia (very low red blood cell count). Symptoms include: lethargy, inappetence, exercise intolerance, pale or yellow mucous membranes, abortion, drop in milk production and death. It is usually transmitted by bush ticks – only small numbers of ticks are required for transmission. Cases are common in coastal NSW, especially in 'naïve' cattle that are brought in from inland areas, where they have little exposure to ticks or Theileria, and thus have insufficient immunity to fight the infection. A DPI case study on a Theileria outbreak in 52 pregnant cows moved from inland (Coonamble) to Gloucester, reported that 4 cows died and another 30 aborted, at an estimated cost of \$26500. For anyone introducing new stock to their property they should be aware, firstly of the risk of introducing Theileria to their herd, and secondly of the new stock succumbing to Theileriosis soon after arrival. It is important to take precautions with newly introduced stock: treat for ticks on arrival, place them in paddocks less favourable to ticks, and avoid mixing them with home cattle. Theileriosis is generally poorly responsive to antibiotics, and some animals may die despite prompt veterinary treatment. Severely affected cattle may require a blood transfusion to survive, hence the importance of prevention via tick control.

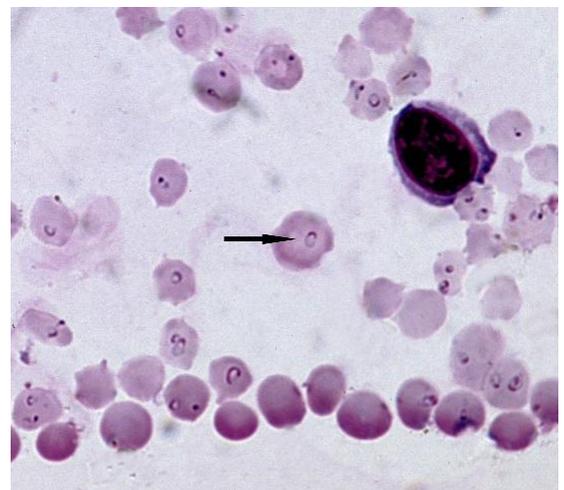


Figure 1: Theileria-infected red blood cells under the microscope. The parasite looks like an engagement ring (see arrow).

## Care of Newborn Foals

Foaling season is well underway and it is important that horse owners know how to manage the foal in the immediate post-birth period, and how to assess the foal for problems that require veterinary intervention. Within five minutes of birth, the foal should be trying to 'right' itself – i.e. to sit up on its chest – and should have a suckle reflex within 20 minutes (test this by placing a finger in the foal's mouth). Most foals will attempt to stand within 30 minutes and can stand unassisted 1-2 hours after birth. Normal foals should be nursing from the mare within 3 hours – this is important for 'passive transfer' of antibodies to the foal via the mare's first milk (colostrum). The navel should be dipped in dilute chlorhexidine (1 part chlorhexidine to 4 parts water) or 1-2% iodine solution – repeat this 3 times daily, for 3 days. Do not use 7% iodine – it can scald the umbilicus. Newborn foals do not regulate their body temperature well and so keeping the foal dry and warm is very important if the weather is wet and cold. Conversely, if it is very hot, a foal can rapidly become heat stressed if it does not have shade.

The foal should start passing meconium (first faeces) within three hours and all of the meconium should be passed within 24 hours. If the foal is straining to defecate, contact us and we may discuss using an enema to help treat meconium impaction, which is more common in colt foals. After the meconium has passed, the foal's faeces will become thick, pasty and orange.

One of the most important aspects of neonatal foal care is passive transfer of antibodies – i.e. ensuring the foal gets sufficient good quality colostrum from the mare. Colostrum is rich in antibodies, protein and energy. In horses, the foal receives antibodies from the mare primarily through her colostrum, whereas in humans, antibody transfer is primarily through the placenta. These antibodies protect the foal against infection, making them more resistant to disease. The foal's small intestine will only absorb these antibody (IgG) proteins during the first 12-24 hours after birth. At 24 hours, the gut "closes" and will not absorb any more immunoglobulins. We recommend that a veterinarian check every foal's IgG levels within the first 12-16 hours after birth via blood sample– this allows you to supplement the foal with additional antibodies where necessary. In foals less than 24 hours old, this can be done via administration of colostrum orally. If the foal is older than 24 hours, the only way a foal can absorb more immunoglobulins is by intravenous plasma transfusion. We use a "Gamma Check" foal-side test which gives a general "high or low" reading, with results available within 5 minutes. If the IgG is checked after 24 hours old, then only a plasma transfusion can be given to increase the immunoglobulin levels.



### *Risk factors that may result in foal health problems:*

#### Mare risk factors:

- Running milk days before foaling – can lead to poor quality colostrum
- History of foaling problems – e.g. septic foal, dystocia
- Poor mammary development
- Dystocia – difficult birth – meconium staining of the foal is a sign of foetal distress
- Red bag (premature placental separation)
- Unhealthy placenta or placentitis
- Sick mare prior to foaling (fever, colic, lethargy, purulent vaginal discharge)

#### Foal risk factors:

- Foal doesn't stand or nurse within 3 hours
- Lack of suckle reflex
- Colic or diarrhoea – foals should not have diarrhoea in the first few days of life – foal heat diarrhoea can occur 7-10 days post foaling
- Swollen joints or navel or a navel that remains moist
- Twin foals

If two or more risk factors are present, the foal is highly likely to have a problem post-foaling (especially septicaemia) and requires careful management and monitoring.

## Time for a Spring spruce up to get rid of the Winter Woolies?

It's Springtime and the weather has warmed up considerably over the past few weeks. We are seeing lots of dogs and cats for grooming, because now is a great time to tidy up long or matted coats with a clip. Keeping the coat short and well maintained has a lot of benefits in the warmer weather. Pets are much more comfortable - finding it easier to cope with the Summer heat, the coat is easier to keep well maintained and is more hygienic. Importantly, it is also much easier to search daily for paralysis ticks. Many dogs with skin allergies also benefit from a clip in the lead up to Summer. Dogs and cats often



find grooming stressful and so we recommend sedation for most dog clips and all cat clips to enable a stress-free and comfortable experience. Sedation ensures that nervous pets are less aware of the activity around them, are much more relaxed and will not go on to develop negative associations with the clinic environment or the grooming process. Our grooming sedation is heavily subsidised, so that it is affordable for owners. Our grooming service is provided by our Delta-trained veterinary nurse and groomer Amber. Delta accreditation takes 3 years to complete and is nationally recognised. Due to this training, Amber is very aware of the subtle signs of stress and anxiety in dogs and cats and so she is well equipped to make the grooming experience as positive and pleasant as possible for your pet. If your dog or cat finds grooming a stressful experience and if you are worried they have had a negative experience when being groomed, our gentle grooming service may be perfect for you and your pet. For more information or to book a grooming appointment, please call us on 6557 0000.

### **Free Trace Element Testing still available!**

Many of our beef and dairy clients have been getting extremely useful information from the free Selenium, Copper and Cobalamin assays. This fully subsidised trace element testing is still available so if you are having growth or fertility problems in your herd, please contact the clinic to arrange herd testing - testing is free, you will only pay travel and Vet time to collect the samples.

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**24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE – 6557 0000**