

#### CVC CLINIC NEWS

Welcome to the Winter newsletter for Beef and Sheep producers. The weather has left us a little wet underfoot with pregnancy toxaemia and low calcium in pregnant and early lactating ewes being high on our list of issues at the moment. As always the ever present parasitism issues in our sheep flocks are also causing issues.

The CVC client information night held at the Mt Elephant Hotel in Derrinallum was a huge success and we hope all who attended enjoyed the evening. A huge thank you once again to our sponsors and speakers for the evening as well as John and the team at the hotel for providing a perfect venue. We certainly will be looking to hold more of these events in the future.

Our Skipton and Derrinallum clinics are open in line with current COVID-19 restrictions . We are available on-farm on Wednesdays for routine work up North and every day for emergencies! Please contact the clinic on 5593 1077 to book an appointment or if you would like to talk to one of our friendly team!

### **PINKEYE: Prevention**

Winter usually provides us with a respite from pinkeye however we have been seeing sporadic, ongoing cases in some herds. Pinkeye or bovine infectious keratoconjunctivitis is a highly contagious ocular infection of cattle caused primarily by the bacterium of the *Morexella* genus. However over the last few years we have seen emergence of new pinkeye strains.

**Pinkeye can affect up to 80% of a mob, usually affecting young cattle during the late Spring, Summer and Autumn months in Victoria.** Prompt treatment as soon as a watery eye is noticed will give the best result. Please contact the clinic to discuss treatment options.

When we consider the expense and time required to treat and control a pinkeye outbreak, prevention is a much better option. The current commercially available vaccine Piliguard <sup>®</sup> aims to control infection associated with *Moraxella Bovis* strains. The best time to vaccinate is once yearly in October, prior to increased fly numbers. If required due to high infection rates or in the face of an outbreak, vaccination can be repeated.

Micro-organisms, including those that cause pinkeye, typically adapt to the environment in which they are found in resulting in regional variation of organisms, therefore custom-made autogenous vaccines may be a key to aiding in the solution of these issues.

An autogenous vaccine is made from microorganisms which have been isolated directly from your farm. This means that our vaccines target the actual bacteria which are causing disease in your animals.

To identify the *Morexella* species that are causing pinkeye on your property several ocular swabs are taken from untreated animals. Ideally 6-10 animals are sampled as some swabs may not grow.

#### To discuss pinkeye and vaccination further, please don't hesitate to contact the clinic and speak with one of our vets.

# Clinical signs of pink eye may vary from mild conjunctivitis to severe ocular ulceration and blindness.

- Mild infection characterised by slight cloudiness and increased tear production.
- 2. Infection progresses with growth of blood vessels creating the 'pink ring' responsible for the name 'pink eye'
- 3. Advanced infection with central hypopyon (pus)
- 4. Globe rupture requiring eye removal.



# **BOVINE VIRAL DIARRHOEA VIRUS (BVDV / PESTIVIRUS)**

**Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Virus** or "**Pestivirus**" is widespread throughout Australian beef and dairy herds with up to 90% of herds showing some exposure to the virus. Although it's name implies a disease of the gastrointestinal tract, the condition more commonly has significant effects on reproduction and immunity in unexposed herds.

Cattle that have never been exposed to the virus are considered "naïve". Some animals may develop fever or diarrhoea after infection although these symptoms are usually

mild. The most significant consequences of BVDV infection is suppression of an animal's immune system and decreased reproductive performance. While the impact in adult cattle is often minimal, calves with naturally lower immunity and exposure to a high load of pathogens often develop more severe signs of common diseases.

BVDV is spread through contact with a wide variety of bodily fluids from infected animals including respiratory secretion, uterine secretions, urine, milk, semen and faeces. Inhaling or ingesting virus-contaminated fluids is the main source of infection for transiently infected animals. Transmission is also possible through the placenta of pregnant cows to their calves.

If cows become infected during key reproductive periods, there can be very serious consequences. Infection during pregnancy can result in significant foetal abnormalities depending on when during gestation a cow is infected.

Infection at the time of joining can result in *reduced conception rates* and *increased early embryonic deaths* (more cows returning at 48 days).

**Infection of a cow between 0– 120 days gestation** can result in production of *"persistently infected animals" or Pl's"*. The tissues of PI calves are infected with the virus and if born alive the animals will shed BVDV for the rest of their lives. PI animals are the main source of infection in most herds.

- $\rightarrow$  Persistently infected calves often have very poor vigour and die early of other diseases.
- → PI animals can make it to adulthood and will always produce PI calves themselves. Bulls can also be PI's, therefore we recommend performing ear notch testing during VBBSE (Bull testing).

**Infection during day 120+ of pregnancy** can result in an immune calf or *calf birth defects*. Defects may include aborted, stillborn or born alive with complications such as blindness, fixed joints (cows may require assistance to deliver these calves), and cerebellar (brain) deformities resulting in uncoordinated calves with tremors.

Management of BVDV on farm depends on many factors such as exposure level in the herd, system set up and desire to control. **Determining your herd's BVDV status is always the first step to starting a BVDV management** program on your farm.

The BVDV status of a farm can be determined by the following tests:

- **Testing for the presence of antibodies** using a sample of blood from a selection of animals. This is known as *antibody testing* and helps determine if animals have been exposed to the virus.
- **Testing for the presence of virus** in blood or body tissue (ear notch) of individual animals This is known as *antigen testing*. This is how PI animals are identified.

#### Additional BVDV control measures may include:

- Vaccinating naïve animals with Pestiguard
- Implementing biosecurity practices such as testing any new animals that come onto the farm to prevent PI's entering the farm.







# LAMBING KITS:

With lambing in full swing, we have been preparing 'Lambing Kits" for farmers to help maximise the health of their ewes and lambs. Kits can be tailor-made for your needs. They can include antibiotics and anti-inflammatory pain relief where warranted, as well as disinfectant and gloves for good hygiene.

We have also had reports of increased numbers of down ewes prior to lambing. These girls are often scanned with twins and require that extra TLC.

To discuss management of your twinning ewes as well as lambing kits please don't hesitate to contact the clinic on 5593 1077.

# LAMB MARKING:

Lambing is now well underway on a lot of farms within the district. This means it is time to start planning your marking and consider the most effective ways to minimise mismothering and pain within your flock, as well as have a positive effect on post-marking weight gain. Ideally lambs are within 2-12 weeks of age at marking. If your lambing period extends for more than 6 weeks it may be advisable to consider marking lambs in two sessions.

Tails can be docked using either a hot knife or ring. For both procedures we aim to dock the tail at the third palpable joint of the tail or the tip of the vulva in ewes. This length is to reduce flystrike however short tails result in higher incidences of rectal prolapse and vulval cancer. It is important to maintain good hygiene when marking, particularly when using a knife for any procedure. Hibitane is a preferred antiseptic that can be used for this.

Over the last few years there has been a push for improved welfare when marking/muelsing, This has resulted in several different pain relief products now available for use.

#### Buccalgesic/meloxicam:

Anti-inflammatory pain relief (NSAID). Decreases pain, swelling and pyrexia (high temperature)

Single administration providing pain relief for 48 hours in either oral or injectable form

These products are Prescription Only medicine and must be sourced from your vet.

#### Trisolfen:

Topical antiseptic/anaesthetic gel that sticks to open wounds, not to be used when tail docking and castrating with rings

Pain relief lasts 24 hours, reduces bleeding and risk of bacterial infection

Does not require a veterinary prescription, can be purchased from your local rural store

#### Numnuts:

Ring applicator combined with an injector that dispenses NumOcaine, a local anaesthetic

Immediate but short acting, lasts up to 2 hours

#### Prescription Only, must be sourced from your vet.

Studies have shown Metacam/buccalgesic when used at marking resulted in more comfortable lambs with decreased incidence of abnormal behaviour and movement when compared to non-treated lambs.

We recommend all lambs are treated with an NSAID (either injectable Metacam or oral Buccalgesic) at the time of marking. Additionally, if surgical procedures are used (muelsing or cutting testicles/tails rather than ringing) Trisolfen should be applied to the wound. If the Numnuts applicator and NumOcaine are used it is still advisable to use an NSAID. These multimodal methods of pain relief provide the best results for your lambs for both production and welfare aspects.







## **Quarantine Drenching: Getting it right!**

Recently we have encountered some parasite issues in relation to stock being purchased from Western states. It is important to quarantine and treat any incoming stock appropriately to prevent buying in parasites that could be resistant to standard products, or that you may not have had on the farm before and could devastate your flock.

Stress associated with travel can also predispose animals to immunosuppression and therefore allow a worm burden to have greater impact. Keeping drench resistant worms out of your property is part of sustainable worm control. All new animals should be assumed to have a worm burden. The following steps have been summarised from the Wormboss article <u>New and Agisted Sheep Bring Resistant Worms Home</u> and aim to minimise your risk of importing drench resistant worms onto your property.

#### **1**. Quarantine drench all sheep new to the property.

- → Use a combination of no less than four unrelated drench actives, with one or both of the following (newest actives on the market) included: monepantel (Zolvix or Zolvix Plus) and/or derquantel (Startect). This can be done using multi-active (combination) and/or single-active products concurrently: up the race with one product, then up the race again with the next.
- → Do not mix different drenches unless the label states you can, as different products may be incompatible.

#### 2. Quarantine the sheep after treatment.

- → Hold the sheep in quarantine in yards (small mobs) or a secure paddock (larger mobs) for at least four days to allow worm eggs present at the time of drenching to pass out of the gut.
- $\rightarrow$   $\,$  Provide adequate feed and water.
- → Keep this paddock free of sheep, goats or alpacas for at least three months in summer or six months in cooler months.

# 3. After quarantine, release the sheep onto a paddock that is likely to be contaminated with worm larvae due to grazing by other sheep. This will dilute (lower the proportion of) resistant worms surviving treatment with worm larvae already on your property.

# 4. Perform a faecal egg count 10–14 days after drenching for added confidence that treatment was successful.

This method of control may seem excessive however drench resistance is widespread, particularly in higher rainfall regions such as ours. Drenching with 4 actives will require sheep to be drenched at least twice. It is beneficial to drench in this way (ie up the race twice) as missed sheep are much less likely to occur.

Wormboss has additional information on the selection of quarantine drench products, these will alter depending if Zolvix or Startect is selected. It is important to follow our guidelines so that 4 individual products are used and doubling up of the same drench class does not occur.

Additional information for resting quarantine paddocks and what to do if you have introduced stock without quarantine drenching can be found at http://www.wormboss.com.au



#### **Camperdown Veterinary Centre**

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Hours: 8:30am – 5:30pm (Monday – Friday) 9:00

9:00am – 12:00pm (Saturday)