

Animal Health Update

South East Local Land Services

November 2019

LOCAL DISEASE WATCH

Alex Stephens District Vet Yass

There have been many disease investigations this month. A number of sheep producers have noticed sheep that are continuing to waste and scour despite drenching, and are in a very poor condition compared to other sheep. **Ovine Johne's disease (OJD)** was diagnosed on post mortem even though these sheep were only 2 and 3 years old and a few of these properties have been vaccinating with guidair® for many years to prevent OJD. Clinical cases of OJD can still be seen despite vaccination especially where sheep have been grazing close to the ground for many years. In these years vaccination will keep losses to less than 1% rather than reaching 20% as can happen in unvaccinated flocks. These sheep are best recognised and culled early both for animal welfare and to minimise environmental contamination.

A post mortem on an anaemic lamb 4 weeks after lamb marking showed the blood parasite ***Mycoplasma ovis*** to be the cause of the anaemia and ruled out barber's pole worm. In another case **barber's pole worm** was shown to be the cause of death in sheep on the South Coast. With recent rain storms it is worth remembering how quickly the short life cycle can build worm numbers to deadly levels. Frequent faecal egg count testing is our best tool in monitoring the barber's pole risk, and effective drenching with rotation to clean pastures our best tool in managing it.

We had a couple of cases of respiratory disease causing sudden death in both lambs and older sheep with ***Mannheimia haemolytica*** being the cause. In all of these cases **a post mortem has proved very valuable** in determining the cause of death and any preventative action required.

We have been blood sampling multiple flocks that have had slightly disappointing lambing compared to scanning results in the maiden ewes. We have been looking for evidence of exposure to **campylobacteriosis as the possible cause of abortion**. Many of the flocks tested have shown evidence that vaccination against the risk of campylobacteriosis may prove profitable for them, particularly in these years where we are holding ewes in more intensive situations and supplementary feeding on the ground.

We have also continued our **surveillance for ovine brucellosis**, with all participating properties showing negative results so far. Please call your nearest Local Land Services District Veterinarian if you would like your property tested.

There have been investigations of cattle herds for causes of early and late term abortion. A positive bacterial culture result was shown to be the cause of the late term abortion in one case, and neospora, leptospirosis and pestivirus ruled out in the other cases. A genetic disorder was proven to be the cause of hair colour abnormalities in a new born calf.



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We help secure the future of agriculture and the environment for NSW communities.

Sheep have been investigated for causes of lameness. It is worth noting that although during this dry time we are not in a footrot spread period, there is still a significant risk of inadvertently infecting your property with footrot by buying a mob of sheep, with an occasional footrot carrier sheep in it, from a property not under quarantine. There are selling restrictions for sheep with virulent footrot, but lesser forms of footrot can be very problematic as well. Remember that when buying sheep it is a buyer beware system. It is always wise to ask for a sheep health statement and it is worth observing the sheep carefully for lameness or checking all the feet of purchased animals. As conditions become dryer footrot carriers become more obvious as sheep that have a limp and may be lighter in weight than other sheep. Dry times are a very good time to eradicate this disease.

Footrot is still a notifiable disease so you are legally obliged to check the feet of any sheep that are lame in the paddock and call your Local Land Services District Vet for an assessment if you are finding sheep with lameness and any underrunning of the heal. Other causes of lameness at this time of year can be orf or strawberry footrot, or laminitis caused by an introduction to grain feeding.

In both cattle herds and sheep flocks spring to early summer is a good time of the year to test for selenium deficiency. District vets have been collecting blood samples which they use to assess the need for selenium supplementation in your stock. Where deficiencies exist selenium supplementation can give real production advantages, especially in regards to reproduction and growth of young stock. However remember as well that supplementation can also become toxic if given in excess.

Remember that herd health investigations and advice are one of the services offered by your local District Veterinarian, and the cost is covered by your Local Land Services rates.

KEEP AFRICAN SWINE FEVER OUT

Evelyn Walker District Veterinarian Berry

African Swine Fever (ASF) is a highly contagious viral disease that affects domestic and wild pigs. It is currently spreading rapidly through Eastern Europe, China and South East Asia. ASF will devastate our pork industry and our economy if it enters Australia.

ASF has been detected in pork products seized at international airports and mail processing centres. On the home front, South East Local Land Services are on heightened alert and ramping up surveillance and inspection activities, but everyone can help protect Australia from ASF.

Know the signs-early detection is key

Symptoms of ASF in pigs may include: fever, red/purple blotching of the skin, diarrhoea, incoordination and sudden death. ASF is spread by direct contact with infected pigs, contaminated vehicles, equipment or clothing and by feeding infected swill or meat scraps to pigs. ASF only affects pigs and is NOT contagious to people. If you are suspicious, report any signs in pigs to the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Protect your pigs with good biosecurity

Domestic pig and pet pig owners can protect themselves and their pigs by having strong biosecurity and hygiene practices. This includes use of foot baths on entering and exiting farms, disinfection of tools and equipment used on farm and washing hands before and after handling pigs. Revisit, discuss

and communicate your on farm biosecurity plan with workers and farm visitors. Resources to help keep your farm clean are available on the website: farmbiosecurity.com.au

Feed your pigs right

It is best to feed pigs a commercially prepared diet that has been formulated to meet their nutritional needs. Pigs will readily consume other foodstuffs including grains, eggs, dairy products, fruits and veggies. For more information: [Primefact 1293: Pig nutrition: get the mix right](#).

The practice of feeding prohibited pig feed is illegal in NSW and all Australian states. Prohibited pig feed (also known as 'swill') includes meat, meat products and anything that has come into contact with meat or meat products. Similarly, allowing or permitting others to engage in swill feeding to pigs is prohibited.

Keep an eye out if hunting or trapping feral pigs

If you hunt or trap feral pigs, use good hygiene practices including cleaning and disinfection of equipment; properly disposing of leftover food so other pigs will not consume; and store carcasses either covered or bagged on the back of the ute. If you see pigs that look sick or dead, report it.

Get to know Local Land Services

Contact your nearest Local Land Services biosecurity officer or district veterinarian if you are suspicious of any prohibited pig feeding activity occurring. All reports are treated confidentially. If you are concerned about the health of your pigs or observe anything unusual, contact your nearest private or district veterinarian. If you need more information regarding ASF and/or biosecurity planning, contact or drop into your nearest Local Land Services office for assistance.

BIOSECURITY AND YOUR PROPERTY

Henry Clutterbuck District Veterinarian Goulburn

Arrangements in biosecurity management plans aim to **prevent, eliminate, and minimise the biosecurity risks posed by people entering a place** at which commercial agricultural or horticultural activity, including processing and education, occurs. Biosecurity is a vital part of keeping you, your property and your livestock safe.

It is easiest to think of Biosecurity as taking 6 parts:

- farm inputs
- people, vehicles & equipment
- production practices
- feral animals & weeds
- farm Outputs
- train, plan & record.

Many of you will have come across these principals as part of LPA accreditation. A working biosecurity plan is crucial to be able to crystallise these into practice on farm.

Farm inputs can be thought of as anything that you bring onto your property i.e. hay, restockers and water.

People, vehicles and equipment is very self-explanatory. It is best to consider how to minimise their impact. This can be for example, having an area that external vehicles are not allowed to pass.

Production practices covers your day-to-day farming practices and includes vaccination, worming etc.

Feral animals and weeds section ensures that you are doing your bit to tackle feral animals and weeds on the property. Minimising both of these will reduce transmission of diseases and parasites being brought onto your property.

Farm outputs include livestock and fodder that may leave your property either for sale or shows. Ensuring that your stock or produce are free from disease is vital.

Training, planning and records should be considered vital. If workers on your property are not aware of, trained in and confident with the Biosecurity plan on your property they will not be able implement it making it useless.

From 1 August 2019 people entering areas where a biosecurity management plan (read biosecurity plan) applies, and who deals with biosecurity matter (anything that isn't a person that is biological), must comply with the measures outlined in the plan.

Failure to comply with these arrangements may be an offence under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. Penalties can include an on the spot fine of \$1,000 or a court ordered fine of \$220,000 for individuals and \$440,000 for corporations.

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/your-role-in-biosecurity/primary-producers/biosecurity-management-plan>

To ensure that you are protected by the new arrangements, you must:

- ensure your biosecurity management plan is up-to-date and sets out reasonable measures to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks, and ensure you are actively following it
- ensure there are signs at each entrance to the management area where the biosecurity management plan applies.

The NSW Government will provide signs, or stickers to update some existing signs, for free until 31 December 2019 – please contact your nearest Local Land Services office.

Ensure your plan is up to date by using the guide on the [DPI website](#). If you don't have a biosecurity management plan in place, templates for developing a biosecurity management plan are available from www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/planner/, a joint initiative of AHA and PHA managed on behalf of members.

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