

Animal Health Update

South East Local Land Services

August 2018

Goulburn welcomes new DV

Henry Clutterbuck has joined the Goulburn local team as the new District Veterinarian (DV), replacing Bill Johnson.

Henry has been working in mixed practice at Coinda Vet Hospital in Marulan for the last 18 months. He has a strong interest in large animal health and infectious diseases. He is very excited to get started helping land managers in the Goulburn area.

Local disease watch

Alexandra Stephens, Yass District Vet

Absentee owners urged to check their stock

Animal welfare continues to be an important issue for the DVs of the South East over this last month. DVs provide assistance to the RSPCA in welfare cases with professional assessment and the provision of feeding guidelines. Livestock condition throughout the district is highly variable, with a vast majority of producers doing a great job supplementary feeding stock where it is required. However, issues with prolonged 'underfeeding' are starting to appear on some properties. Most often this is occurring where owners are absentee, and supplementary feeding has not been occurring or has been inadequate. Stock owners have a moral and legal responsibility for the welfare of their stock including the provision of food and water and during more challenging seasonal conditions stock need to be checked more frequently.

There have also been occasional cases of livestock arriving at saleyards which were very thin, or in fat score

1/5. These animals are unsuitable for sale through the saleyards or transport over long distances due to their risk of fatigue. The recommendation for these stock is to transport them direct to abattoir or another property only.

Now is a great time to do your annual pre mating check of rams. Doing it early allows you to sort any issues detected well before breeding commences. Remember the 4 Ts- Testicles, Tossle, Teeth and Toes. Producers should be consistently aware of the risk of brucellosis to their flock and any testes that palpate abnormally can be blood tested by your DV or private vet for exclusion of this disease. It is also important to always check the feet, as any flock issues with strains of footrot will usually also show up in the rams. Any concerns and the DV should be contacted.

This newsletter also includes an article on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) surveillance testing. Getting a definitive diagnosis of your animal health problems really helps with future prevention of disease. Eligible cases of pregnancy toxemia, hypocalcaemia, grass tetany and plant poisonings may all be diagnosed at no cost to you by using this program.

DVs in the South East have been collecting blood samples this month for the national arbovirus monitoring program and an article has been included to explain this scheme.

A notifiable disease is one where if you have any suspicion of disease you must notify the DV as your legal Biosecurity duty. Examples of notifiable diseases are footrot in sheep, anthrax, and poultry disease such as infectious larangotracheitis (ILT) and avian influenza.



A recent positive ILT diagnosis prompted an article to explain this disease.

'Barbers pole' worm or haemonchus has increasingly been causing more problems in the South East each summer due to the increasing predominance of summer rainfalls. A seminar is being planned for the 24 August in Yass to raise awareness of this disease and to talk over management options. Guest speakers have been invited to discuss the success and use of Barbervax® in the region. Please contact the Yass office for more information.

Infectious laryngotracheitis virus detected

Lou Baskind, Palerang District Vet

Infectious Laryngotracheitis (ILT) is a notifiable respiratory disease of poultry which was recently detected near Nowra. It is caused by a herpesvirus and can present as two different syndromes, a severe classic form and a milder form. The classical form affects 90 – 100% of the flock causing severe breathing difficulties, expectoration of bloody mucous and severe conjunctivitis. Mortality rates vary between 5 – 70%, but usually around 10 – 20% of the flock will die. The milder form causes conjunctivitis (often referred to as "foamy" eye), some respiratory mucous, a drop in egg production and sometimes swelling of the sinuses.

Around 5% of the flock are affected, with deaths of only 0.1 – 2%. In both forms it is an acute disease, spreading through the flock in less than 3 weeks. Chickens of any age can be infected. ILT can also infect pheasant, peafowl, and possibly turkeys or ducks. Guinea fowl and pigeons do not appear to be susceptible.

ILT is of concern to all poultry keepers from large commercial producers to small-flock hobbyists. It is a serious disease of poultry wherever susceptible populations are present. It has the potential to cause severe losses and to decrease egg production significantly.

If a chicken survives the infection, the virus goes into a latent state, and infected but healthy appearing birds continue to shed the virus intermittently. Periods of stress such as new housing, transport, and the onset of reproduction can all cause reactivation of the virus. Vaccinated birds can also shed the virus.

Wind is thought to be a major factor in spreading the virus between flocks. Backyard flocks are considered a significant risk for commercial facilities, and live haulage of infected or vaccinated commercial poultry could be a risk to backyard producers. The virus is thought to be able to travel several kilometres on the wind.

The virus transports easily via personnel, clothing, equipment, feed and litter. ILT can survive in tracheal mucus, chicken carcasses and dry litter for up to 100 days at temperatures below 23°C. The virus is readily destroyed by common disinfectants or with adequate exposure to heat (48 hours at 38°C).

The following strategies are essential biosecurity practices for all poultry farms:

- do not mix vaccinated or recovered birds with susceptible birds
- control pest animals
- clean and disinfect equipment, boots and clothing
- clean and disinfect vehicles off-site
- do not allow visitors, or if you do, ensure they do not have any poultry contact for 72 hours prior
- remove all organic material when disinfecting equipment, boots, sheds and pens
- quarantine new stock for a minimum of 21 days
- isolate sick birds with a substantial barrier
- dispose of used litter, manure and carcasses appropriately.

ILT should be suspected in all cases of chicken respiratory disease. Rapid diagnosis allows prevention of further spread during an outbreak. ILT must be differentiated from a range of other diseases that can cause similar symptoms. For example avian pox, avian influenza, Newcastle Disease, infectious bronchitis, infectious coryza (*Avibacterium paragallinarum*), fowl adenovirus and aspergillosis.

Diagnosis requires the DV or your private veterinarian to take tracheal swabs and post mortem samples which are submitted to the laboratory for testing. ILT vaccination is not recommended for small farms because vaccine strains can be a source of infection. Commercial producers should seek further advice regarding vaccine programs.

Transporting drought-affected stock

Jess McLeod Final Year Student

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine University of Sydney

Many a farmer has felt outrage at being told upon arrival at saleyards or other destinations that their cattle are not fit to travel further and must be destroyed rather than sold.

This is a lose-lose situation – producers lose income, inspectors are vilified, fines are applicable for agents,

transporters and owners, and stock undergo suffering which could have been avoided.

There are national standards and legislation for the welfare of livestock during transport, which are applicable across the country, and are *enforceable by law*. Special focus should be given to make sure producers are familiar with these standards.

While all producers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Standards (available at www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au), below is a summary guideline for decision-making regarding the transport of drought-affected stock.

An animal is not fit for journey by road or rail if it:

- is not strong enough to undertake the journey
- cannot walk normally, bearing weight on all legs
- is severely emaciated or visibly dehydrated
- is suffering from severe visible distress or injury
- is in a condition that could cause it increased pain or distress during transport
- is blind in both eyes
- is in late pregnancy (i.e. calving is imminent).

IF IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT

If you identify an animal meeting any of the above criteria, then you must not transport it.

You can:

- Treat the animal and transport when recovered and fit to load or humanely destroy the animal.
- Consult a veterinary surgeon and transport *only* under veterinary advice.

Remember, at-risk stock should always be rested and provided with cool, clean water and dry feed until transported.

For more information please see the following MLA document [link](#).

Have you heard about NAMP?

Jess McLeod Final Year Student

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The National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP) monitors the distribution of economically important arboviruses (insect-borne viruses) of ruminant livestock and associated insect vectors in Australia. The 'big

three' viruses monitored by NAMP are Bluetongue, Akabane and Bovine Ephemeral Fever (aka 3-day sickness), and data from the program is used to define the borders of the national Bluetongue line, and distribution of those diseases, which has impacts for live exporters of stock from those areas. The southern limits of the Bluetongue line currently extend well into the South East LLS District (see map below).

Industry Collaboration

The NAMP is a great example of public and private sectors working together to ensure economic security of the livestock industry. The NAMP is an ongoing collaboration between the cattle, sheep and goat industries, the livestock export industry, and the state, territory and Australian governments.

The program maintains a database management system, publishes an annual report, and has a live interactive map of Bluetongue distribution, which can be accessed at

https://namp.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/public.php?page=pub_home&program=2

Economically Important Diseases

Bluetongue, Akabane and Bovine Ephemeral Fever viruses are non-contagious and are biologically transmitted by insect vectors. Climatic factors determine the distribution of potential vectors, and the viruses are transmitted only if vectors are present in sufficient density, hence the distribution of the diseases can change year-to-year.

The main vector of both Bluetongue and Akabane virus is the biting midge *Culicoides brevitarsis*, which is also the main culprit causing Queensland Itch in horses. The vector of Bovine Ephemeral Fever virus is the mosquito *Culex annulirostris*, which can tolerate far lower temperatures than the midge, accounting for its wider distribution in regions not affected by Bluetongue or Akabane.

Export Restrictions

A number of importing countries require Australian livestock to be sourced from Bluetongue free areas. This includes China, Argentina, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Taiwan.

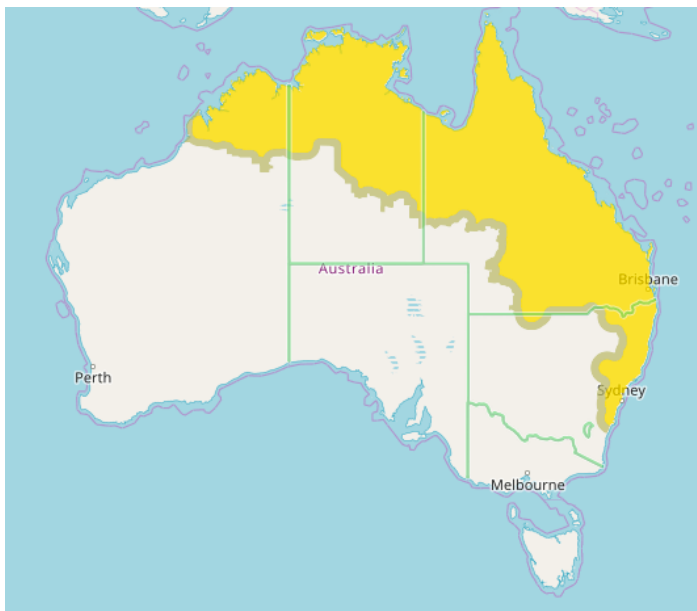


Image: Australia-wide map of areas deemed endemic for Bluetongue virus. Export restrictions apply to stock originating from within these areas, *including* within the brown 'buffer' zone.

The TSE disease in cattle is BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy), more commonly known as “mad cow disease”. In sheep, the disease is known as “scrapie”.

It is important for us to know, and to demonstrate to export markets, that our animals and animal products are free from TSEs. The best way to do that is by testing the brains of any cattle or sheep that show signs which could be due to a TSE.

Clinical signs of BSE in cattle, and scrapie in sheep, can include:

- changes in behaviour and neurological signs
- excessive licking of the nose and flanks
- incoordination (circling, staggering, and falling)
- muscle tremors
- difficulty in getting up
- paralysis
- excitability
- increased or decreased sensitivity to sound, pain, heat, cold or touch.

These signs can be caused by many other diseases, so specific testing on the brain is required to prove that an animal doesn't have a TSE. Testing also gives us the best chance of early detection of TSEs should they ever occur in Australia.

If you have an animal that is eligible for testing, and you have testing done via your LLS District Vet or your private veterinarian, you will receive an incentive payment of \$300 for cattle and \$100 for sheep. Not only do you not pay for the TSE testing and for the actual diagnosis, you do get paid for contributing to TSE surveillance.

Eligible sheep must be 18 months – 5 years of age, and show any sign consistent with scrapie. Eligible cattle must be 30 months – 9 years of age, and show any sign consistent with BSE.

For more information on the National TSE Freedom Assurance Project, please contact your LLS District Vet or private vet.

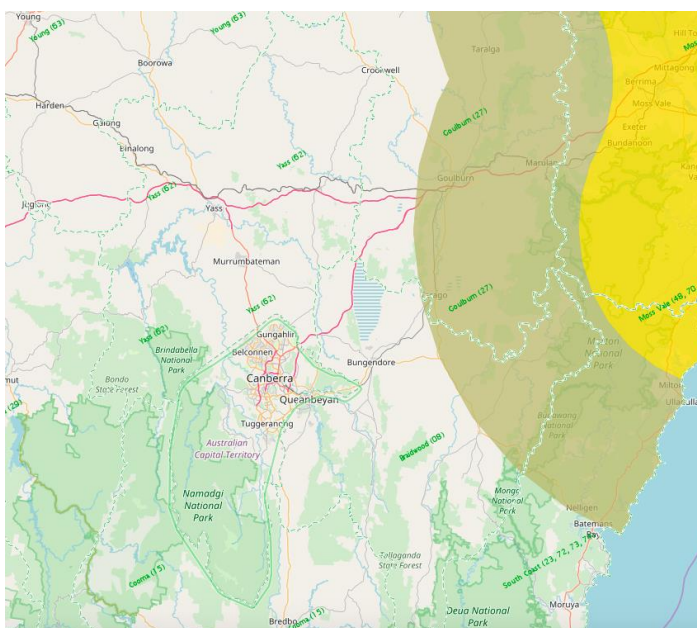


Image: Limits of the bluetongue line within the South East LLS District

TSEs: Get paid for a brain *and* help maintain our export industry!

Helen Schaefer, Far South Coast District Vet

TSEs (transmissible spongiform encephalopathies) are rare fatal diseases of the brain that can affect cattle and sheep. Australia is currently free from TSEs and we want to keep it that way.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN VACCINE RESEARCH

Research conducted in the past 15 years has shown that vaccination with Gudair® substantially reduces mortalities but sheep in some flocks continue to shed Johnes's disease causing bugs in their faeces. Why is the efficacy of Gudair® different on different properties? What are the reasons for the persistence of the disease on some properties? This project funded by Meat and Livestock Australia will answer these and other similar questions. You're invited to participate in Phase 1 of this research project to answer some crucial questions about the efficacy of Gudair® vaccine.

You can participate in this research by visiting www.surveymonkey.com/r/GGZSBJD, by calling Dr Jeff Eppleston on 0429 652 888 or emailing jeff.eppleston@sydney.edu.au, or by writing to:

A/Professor Navneet Dhand
The University of [Sydney](#)
425 Werombi Road, Camden NSW 2570

After receiving your response, you will be contacted and if you meet the eligibility criteria for the second phase of the study. Your name will also go into a draw to win one of ten \$50 gift vouchers.

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS - LAMB STUDY

Jurox, Australia's Animal Health Company, is searching for farm sites to recruit into a lamb mulesing study in 2018. The study will investigate the efficacy of several topical insecticide sprays for the prevention of blowfly strike on mulesing wounds. From January to December 2018, the 6-week study will be conducted at a number of farm sites across Australia. Requirements for farm sites to be enrolled into the study are:

- Farms that will have at least 400 unweaned lambs (all of the same breed or crossbreed) between 2 and 12 weeks of age at the time of mulesing.
- Farms with facilities appropriate for mulesing and for separating 8 groups of lambs and ewes for up to 24 hours after mulesing.
- Farms where mulesing will be conducted by farm staff or by a contractor organised by the farm owner/manager.
- Farmers that are happy for their 400 study lambs to be tagged with study ear tags and weighed by the Jurox research team just prior to mulesing.
- Farmers that are happy for mulesing to go slowly (i.e. 400 lambs mulesed over one or two days) so that the Jurox research team can apply topical sprays and record study data.
- Farmers that are willing to check lambs every day for 6 weeks after mulesing to identify, photograph and treat any lambs that are blowfly struck.
- Farmers that are prepared to complete study paperwork and are happy for Jurox staff to visit their farm multiple times during the 6 week study (follow-up visits will require yarding and handling of study lambs at 1 week and 6 weeks after mulesing)

All study medications will be provided and all study costs will be paid for by Jurox.

As a token of appreciation, participating producers will receive Jurox products such as Strikeforce S and Q Drench for their own personal use after the completion of the study at their farm.

Producers who are interested in participating in the study in 2018 are encouraged to contact the study coordinator: Jenna Fraser (Research Veterinarian) - (02) 4931 8096, 0418 247 722, jenna.fraser@jurox.com.au

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