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# TAREE VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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## JANUARY NEWSLETTER

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Still no rain. Some areas had a shower on Xmas Day which had dried up by the weekend. However, I know of one dairy farmer averaging 22 litres and many doing 20 and 18, which is fantastic really.

This unprecedented and relentless drought continues to ask questions of us all. In these times we are seeing unusual solutions. Some beef farmers are cutting scrub for feed, something you see in western NSW, not on the coast. Bores, water filtration and desalination are being tried with varying success.

In the mid 80s while a student I worked often up 125 km north of Bourke on a large

sheep property. This was during severe drought, even for out there, and crippling high interest rates. Thinking back I'm sure the pressure was getting the owners, John and Margie Oldfield, down, but you'd never have known. Every day we would fence, cut scrub or check tanks and bore drains, and drag sheep out. Keeping busy with constructive plans for when it would rain. And keeping a sense of humour, and celebrating small victories. Drought is very isolating too because your world shrinks down to feeding, watering and desperation. Anyway it did rain and loans were refinanced and they are still going strong.

No, don't even contemplate farming merinos on the coast.....

One thing I've observed in these conditions of feed and heat stress is how well Jerseys and cross-bred cows do, and how Friesians struggle to maintain body condition because they can't help but try to produce milk, which then affects their fertility. Because cows are being fed hay there are really high butter fat percentages too. It's hard to say which beef breed does best because they are all struggling, and how do you measure it ?

Cattle Diseases of the Month  
calvings, couple of difficult breech presentations cooked for two days  
prolapses  
grain poisoning  
milk fever  
bull with broken pizzle  
pink eye , with some cases in vaccinated cattle

And in the Horses.....

The stud season is just about over. Pregnancy rates and mares served were both reduced at the large studs in the Hunter, but we did well here early on, even with our walk-ons and AIs, because the drought affected the coast a bit later. Then heat and freight delays around Xmas made fresh AI more problematic. One frozen semen AI, where the mare had already ovulated so I only used one straw instead of the recommended three, conceived. Another frozen AI where everything went perfectly did not.

For the first time in over 30 years I had a teratoma in a testicle the other day. A teratoma is a type of mass which contains tissue from another source. In this case I gelded a horse with one testis in the abdomen. This nut was difficult to exteriorise through the groin as it was larger than expected, and when it did eventually pop out it had cartilage and possibly immature teeth within the testis.

We have a pony stallion in the practice with only one foal on the ground out of four mares last year. He is young, has large testes, and an overly high sperm count with nearly all of them dead, with bent or broken tails. Most likely he is accumulating sperm in his testicular tubules which then in effect get squashed. So we are treating him with oxytocin prior to service to cause contraction and cleaning out of his tubules. The first service resulted in a normal sperm

count with some motility, not just sperm doing circle work. We will reassess him soon.

Horse diseases of the month  
Cuts and Colics  
sarcoid  
roarer, diagnosed by endoscopy  
locking patella surgery  
removed a big melanoma from inside an ear  
Sadly, some RSPCA cases

### **RUN DATES FOR JANUARY**

<b>LANSDOWNE.....</b>	<b>THURS 2ND</b>
<b>OXLEY/MITCHELL'S IS.....</b>	<b>TUES 7TH</b>
<b>HANNAM VALE.....</b>	<b>THURS 9TH</b>
<b>DYER'S CROSSING.....</b>	<b>TUES 14TH</b>
<b>WINGHAM.....</b>	<b>THURS 16TH</b>
<b>LORNE/COMBOYNE.....</b>	<b>TUES 21ST</b>
<b>COOMBA AND THE DEEP SOUTH....</b>	<b>WED 23RD</b>