
TAREE VETERINARY HOSPITAL

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

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As you read this I am at Hat Head, where the fish are not biting this holiday, but it is a lot cooler than Taree.

Well, do we say the drought is over for us? Good rain has fallen over our area, 170 mm over 3 days in some areas, then storms. It's been fantastic to see the grass grow. Today I saw a bloke cutting a paddock for silage up here !

We have had many cases of calf diarrhoea this month. The usual approach is to first decide if it is an individual or a herd problem. Then examine the calf and determine if it needs IV fluids, get a faecal sample and test it for parasites, coccidia,

cryptosporidia, E. coli, rotavirus, coronavirus, and clostridia, then a blood sample for pestivirus and other tests.

Two problems here. One is the iceberg - is one sick calf an indicator of other calves being subclinical, say with parasitism ? How many calves are actually affected ? Or is it just one sick calf ? Second problem is when the tests are all negative. A post mortem always gives the most diagnostic results but even PMs are not always diagnostic, especially if the calf has been dead too long.

Whatever the result it is the disease is nearly always related to hygiene, immunity and colostrum intake and quality.

Who said romance is dead ? Just before Xmas I asked one of our dairy farmers what he had bought his wife, Sandra, for Xmas. His eyes went shifty, before he said, "a generator, it's what she wants ! " Priceless.

Cattle Diseases of the Month
calvings , one very funny one where the santa cross cow treated the head bale with no respect, wedged herself sideways in front of the crush, went down moaning and frothing, and we pulled a live calf. One onlooker said we were like the Three Stooges.

prolapses , vaginal

3rd toe

metritis with uterine adhesions

milk fever

grass tetany (low magnesium) - another cruel irony, it occurs on fresh growth !

Cows become nervous, twitchy, go down

with stiff legs. Treat with magnesium, so hay, 4 in 1 bag, magnesium oxide in feed.

And in the Horses.....

This month I had a case of Swamp cancer, which is really a type of fungal infection called pithyosis. This lump on a chest started as a golf ball sized lump and the owner thought she may have a stake wound or injury. Then it grew quickly and over a month it grew to twice the size of a big fist. Culture and biopsy diagnosed a fungal infection.

This type of fungal mass is unusual here and is more common in northern Aust., where it is wetter. Horses that stand in dams are more likely to get infected. Must be an unlucky horse considering the dry conditions.

Treatment is usually by removal as antifungals are expensive and don't work that well. In this case removal was going to leave a BIG hole. However, there is a new biomedical company that manufactures a vaccine for pithyosis, which hopefully will make it disappear or at least get it to a surgically manageable size. The owner will give the vaccine every 10 days for four doses, and take pictures.

This month we saw a horse that was drinking a measured 90 litres a day. Bloods and urine were taken to rule out other causes and it was diagnosed with psychogenic polydipsia, which is a bit like stereotypies - e.g. wind sucking from boredom - where they get it in their brains that they want to drink , and drink they do.

It is treatable and manageable, but will it be curable ?

Horse diseases of the month

Cuts and Colics

arytenoiditis, diagnosed by endoscopy

fractured frontal bone

fractured stifle in a foal

eye ulcer

chipped tooth

foot abscess

RUN DATES FOR FEBRUARY

LANSDOWNE.....	THURS 6TH
OXLEY/MITCHELL'S IS.....	TUES 11TH
HANNAM VALE.....	THURS 13TH
DYER'S CROSSING.....	TUES 18TH
WINGHAM.....	THURS 20TH
LORNE/COMBOYNE.....	TUES 25TH
COOMBA AND THE DEEP SOUTH....	THURS 27TH