

WINGHAM & VALLEY VETS

Newsletter

April 2019

Volume 13

Addressing Selenium Deficiency will significantly improve your herd's reproductive performance

One of our beef farmers reported to us 18 months ago that they have had very low pregnancy rates over the previous 8 years (approximately 55% of cows in calf). There appeared to be an inherent fertility problem in the females of the herd rather than there being a 'bull power' or bull fertility problem. We considered whether there could be a problem with infection in the cows such as pestivirus or Vibriosis causing either low fertility or significant numbers of early pregnancy losses. Both of these diseases were ruled out and so we tested the cattle for Selenium deficiency and the results were significant. **We had mentioned this herd 18 months ago in one of our newsletters, as being a herd in the Manning Valley with very poor pregnancy rates and very low Selenium levels on blood testing in all animals sampled.** Selenium deficiency is very common in cattle grazing tropical pastures such as Kikuyu and can have a significant effect on herd fertility as well as milk production, calf vigour and growth rates. Once we identified the severe Selenium deficiency in this herd, we supplemented all the adult cattle with long-acting injectable Selenium. We preg-tested this herd again 18 months later and the result was amazing – **91% of cows were now in calf.** Given what a terrible season we have had with the drought, this result was outstanding and is likely due to addressing the severe Selenium deficiency in this herd. **Bayer are still offering free testing of herds for Selenium deficiency.** The testing involves taking blood samples from a random selection of cattle in the herd (minimum 10) – ideally from both old and young animals. The pathology on the blood samples will be at no cost to farmers – you will only be charged subsidised vet time for the sample collection and sample postage. Since Selenium can be toxic in high doses, it is preferable to first confirm cattle are selenium deficient before administering Selenium supplements. If you would like to take advantage of the free testing, please contact us at the clinic on 6557 0000



Free Equine Cushings Testing this Autumn

Boehringer Ingelheim are again offering their free ACTH testing to diagnose horses with Equine Cushings Disease (PPID). Horses with this condition are at increased risk of developing laminitis and infections.

Cases of the Month

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Corneal Ulcer (Horse)

E-coli scours (calf)

Marek's Disease

Diaphragmatic Hernia

Mast Cell Tumour

Periodontal Disease

Uterine Prolapse

Megaoesophagus

Snake Bite

Run Dates

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Krambach: every
Tuesday

Comboyne: second
Thursday of every
month

Thurs 11th April
Thurs 9th May

Oxley Island: fourth
Thursday of every
month

Thurs 25th April
Thurs 23rd May

Cooperook,
Lansdowne & Hannam
Vale: third Wednesday
of every month
Wed 17th April
Wed 15th May

To book a job, please
call by 5pm the day
before a run.

Emergencies will be
accommodated.

Subsidised travel fees.

6557 0000

*In the Spotlight:
Canine Anxiety: A calm dog
is a happy dog!!*



Generalised anxiety disorders are common in many pet dogs and sadly, behavioural problems are one of the major reasons dogs are euthanased or surrendered to shelters. Many problem behaviours such as excessive barking, separation anxiety, phobias, destructive tendencies and dog aggression may be manifestations of an underlying anxiety disorder. If you have a dog that you feel is badly behaved, there is probably a good chance he or she is anxious. We see hundreds of dogs every year with anxiety disorders and many of these dogs can be helped significantly with a combination of medication and behavioural therapy. Often owners are desperate to help their beloved pet and are struggling with the aftermath of destructive behaviours. Many owners desperately search for information about what can help their dog and it can be easy to stumble across bad advice, especially on the internet. The worst of this advice is that problem behaviours can be solved through discipline, punishment or the owner 'asserting dominance' over the dog. Punishment or 'negative reinforcement' won't treat generalised anxiety and in most cases makes it worse! We would encourage anyone who has an anxious dog or a dog with problem behaviours to talk to Louise and our qualified trainers, and to maintain an open mind about drug therapy for anxiety – when used appropriately, it really can improve the welfare of so many of these terribly anxious dogs.



Equine Cushings Disease is very common in older horses with reports of up to 30% of older horses affected. Horses suffering from Equine Cushings can show a wide range of clinical signs, all of which are caused by the abnormally high circulating levels of the hormone cortisol. Signs include laminitis, an abnormal hair coat (this can be mild changes in coat shedding or a full, long curly and overgrown coat – 'hirsutism', abnormal fat distribution – including abnormal fat bulging above the eyes ("supraorbital fat") and a pot belly. Other "classic" indicators of PPID include:

- Excessive sweating
- Increased appetite
- Increased drinking and urination
- Lethargy / poor performance
- Repeating episodes of laminitis
- Recurring infections (e.g.: sinusitis)
- Loss of muscle condition, and/or a pot belly

If you are concerned your horse may be showing these signs, please contact us on 65570000 to arrange free ACTH testing.

Snake Bite Cluster in early April

We had an unusual cluster of three cases of red bellied black snake bites all within 48 hours of each other in early April. Luckily all three dogs have made a good recovery after treatment with antivenin and intravenous fluids in hospital.



If your dog is found with a dead red-bellied black snake but isn't showing symptoms, please bring them in so we can check them, since many dogs will not show symptoms and then develop acute renal failure up to a week after envenomation.

Staff Updates

The staff recently had a lovely dinner in Forster to farewell our beautiful Natalie who is embarking on a teaching career at TAFE. Nat will be in a partly administrative role which involves coordinating and assisting vet nursing students. Nat has been a truly valued employee as well as a treasured friend to all of us and we all miss seeing her smiling face every day. Happily for us and the many clients who love her, Nat will still be doing some casual work with Wingham & Valley Vets so we will all get to see her from time to time behind the reception desk. A great night was had by all and we are very lucky to have such a great team of people. Best of luck in your new position Nat and thank you for everything!!!



In-house Progesterone testing is just around the corner

It has been a long time coming, but IDEXX have informed us that we can expect in-house blood progesterone testing to be available from late April 2019. This will be very welcome news to all our registered breeders, as the availability of in-house progesterone testing will provide very rapid, accurate results and this can be vital to a successful mating. It will also make it much easier for breeders to have access to multiple progesterone levels without having to wait 24 hours for results. Stay tuned for more updates about when we can expect progesterone testing to become available.



Figure 1: Dental x-ray showing a tooth root abscess that has virtually eaten through the jaw bone - removing this tooth without extreme caution would quite likely result in jaw fracture. This shows the value in good dental x-rays.

the gum line and in the jaw bone. High quality dental x-ray is crucial to maintaining high standards of dentistry. Without these standards, many dogs and cats are left with either painful teeth that should have been removed or have had healthy teeth removed unnecessarily. We recently purchased a top quality portable dental x-ray unit, when it became apparent our old wall-mounted dental x-ray was becoming tired. We have been getting some great images and it has also proved extremely handy during orthopaedic surgeries, for checking screw and pin positioning during the procedure.

Exciting new equipment!

Many of the same illness and ailments that affect people also affect our pets. Dental disease, broken bones, infections, diabetes... And many of these illnesses need to be diagnosed and treated in exactly the same way as dentists, emergency doctors or specialists would treat their human patients. We are always trying to ensure we have up to date, modern equipment so that we can quickly and accurately diagnose your pet.

Your dentist would never recommend removing your teeth without taking a dental radiograph (x-ray) first, to determine the extent of the disease and to plan the safest approach for removing the diseased tooth. The same is true for pets. Gone are the days when vets had no other option except to approach dentistry in dogs and cats effectively 'blind' to what pathology was hidden under



Figure 2: Our new dental x-ray generator

Companion Animal, Equine & Cattle Services

Fully Equipped A-Class Hospital
Digital Radiography & Ultrasonography
Qualified Trainers & Veterinary Behavioural Services
Dairy Herd Health Programmes
ACV Accredited Pregnancy Testing
Infertility Investigation & Bull Breeding Soundness Exams
Lameness & Mastitis Management
Equine Dentistry & Pre-purchase Exams
Grooming Services

Over 100 years combined experience
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24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE – 6557 0000