

WINGHAM & VALLEY VETS

Newsletter

March 2018

Volume 10

Dogs and chocolate do not mix!

Easter is the time of year when we see most of our cases of chocolate toxicity in dogs. Chocolate contains a compound called theobromine. Humans readily breakdown and excrete theobromine but dogs are less able to do this. Dogs love chocolate and so it is essential you keep all chocolate well out of reach!

What are the signs of chocolate toxicity?

Theobromine stimulates the cardiovascular and central nervous systems. Signs usually occur within 12 hours of ingesting the chocolate and can include: vomiting and diarrhea, trembling and muscle spasms, increased excitement, irritability or nervousness, elevated heart rate, excessive thirst and urination, seizures, coma and possibly death due to cardiac disturbances.

How much chocolate is dangerous to a dog?

The effects of Theobromine are dose-dependent so the potential for toxicity depends very much on the type of chocolate eaten and the size of the dog. Different types of chocolate contain vastly different amounts of Theobromine and the toxic dose of theobromine is 100-150mg/kg bodyweight, however we can see symptoms at doses as low as 20mg/kg. The amounts listed below are approximate:

Chocolate Type	Theobromine Content	Toxic Dose of Chocolate for Bodyweight
Milk chocolate	1.5mg per gram	60 grams per kg
Semi-sweet	5.3mg per gram	20 grams per kg
Unsweetened dark chocolate	13.9mg per gram	7 grams per kg
White chocolate	Negligible amount	Toxicity unlikely

In other words, if an 8kg dog ate 100 grams of milk chocolate, they are unlikely to experience severe symptoms and may just experience some digestive upset. However, if they ate just over half that amount of unsweetened dark chocolate, they are likely to be very unwell, with risk of death.

What do you do if your dog has ingested chocolate?

Call us straight away if you find your dog has gotten into chocolate, especially milk or dark chocolate. There is no antidote for chocolate toxicity, only supportive treatment with intravenous fluids and management of symptoms as they arise (e.g. anticonvulsants or antiarrhythmics). It is therefore essential that your dog is seen by a vet straight away (ideally within 4 hours of ingestion), so that we can induce vomiting and get the chocolate out of their system.



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS OF OUR EASTER COLOURING-IN COMPETITION!!

Thank you to all who participated. With many beautiful entries it was difficult to choose a winner!

- **1st prize** (family movie tickets): Seanna Laws
- **2nd prize** (Easter hamper): Archie Sheather
- **Honourable mention:** Yarrington family, Riley family and the Knoke Family.

Well done and have a wonderful Easter!!

Cases of the Month

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Kidney stones (dog)

Ear Infections

Vibriosis

Cutaneous lymphoma

Tetanus (calf)

Mast cell tumour (dog)

Run Dates

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Krambach: every Tuesday

Comboyne: second

Thursday of every month

Thurs 8th March

Thurs 12th April

Oxley Island: fourth

Thursday of every month

Thurs 22nd March

Thurs 26th April

Cooperbrook, Lansdowne

& Hannam Vale: third

Thursday of every month

Thurs 15th March

Thurs 19th April

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

Emergencies will be accommodated.

Subsidised travel fees.

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Easter Hours

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We will be closed Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. An on-call vet will be available 24-hours for emergencies.



In the spotlight:



Clostridial diseases are common in cattle in the Manning Valley and there is a very affordable and extremely effective prevention available – Ultravac 5 in 1 vaccine. One potentially lethal Clostridial disease is Tetanus. It is seen in cattle and horses are especially at risk of contracting Tetanus from skin wounds.

We recently saw a case of tetanus in a calf after routine castration. The calf had not been vaccinated against Clostridial disease and unfortunately Tetanus is very difficult to treat in all species (including humans!) Tetanus is caused by the bacterium *Clostridium tetani*, which is found in the soil and the gut of humans and animals. When a wound contacts the soil, the bacteria can get into wounded or devitalised tissue and this particular bacteria thrive in wounds that lack oxygen supply. Generally, calves castrated using an emasculator ring are at much greater risk of contracting tetanus because a large amount of necrotic, deoxygenated tissue slowly decays over a long period of time. As the bacteria multiply in the wound, they produce a toxin that affects the nerves. Clinical signs of tetanus include: stiffness and reluctance to move, twitching and muscle tremors, classic lockjaw, protruding third eyelids, unsteady gait with tail held out stiffly, bloat, collapse, spasm and death.

Because Tetanus is generally so difficult to treat, it is strongly recommended all cattle and horses be vaccinated against tetanus. Young cattle should be vaccinated with 5 in 1 at 6 weeks of age and again 4 weeks later. A booster dose at 12 months of age should confer lifelong immunity against blackleg and tetanus. The vaccine is very affordable, costing approximately 50 cents per dose. It is extremely cheap insurance against loss of stock. In particular, outbreaks of blackleg can result in high numbers of deaths.



Did you know we are now on Instagram? Join us and share your favourite photos of your animals and the Manning Valley by tagging us in your photos @winghamandvalleyvets



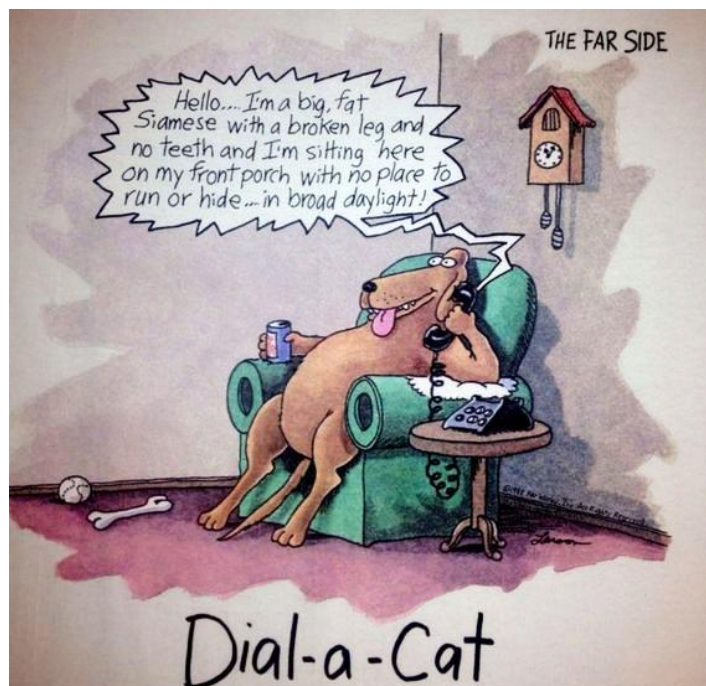
Follow us on
Instagram

Welcome Bec!

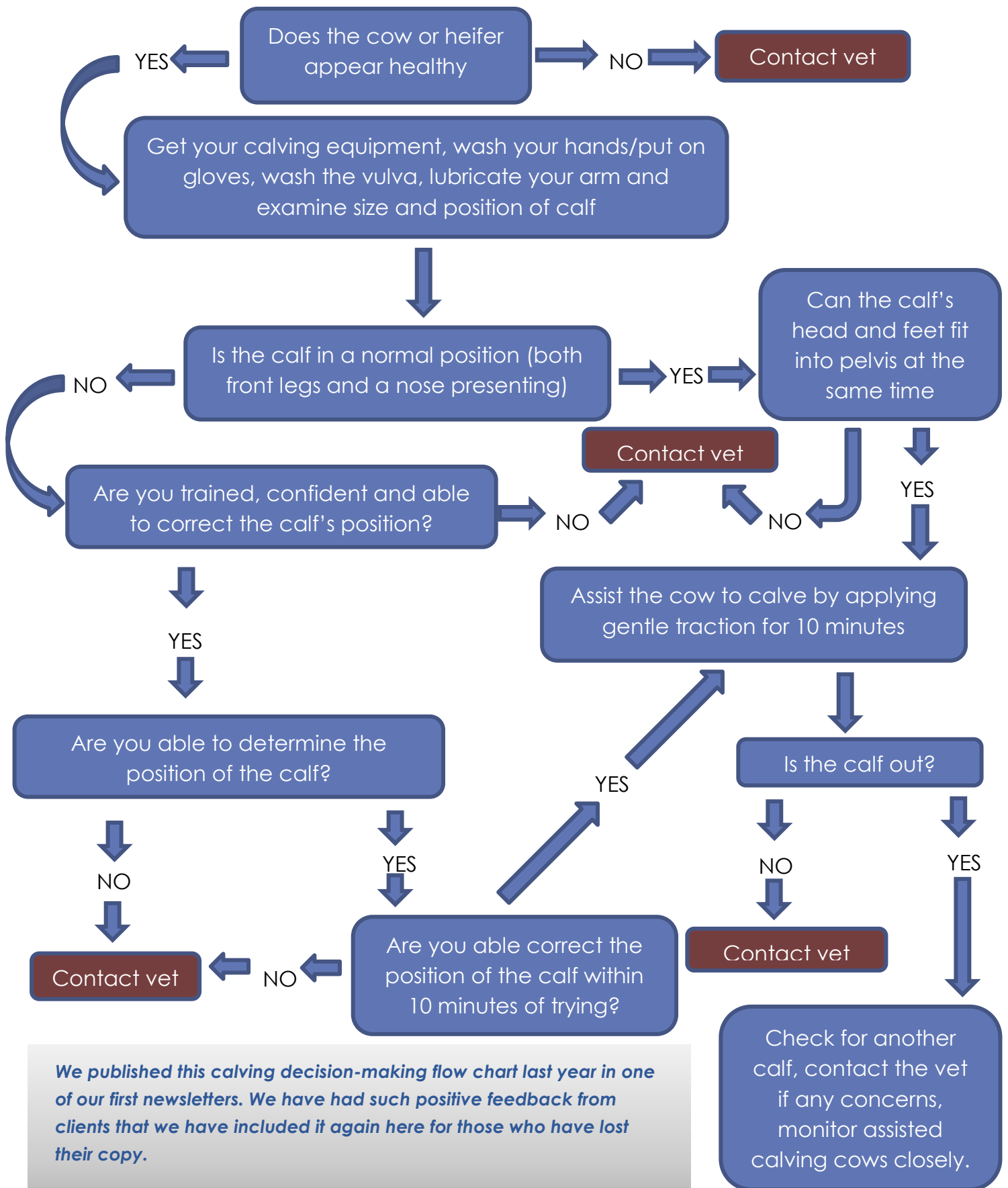
This month we were lucky enough to have Rebecca Laws join the team as a certificate IV Veterinary Nurse. Bec is a local who completed her vet nursing training with us last year. We were so impressed with Bec's attitude and how well she cared for our patients during her time here as a student nurse, that we offered her regular shifts of a Friday and Saturday. Welcome to the team Bec!! It's wonderful to have you on board!

Utilising early pregnancy testing in Beef Herds

Early pregnancy testing is a powerful tool to increase the efficiency of your beef herd and it is a worthwhile investment in your agribusiness. We recommend a herd pregnancy test 6-8 weeks after the bulls are locked up at the end of the joining season. **This enables you to identify the empty cows early and sell them sooner in the year when more feed is available, they are in good condition and prices are better.** This also leaves more feed for the pregnant cattle you are keeping, so avoids waste of fodder heading into Winter. Selling the empty cattle later in the year once feed is becoming scarce means you won't get as much for them. Herd pregnancy testing also identifies repro problems in your herd such as low conception rates or abortions. If you are achieving poor pregnancy rates the vet can advise you on where losses are likely to be occurring – this could be due to subfertile bulls, infection (e.g. vibriosis, pestivirus) or trace element deficiencies. We use a BCF cattle ultrasound in conjunction with manual pregnancy testing to ensure fast and accurate results. For more information call the clinic on 65570000.



ON-FARM CALVING PROCEDURE



We published this calving decision-making flow chart last year in one of our first newsletters. We have had such positive feedback from clients that we have included it again here for those who have lost their copy.

Your calving kit should contain: 2 short chains or ropes, 1 head snare, obstetrical lubricant, disinfectant (iodine), rectal gloves and potentially a calving jack or pulley.

Wingham & Valley Vets' long and proud history servicing Riding for the Disabled

For many years, Wingham & Valley Vets has been proud to provide veterinary services to Riding for the Disabled in Taree. As RDA is a cause close to his heart, John Dooley first started offering a heavily subsidized equine veterinary service to the RDA when he was the sole owner of Wingham Veterinary Clinic and this tradition has continued after the formation of Wingham & Valley Vets. We feel that the RDA is a wonderful charity – their Mission Statement being: "RDA enables people with disabilities throughout Australia to experience enjoyment, challenge and a sense of achievement through participation in equestrian activities to improve their quality of life, attain personal goals and develop life skills." RDA Centres provide suitable horses, trained volunteer helpers, accredited RDA coaches, riding and safety equipment to run a range of equestrian activities. Should you be considering donating to a charity, the RDA is truly worthwhile of your consideration: <https://www.rda.org.au>.

Staff Training Updates

Mick Healy is most of the way through his Dairy Australia Countdown Mastitis course. This year long course trains private Dairy veterinarians in mastitis management and prevention, so they are well-equipped to give expert advice to farmers and assist in preventing and treating mastitis outbreaks. With two training workshops in Warragul VIC already completed and one more to go in May this year, Mick is enjoying the course immensely and is looking forward to implementing what he has learned to provide a comprehensive and expert service to local dairy farmers.



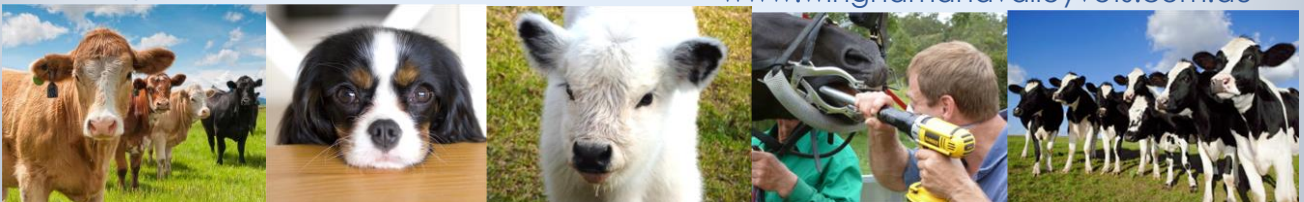
Pete Rourke has completed his year-long cardiorespiratory medicine course. This course has been a fantastic resource to the practice and has already revolutionised our approach to complicated cardiac and respiratory cases. We recently had a vet and nurse breakfast training session on 'taking and interpreting the perfect chest radiograph' (see above). We are aiming to have at least one hour of training a month with the whole staff so that we can offer our patients the very best of care.

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