

## Mid Coast LHPA Spring Report

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### Tips for spring

#### Prepare for joining

Ensure bulls are vaccinated against Vibrio.

Aim to have bulls at body score 3/5.

Drench bulls prior to joining.

#### Parasite control

Ticks may be an issue on some properties.

Protect young calves against paralysis ticks.

Young cattle may require a spring drench.

Stomach fluke may be an issue on some properties.

#### Disease Watch

Bloat may be an issue with good clover growth in many areas, there are many preventative measures to be considered.

Pulpy kidney may also be seen on “high clover” content pastures, ensure stock are vaccinated with 5 in 1.

Calf scours commonly cause problems in young calves.

As flies become more prevalent pinkeye may become an issue especially in young animals—consider vaccination now.

Consider vaccination against 3 day sickness especially bulls, heavy cows or bullocks and introduced stock.



## Money for your brains — we need your help

Did you know that one of the national animal health programs LHPA staff are involved in is to demonstrate to our trading partners that we don't have Mad Cow disease and other similar diseases in Australia? As part of this program NSW has to test 87 cattle brains and 149 sheep brains each year and that's where we need your help.

If you ever have cattle or sheep which are showing nervous signs and which do not respond to treatment, the brain from the affected animal can be collected by either your local private vet or LHPA district veterinarian. Nervous signs may include weakness, staggering, inability to stand, a change in behavior, or circling. The animals need to be over 18 months of age in the case of sheep and over 30 months and less than 9 years old for

cattle to be eligible for the program.

#### What's in it for you?

You will be paid \$50 per sheep brain and \$300 per cattle brain collected (a maximum of 2 brains can be submitted for a single disease outbreak on a property). The vet also receives a subsidy for removing the brain and doing the paper work.

Additional tests to determine the actual cause of the animals illness will be undertaken free of charge. You will then be able to prevent further illness in your animals.

You will be contributing to maintaining Australia's meat export markets.

# Tips to prevent pasture bloat this spring

With a good 'clover season' likely, bloat is a real possibility this spring. There are numerous options available to producers to help prevent pasture bloat including:

- **Limiting grazing time or strip grazing to restrict pasture intake**

This can be a successful management tool, provided alternate feed sources are available. Obviously there are some labour costs involved in moving electric fencing if strip grazing is used. It is important that grazing is not limited to a point where productivity may be affected and that pastures are still utilised when at their greatest nutritive value.

- **Avoid introduction of hungry stock onto high risk pastures by filling with hay**

It is essential not to introduce hungry stock to bloatigenic pastures and this may be achieved by feeding hay, silage or grazing alternate lower risk paddocks prior to introducing stock to high risk pastures.

- **Daily spraying of pastures with oils/surfactants**

This option may be suited to strip grazing operations, with the days grazing area sprayed. Problems may be encountered if heavy rain is encountered as this may wash products off the pasture. If applying via boom spray and nozzles become blocked some pasture may be missed. If strip grazing, fencing needs to be adequate to avoid cattle accessing untreated pasture.

- **Drenching animals twice daily with antibloat preparations**

Obviously this option is extremely labour intensive and unlikely to be viable in most situations.

- **Flank Spraying Antibloat preparations**

Bloat oil can be applied to the flanks of animals by either a brush or spray. Cows need to lick this off during the day for this to be an effective control measure. Molasses may be added to improve palatability but this may encourage cows to lick it off each other. This is labour intensive and in addition wet weather and variable consumption make this a less reliable control option.

- **Providing Surfactants via drinking water**

Adding surfactants to the water troughs may be an option provided it is the only source of drinking water. Some products also have a bitter taste and may need to be added gradually until stock become accustomed to the taste. Variable water intake between individual cows may lead to variable control within the herd and given that high risk pastures generally have high moisture content intake is likely to be lower

- **Providing surfactants via licks or blocks**

Blocks and licks may be a successful control option particularly on extensive beef properties where other options may not be feasible.

Provision of surfactant via a molasses roller lick may also be useful in an extensive situation.

With either of these systems there can be considerable variation in intake between individual animals, thereby leading to variable results within the herd. Labour inputs are considerably lower than some of the previous options. Either option should be commenced prior to high risk periods to improve acceptance by cattle before grazing high risk pastures.

**Prolonged use of surfactants in any of the above methods should be undertaken with care to ensure that deficiencies in fat soluble vitamins do not occur, as surfactants interfere with the absorption of fat soluble vitamins.**

- **Ionophors**

Beef cattle may be dosed with Monensin boluses to prevent bloat for up to about 100 days. These capsules also have the added benefit of improved production. Capsules have the advantage that you know the animals have been treated (provided spit up does not occur – animals should be held in the yards following administration and monitored for this). They need to be given at least 1 week before access to high risk pastures. Ionophors are commonly included in dairy rations and are useful in the control of bloat. Beef cattle could also have ionophors delivered via grain or molasses.

***It is important to remember that no single method or combination of methods is 100% effective.***

# Vibriosis

Despite a very effective vaccine being available to prevent vibriosis it remains a common cause of poor fertility in beef herds in this area. Vibrio, also known as bovine venereal campylobacteriosis, is a venereal disease of cattle caused by a bacteria. The bug does not survive outside the reproductive tract of cattle. Bulls have the potential to remain infected persistently without showing any signs of infection.

In cows and heifers, infection causes early loss of pregnancy, altered oestrous cycles, delayed conception and occasionally abortion. Aside from this there are no other signs of infection.

When vibrio is first introduced into a herd the earliest sign may be a large number of heifers and cows returning to the bull. These returns to service are usually longer than the normal oestrous interval of 18 to 21 days. Pregnancy rates in herds where infection has recently been introduced are usually very low. While in herds where the infection has been present for some time pregnancy rates will be better, but still well below that expected in a non-infected herd.

Most cows eventually develop immunity to the disease and subsequently hold a pregnancy. However, a small percentage of cows, less than 1 or 2%, may remain permanently infertile. A small number of cows may also abort as a result of vibrio infection.

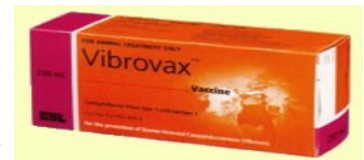
Swabs taken from the vagina of a sample of heifers and cows in the herd may be used to confirm a diagnosis of vibrio in a herd.

Testing of bulls may also be used, using material collected from the prepuce of bulls. In cases where abortion has occurred, samples from the fetus can be used to confirm a diagnosis.

Factors which may increase the risk of vibrio in a herd include:

- Year round joining
- Use of hired or shared unvaccinated bulls
- Poor boundary fencing

To avoid vibrio ensure all bulls are vaccinated with Vibrovax. Previously



unvaccinated bulls should receive two doses four to six weeks apart, preferably with the second dose given shortly before joining. Bulls should receive a booster every 12 months. Local reactions to the vibrio vaccine are quite common, with many animals developing a lump at the injection site. The smallest vaccine pack size currently available is sufficient for ten bull doses and this is often more than what is required for smaller herds.

Consider sharing a pack with neighbours; this may have the added benefit of protecting your herd from infected straying stock. In herds where vibrio has been diagnosed, vaccination of bulls and females may be used to control the disease. Additional management practices such as a restricted joining period, culling empty cows and using young bulls may also help in control of vibrio.

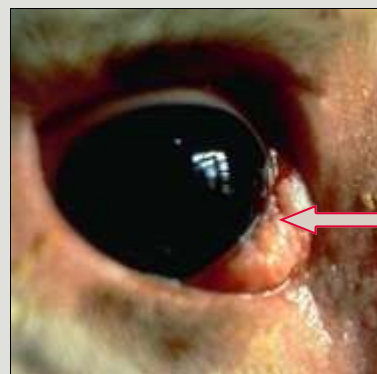
## Cancer Eye in cattle

Cancer eye is the most common form of cancer in cattle. Cancer eye growths can occur on the eyeball, eyelid or third eyelid. Some can be successfully treated if recognised early.

Cancer eye can be an animal welfare issue, and it is an offence to allow animals to develop to the advanced stages. Stock should be culled when cancer lesions are small.

Diseased stock sent for sale with severe lesions may be condemned and the owner could face prosecution.

Check your stock regularly, recognise the early stages of cancer eye and cull affected animals immediately. This way the animals suffer little discomfort, there is no animal welfare problem, and the vendor still obtains a reasonable price for the animal.



## Dehorning of cattle

Bruising costs the Australian beef cattle industry an estimated \$20 million yearly. Extensive research indicates the single major cause of bruising is the presence of horns on cattle.

It is best to dehorn calves at less than three months of age. They suffer less stress, are more easily handled, heal quickly and as a result there are no significant setbacks of the calves. Dehorned cattle also usually show less problems with temperament.

Cattle should be dehorned on dry cool days to allow the wound to heal quickly with the minimum risk of infection. With the right equipment and good animal restraint, dehorning can be performed with minimal stress of the animal.

Under the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Cattle, dehorning without local anaesthesia should only be done on animals less than six months of age. Dehorning of animals over 12 months of age without local anaesthetic may also be an offence under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Veterinary Surgeons Act.

**A Primefact on methods of dehorning is available from your Livestock Health and Pest Authority office.**



## District office contacts

Contact your local LHPA District Veterinarian today for further information.

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