



Reminder for bull buyers

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Stockowners considering buying a bull at upcoming bull sales across the state need to be aware of the potential problem of Benign Theileriosis, particularly if buying from non-coastal or tick-free areas.

Benign Theileriosis is a protozoal infection which attacks the animal's red blood cells, resulting in severe anaemia, weight loss, jaundice and often death.

There is no vaccine or other specific treatment, although in some cases veterinary treatment appears to have helped reduce losses.

It is assumed to be transmitted by ticks (and possibly other biting insects), and most cases are seen in introduced animals at least 6 to 8 weeks after arrival.

Locally born and bred animals have a much greater chance of having a natural immunity due to previous exposure, whereas cattle from tick-free areas have no natural immunity, and are more likely to develop severe clinical signs.

Of the hundreds of cases seen in adult animals over recent years, all have been in animals introduced from areas of low or nil tick prevalence.

If tick-naïve cattle are purchased, it may be good insurance to treat them regularly against ticks and biting flies, at least for the first few months after arrival.

The number of ticks observed is not an indication of the risk of infection, as there have been several outbreaks of the disease in this district, in the middle of winter when tick numbers were low to almost non-existent.

Bulls should be drenched on introduction to the property (including Liver Fluke if coming from a fluke area), and vaccinated for Campylobacteriosis (commonly called Vibrio).

Vaccination with 5 in 1, or 7 in 1 vaccine should also be considered.

Another important thing for introduced bulls, is to check that they are not Pestivirus carriers (or PI's – Persistently Infected animals). You can do this test yourself by collecting a tail hair or ear notch sample, and sending to a vet laboratory. Even Pestivirus-vaccinated bulls should be PI tested, as in some cases it is possible for a vaccinated bull to still be a PI.

Further information on any of these diseases is available from your local private veterinarian, or LHPA District Veterinarian.