

Winter Report



Topics in the Winter Report:

- ⇒ **Reminder for bull buyers**
- ⇒ **Beef nutrition through winter**
- ⇒ **Mother of Millions**
- ⇒ **Property to property transfers**

Reminder for bull buyers

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 six to eight 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.

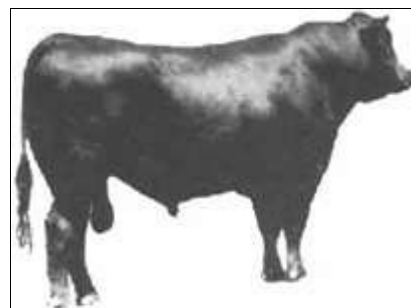
The number of ticks observed is not an indication of the risk of infection, as there have been several outbreaks of the disease in this district in the middle of winter when tick numbers were low to almost non-existent.

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.



Managing Beef Cattle nutrition through winter

There is no doubt that winter can be a tough time for cattle on the mid north coast, with feed quality and quantity both generally very low. Our predominantly tropical grass based pastures are often of very low quality during winter, being deficient in both protein and energy. There is often insufficient energy and protein to provide beef cattle with their maintenance requirements meaning that some form of supplementation will be needed. With thoughtful supplementation through winter we can maintain adequate production levels cost effectively.

There are several options available to producers to provide cattle with more nutritious feeds during this tough period.

Where there is substantial standing feed in a paddock supplementation with an energy and nitrogen source such as molasses and urea can dramatically improve productivity on poor quality feed. The molasses provides a relatively cheap energy source, while the urea provides a source of non protein nitrogen for use by the bugs in the rumen. This has the result of 'feeding' the bugs in the rumen which, in turn allows for better utilisation of poor quality feed. Molasses and urea mixes are only suitable when there is a body of standing feed and producers should be aware of the risks of urea toxicity when urea is inadequately mixed or when introduced at too high a rate. The two well recognised ways of feeding molasses and urea are via "roller drums" or via fortified molasses mixes. Roller drum mixes generally contain higher concentrations of urea, but are not as effective as fortified molasses mixes especially when feeding lactating or growing stock. Fortified molasses mixes can be fed in open troughs and contain molasses, urea and a protein meal such as cottonseed meal. A phosphorus source is also often added. It is important to ensure cattle have access to sufficient roughage when fed significant quantities of molasses as molasses contains no fibre.

For further information on molasses mixes see the DPI website at

http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/92721/fortified-molasses-mixes-for-cattle.pdf

or

http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/95141/urea-roller-drum-mixes-for-cattle.pdf



Alternatively animals may be fed conserved fodder in the form of hay or silage. It is important to realise that the quality of conserved fodder can vary significantly. The energy and protein content can be determined by doing a feed test. For hay or silage produced from very mature pasture the yield will obviously be high but the quality will often be quite low.

In contrast, hay or silage made from pasture in an early vegetative phase of growth will provide a lower yield but be much better quality. Depending on how hay or silage is fed out there can also be considerable wastage which needs to be considered when determining how much to feed.

Concentrate feeds such as grain may also be used to supplement cattle during periods of feed deficiency. The introduction of grain to the diet should occur slowly to prevent the development of digestive upsets such as acidosis (grain poisoning).

Planting winter active pastures is an alternative and can provide stock with very high quality feed through winter.

When deciding on what type of supplementary feed to use we need to consider what is available in the paddock and also compare supplementary feeds on cost per energy unit. For further information on supplementary feeding through winter contact your local LHPA district vet or DPI livestock officer.



Mother of Millions



Cattle deaths every winter and spring due to the plant Mother of Millions, are an urgent reminder to producers of its toxic effects. Cattle producers with pastures containing Mother of Millions need to take special care at this time of the year when the plant is in flower and most toxic.

Mortalities occur when cattle not accustomed to the plant, have the opportunity to eat the plant when it is most toxic. Cattle that continually graze infested paddocks or are introduced to it in the summer when it is less toxic are least likely to be effected.

Mother of millions is an ornamental plant from Madagascar. As the name suggests one plant can produce masses of smaller colonies from plantlets along the edge of the leaves. This makes these plants hard to eradicate. It is a succulent perennial garden plant up to 1m high with cylindrical leaves to 10cm long and salmon coloured tubular flowers. It is sometimes called Mission Bell or Christmas Bells because of the shape of the flowers.

Poisoned cattle show signs of dullness, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, and heart failure. There are two types to poisoning; acute, where cattle die within a day, and chronic where cattle may take up to five days to die. Some cattle may make a slow recovery if insufficient plant material was eaten. Whilst there are no specific treatments against the toxin, absorbents such as bentonite or activated charcoal may be useful if given early.

Physical control can be used in small areas by pulling up plants by hand, stacking on a wood heap, and burning. Herbicides are effective but follow up control treatments are essential.



Property to Property NLIS Transfer Reports

The failure of some property owners to record property to property transfers on the data base could affect our response to an exotic disease outbreak. Control of mad cow disease depends on being able to trace back to find the dam of the infected animal.

Current information is showing that 25% of property to property transfers are not being recorded. Cattle that are sold through the saleyards and abattoirs are transferred by staff at those facilities but property to property transfers is the responsibility of farm managers.

Under the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) Cattle, cattle movements between properties with different property identification codes (PICs) must be reported to the NLIS database. Animal movements that need to be reported to the NLIS database include: moving cattle between your own properties(if those properties have different PICs), buying cattle privately and moving cattle to and from leased and agistment properties

What information is required to inform the NLIS database of property- to- property transfer?

- NLIS or Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) tag number of each animal being transferred
- PIC of the properties that the animals are moving to and from
- National Vendor Declaration (NVD) serial number (if applicable)
- transfer date.

Property-to-property transfers in NSW need to be reported within seven (7) days of the movement. Either party may report the transfer to the database, but the receiver is legally responsible for ensuring that the transfer is reported

How can transfers be reported to the database?

Several options are available for reporting transfers, depending on the facilities and equipment available to each producer.

1. Sending the information electronically using an NLIS database account.

An account can be set up at www.nlis.com.au and information can be entered in the form of:

- a transfer file of RFID numbers recorded electronically with a reader and downloaded to a computer
- NLIS numbers recorded visually and entered manually on the database

- manual selection of NLIS numbers from a list of numbers provided by the database

2. Authorising a third party to conduct the electronic transfer.

Third-party access forms can be accessed from the NLIS website or database service (1800 654 743). The third party will require an NLIS user account and will have access to the PICs specified in the application for authorisation.

3. Completing a 'Form A' livestock movement form and submitting by fax or mail.

Forms can be obtained by contacting the NLIS database service on 1800 654 743 or at www.nlis.com.au

Completed forms can be faxed (02 9463 9136) or mailed (NLIS helpdesk, MLA Locked Bag 991, North Sydney 2059) to the database.

Paper-based recording is limited to 20 animals per transfer and may be subject to a user fee.

More information: DPI- 1300 720 405, NLIS database service- 1800 654 743

Checking your database

It is strongly recommend you check your property NLIS data base on a regular basis to ensure there are no cattle that need to be uploaded onto your PIC . The data base should display all cattle with tags on your property and tags that you have purchased but not yet attached. Not everybody has access to a computer or internet but most people know somebody who could help.

Loss of NLIS lifetime traceability

You may be advised of movements of cattle where transfers have not occurred. This means that NLIS lifetime traceability has been lost. A loss of lifetime traceability may also result in decreased returns for cattle sold (e.g. some feedlots and store buyers require lifetime traceability) or interfere with the owners own record keeping.

Office contacts

Wingham — Phone 6553 4233

Allan Glassop (allan.glassop@lhpa.org.au)
Jim Kerr (im.kerr@lhpa.org.au)

Kempsey — Phone 6562 7822

Ian Poe (ian.poe@lhpa.org.au)

Singleton/Scone — Phone 6572 2944

Ross Kemp (ross.kemp@lhpa.org.au)

Total Phone — 4939 8967

Digby Rayward (digby.rayward@lhpa.org.au)