

NPVC LARGE ANIMAL NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2021

Bull Testing

Bull testing, or a Veterinary Bull Breeding Soundness Examination (VBBSE), is a valuable investment in your farm's breeding program. Cattle veterinarians use this standardized examination to check your bull's general health, as well as external and internal reproductive organs. Semen is then collected for an on farm analysis to detect semen quality and motility. Occasionally, if indicated, samples can be sent for further assessment (a morphology exam). These exams are recommended for all working bulls prior to joining, to minimize reproductive losses and maximize number of calves on the ground

We recommend Bull Testing before mating so that if the examination indicates less than ideal fertility or ability to perform, then there is time for ailments to heal, or ability to purchase a replacement or extra bulls. Some producers will choose to test before the summer/autumn bull sales to give themselves a practical and well guided opportunity to purchase new sires if required.



Photo: Angus Australia

At \$77 per bull for multiple crush side tests, and a poorly fertile bull having the potential of costing a producer up to 40 calves for the season, it works out to be an insurance policy that you really cannot afford not to have.

Please phone the clinic to make your booking or to put further questions to our Cattle veterinarians

Pain relief at marking

Our routine husbandry procedures like calf and lamb marking, while necessary, do involve pain during and after the procedure. We believe in considering animal welfare and it is important that we address this issue with appropriate pain relief. From a production point of view, getting calves and lambs back to the paddock as pain free as possible reduces stress, improves appetite and allows them to recover sooner.

We have several pain relief/anti-inflammatory options for cattle and available, and have many of our clients now reaching for these products when treating down cows, following a difficult calving, for reducing inflammation in injuries, or complementing other treatment for infections.

The Cattle Council recently released a Guide to the use of Pain Relief in the Grass-Fed Beef Cattle Sector and Victorian producers are now required to administer a registered pain relieving product at mulesing. Select markets are requesting the use of pain relief at marking. It is reasonable to expect in the coming years these recommendations and requirements for pain management will be expanded. Let's be ready for it. Check at the end of the newsletter for our comparison of products available for lamb marking.



Photo: Barber's pole worm under microscope, Wormboss

Worm Egg Counts

The continuation of our complimentary Veterinary Faecal Egg Count Reports has given us more information about the general worm burdens affecting our region's sheep population. This has guided many local producers to use their traditional summer drench in a more strategic timing and manner, rather than blanket drenching at a set time of year.

We have recently been sending samples away for larval culture, given the ideal situation and weather pattern for Barber's Pole Worm. Down the microscope, these eggs look so much like other strongyle eggs, they require being grown out for accurate identification. Signs of possible Barber's Pole worm include poor response to drenching, pale gums, bottle-jaw, weakness, and death, typically following a humid, warm period-like autumn rains. If you have any concerns regarding any poor performance or worm burdens in your sheep, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Calving and lambing

With Autumn calving and lambing upon us, many of our local producer are already flat out checking ewes and cows. We are already getting call outs on farm to calvings and caesareans, on top of busy practice bookings. Whilst we are always happy to help in situations like this, to get the best possible outcome for you, the cow and the calf, an early call is best. We do have success stories from the "less fresh" calvings, at least for cow and producer, but the likelihood of success reduces with time.

Given the value of ewes, more producers are seeing the value in either calling a vet, or bringing ewes into the clinic that are suffering from a difficult lambing, vaginal or uterine prolapses. These ailments should be treated just like the same condition in a cow. That is, very gently with cleanliness and plenty of obstetrical lubricant, and with urgency to ensure the best outcome. If you are noticing lambing or calving issues frequently occurring, chat to one of our livestock vets to try to help manage these in your flock.



As always, preparedness is best- ensure you have chatted to your vet regarding mineral and feed requirements leading up to the busy period. Ensure you are routinely checking calving and lambing females regularly- early veterinary intervention when necessary is essential to give your animals the best chance of the ideal outcome; a healthy mum feeding a live offspring (or two!). This is also true for your own intervention at home- ensure you are stocked up with plenty of supplies to help your ewes or cows with issues as soon as needed, antiseptic, obstetrical lubricant and supplements such as 4-in-1, Ketol and electrolytes. Not sure where to start? Call past the clinic to pick up a lambing box- full of such supplies for your convenience.

Calf scours

With calves sometimes comes calf scours, and we are consistently improving and developing new strategies to help treat and prevent these conditions. Our key aspect of management is now supportive care, rather than routinely reaching for antibiotics and such. Use of these treatments in the past have effects on our patients that are not ideal or beneficial long term. Best practice treatments include electrolytes, appetite stimulants, milk supplementation, nursing care and cleaning and stocking rate reduction/isolation. Different types of calf scours present in different ways, so calling ahead to discuss a plan with a livestock vet will ensure the best plan is made and the appropriate products and are provided.



Some strains of calf scours can create extremely sick calves and occur as a large-scale outbreak. In these situations, intervention to save individual calves while keeping in mind the whole-herd management is key. As always, our livestock vets are always keen to plan for this or future years with you, so please phone either clinic with enquiries.

Deworming working and farm dogs

Worms in dogs can affect humans too. This is particularly true for hydatid tapeworm, which have the potential to cause very serious illness if allowed to infect humans. The dog is a definitive host for the tapeworm, which means this is where the Hydatid tapeworm reproduces, shedding (and spreading) its eggs in the dog's faeces. These eggs are extremely sticky, and are easily picked up on the dog's hair coat, other surfaces, hands etc. From these surfaces, the eggs can be accidentally ingested by people (an intermediate host) and cause disease. Sheep, cattle and other intermediate hosts can also pick it up grazing on contaminated pasture, which can result in offal condemnation at the abattoir if lesions are identified.

The best way to prevent this condition in humans and stock is by routine deworming of farm dogs.

The worming product must contain praziquantel to be effective against the hydatid tapeworm, which is our standard all-wormer tablet in our clinics. The wormers tablets should be administered 6 weekly at the correct dose for your dog's weight. After a year of practicing washing our hands with soap and water, we are now all experts in minimizing risk after handling dogs. It is also advisable to not allow dogs to scavenge carcasses or feed dogs untreated offal.

Pain Relief Options-Lamb Marking

Product	Active Ingredient	Pack Size	Time of Onset + Duration of Action	Features
Metacam Injection	Meloxicam	100ml or 250ml bottle	Onset 5-10 minutes Duration 3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Longest lasting pain relief we have on label for sheep use - Whole body pain relief- treats whole animal (i.e. testicles + tail + mulesing wounds) - 3 days pain relief - We can organise an applicator for you
Buccalgesic	Meloxicam	200ml (1 ml/10kg)	Onset: 15-20 minutes Duration= 2 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whole body option - 2 days pain relief - Has to be placed in buccal cavity (between cheek and teeth) and held for 30 seconds to work properly - We can organise an applicator for you
"Numnuts"	Lignocaine	100ml bottle + applicator	Onset approx. 5 minutes Duration: 1.5 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can be used for just testicle rings, or can also be used for tails on crossbreds - Helps minimise how many lambs are sitting down post marking - Can be used in addition to metacam injection or buccalgesic -Can hire applicator from us
Tri-Solfen	Lignocine, Adrenaline, Bupivacaine		6-8 hour for bupivacaine, 1.5 hrs for adrenaline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adrenaline helps stop bleeding, which is important for scabbing and wound healing. - Can be used in addition to Metacam OR buccalgesic AND/OR Numnuts - We don't stock it- contact rural merchandise seller

If you wish to chat further about your options, or require personalised cost estimates for your flock please feel free to call us at the clinic. We also appreciate a minimum week's notice so we can order supplies for you and ensure we have applicators in stock or free for your use