
TAREE VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to 2007. The last few years have seen us get too busy for the current building so hopefully the new hospital will give us some space and allow us to employ another vet. This last year has seen the horse and small animal side of the practice increase. The new building will have facilities for limited horse surgery, as well as an indoor crush for ultrasound and x-rays. It is being built by Tony Beeton, with Roy Halliday, Andrew Howard and Chris Harry. Andrew is the token non-ex-dairy farmer.

Around New Year I get a bit reflective on what things we can improve on and customer service can always be improved on. Hopefully the new computer system will streamline our accounts. The ET, horse reproductive and cattle herd health services are fairly unique but we're always open to new ideas, or ways to improve our existing services. We need to keep improving to pay for this building !

This last month we've had two very interesting diseases on dairies. Both of these have been costly in their own ways.

The first of these is a reproductive problem. The farmer uses AI and a bull and has thought his overall conception rate had been slipping for a while. He'd had no abortions and had noticed a couple of cows with vaginal discharges. An adjacent farm also has bulls.

After discussion we thought there was a chance that the herd had Vibriosis, a transmissible venereal disease infecting cows and spread by bulls. Vaginal swabs were taken from six empties and five came back positive.

Treatment will be vaccinating the whole herd, including bulls, as the vaccine is curative. But not 100 %, so some cows will be treated with antibiotics. Even then there will be culls.

So the costs are in increased numbers of stale cows and resulting drop in production, increased semen use, diagnosis and vaccination, and some milk losses due to culls.

The hardest thing with vibrio is picking it up early. It's not something that is visible (unless you're getting

abortions) so the earliest is when you recognise there's a problem with conception. This is often subtle because cows with no access to a bull and are AI'd will go into calf, which will hide the overall drop in rate.

The second case has been more dramatic. Before Xmas a farmer found a cow dead on the edge of a drain and a bit blown up, with no evidence of struggle, so just put it down to "you've got live ones, you've got dead ones". Next day another cow was down, very similar to milk fever. We saw it, took blood because she didn't fit into the usual milk fever category, and treated her. Bloods came back as normal. Next day another down cow and the second one died. This cow was similar to the second cow i.e. hind limb paralysis, relaxed not agitated, however, her tongue was easily pulled out and her swallowing was slow. This is when we thought it was possibly Botulism. To give him some credit we sometimes call this farmer professor.

The problem with Botulism is identifying the source of the toxin. It must come from a carcass(es) contaminating feed or water. No silage was being fed. Rats were found in two feeders and a wild dog carcass in a dam. So the plan was to fence-off effluent, dams and clean out feeders, and with time the toxin will degrade. In the mean time 14 cows have died over two weeks, which is also a problem. He also has vaccinated the herd, and we've taken blood samples for antibody testing as not all cows that ingest toxin die, but live to produce antibodies. Since vaccination there haven't been any further cases.

The costs here are more tangible.

Horse Topics - We've had several horses founder this month, fed on clover and overweight. Rotation of the pedal bone is the big risk with these although uncommon. Antiinflammatories and frog/sole support are required for laminitis, as well as starvation.

The breeding season is nearly over with some AIs still to come.

DISEASES OF THE MONTH

SCC on a horse's penis

Ulcer on a horse's eye

Colics

Calvings, including two caesars in one day

Lame cows and bulls

Semen test on bull

Lame horses

RUN DATES FOR JANUARY

Lansdowne.....Thurs 4th

Oxley/Mitchell's Is.....Tues 9th

Hannam Vale.....Thurs 11th

Dyer's Crossing.....Tues 16th

Wingham.....Thurs 18th

Lorne/Comboyne.....Tues 23rd

Coomba and the deep south..Thurs 25th