Animal Health Update

Thinking about buying livestock? Think about the risks!

Regional Veterinarian Eliz Braddon

Are you a risk taker? If you are playing the stock market, do you go for the high return but high risk type stocks or do you play it safe and go for the guaranteed returns?

These are questions you should ask yourself when you are buying in livestock as well! Every time you buy stock you are risking buying in a problem.

If we look at an example of buying in sheep, the risk wheel below shows just a few of the more common risks you can face when buying in sheep and the potential impacts those risks can have.

Of course we can’t stop buying in livestock but we can take steps to minimise the risks.

- Know the stock you are buying
  - get a sheep/cattle health statement and an NVD for each purchase – read it!
  - ask the vendor about specific concerns you have
  - inspect the stock before purchase or at least immediately on arrival to the farm.

- Quarantine the stock for a period of time
  - six months for sheep lice/footrot potentially
  - at the very least, run them as a separate mob rather than immediately mixing with current mobs for a few weeks and observe for any issues
  - check any rams coming in – buy from OB accredited studs.

- Induct the stock onto the farm
  - quarantine drenching
  - appropriate vaccinations (for example sheep: 5 in 1, 6 in 1, Gudair, cattle: 7 in 1, Pestigard, Vibrio, etc).

- Don’t forget about them!
  - continue to monitor the whole flock
  - inspect for lice, foot problems

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o investigate any unexplained losses with your vet
o check your rams pre-joining for any issues.

If you do some or all of these mitigating steps, you may still at some point buy in a problem, but it should be quickly detected and more easily managed!

This simple risk assessment when you purchase stock is the basis of biosecurity.

For further discussion or advice, please feel free to contact your local district vet.

**Lupinosis warning (again)!**

*District Veterinarian Tim Biffin*

In February this year we made the recommendation that all stock be removed from lupin stubbles and alternate feed sources provided.

Although most producers have ceased feeding sheep on lupin stubbles there has been a few more cases occurring across the Riverina.

At the moment it is really important that lupin stubbles are not being grazed, because in our region, the risk of lupinosis is now far too high.

Additionally, given recent, small amounts of rainfall, the quality of remnant lupin grain would be significantly deteriorated encouraging sheep to eat high risk leaf and stalk material.

**Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Quiz – Test your knowledge!**

*District Veterinarian Courtney Simkin*

Suzie is the manager of a sheep enterprise in the Riverina. It is a warm, wet summer. She has had some trouble with lame sheep due to the conditions.

Suzie noticed that there were lots of small biting insects in her sheep mob after the most recent lot of rain last week. Suzie thinks the annoying insects seem to have made her sheep a bit depressed.

Suzie goes to check on her mob after a weekend away. There are lots of dead sheep in the paddock (about 15%) and lots of sheep are drooling with copious amounts of nasal discharge.

Some of the discharge has thickened, is red tinged and is leaving crust around the nose, their lips and ears are red and their whole face is swollen. Some also have discharge from their eyes.

![Image 2: depressed sheep](image2)

![Image 3: yellow nasal discharge, crusting around nose, swelling of face](image3)
Walking through the mob she notices lots of the sheep feel hot. Suzie gets an old thermometer and their temperatures are 40°C and higher.

There are ulcers on the inside of the sheep mouths and some of these are bleeding. The lame sheep have a red/purple band of skin just above their hooves.

What do you think is occurring with Suzie’s sheep?

- a) bluetongue disease
- b) photosensitisation
- c) virulent footrot
- d) scabby mouth
- e) foot-and-mouth disease.

Looking for the answer? Read on! It’s located at the end of the newsletter!

BJD final reminder of change in management.

District Veterinarian Tim Biffin

As Local Land Services and many others have previously published, Bovine Johne’s Disease (BJD) has changed in its management nationally (as of July 2016).

It is now deregulated in most state jurisdictions, meaning that producers in NSW that wish to sell cattle into Western Australia or the Northern Territory must maintain a Johne’s Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS) of 7 or 8 [on a scale from 0 to 8].

For most producers in the Riverina their cattle trading will be unaffected by the changes (i.e. if selling locally to other commercial producers, selling through the saleyards and over the hooks).

However, if there is any thought that in the future you may wish to diversify your cattle trading (for example into NT or WA) a property management plan should be put in place now!

If a NSW “beef only” producer develops a plan on paper prior to 1st July, 2017 they will maintain a J-BAS score of 6. Those without a plan will drop down to a score 0, making things harder for them to progress to a score 7 or 8 later down the track.

Answer to EAD Quiz

These photos are from cases of bluetongue disease. The virus can only be spread by Culicoides midges. These midges need a warm, moist environment to survive. They usually travel 1.5-2km per day but in prime conditions can travel up to 20km.

Bluetongue disease is a notifiable disease and often will cause 20-40% mortality in sheep (in some cases up to 70%). Incubation period is 4-7 days, all ruminants are susceptible but it is most severe in sheep.

Sheep will have fever (40-41°C) for 5-6 days, drooling, nasal discharge, reddening and swelling of the lips, ears and tongue. They will often go lame and can have stiff movement with an arched back stance.

Although bluetongue disease is known to be in Australia, it is endemic to areas of tropical Queensland and Northern Coastal NSW. All cases must still be reported to monitor if it has spread outside the bluetongue zone.
If you have a concern we are here to protect our shared industry and don’t mind ‘false alarms’ one bit!

Call the Emergency Animal Disease hotline on **1800 675 888** in all cases where an exotic animal disease is suspected.

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