Some potential upcoming animal health issues over the Holiday break:

By Regional Veterinarian, Eliz Braddon

**Worms**

With the rainfall we are having at the moment, we could see increased worm activity in about three to four weeks.

This is particularly the case for barber’s pole worm with summer temperatures and the rain.

If you haven’t thought about your first summer drench yet, then a wormtest with a larval culture would be recommended in the coming weeks, to ensure you and your flocks are protected moving into summer.

Pale membranes in the eye or the gums can be suggestive of barber’s pole worm.

**Summer weeds**

Again with the rain, also come summer weeds.

These often look green and appealing from a stock feed perspective but some can be poisonous. As an example, St John's Wort, Tribulus (cat-heads) and what most know as hairy panic, can all cause photosensitisation and potentially liver damage.

Usually this affects young stock that “don't know any better”.

To avoid this potential problem, it would be wise to have a look at the paddocks before putting stock into them, to see what level of weed contamination is there.

If there is a good mix of feed, and the weeds do not make up more than 50 per cent, then the paddock should be fine.

This plant is commonly called “hairy panic” due to the fine hairs on the stem. It can be the only green feed in the paddock after rains, especially in cultivated areas.
Bushfire preparation

In light of the serious fire conditions this year and the ongoing threat to us locally this summer, we urge you to consider some fire planning.

Earlier this year, some unfortunate stock were caught up in the fires but there were a good number that also escaped unharmed thanks to some quick thinking and well prepared producers.

Due to the unpredictable nature of fire, it is not always possible to have an exact plan for stock, but if you have had a chance to think of some options ahead of time, that may be enough should the situation present itself.

Biosecurity is not just about emergencies

By Cassie McDonald – CSU Veterinary Intern

Emergency disease outbreaks are not the only time when biosecurity is important. Integrating biosecurity into day-to-day farm management can save both time and money and ultimately lead to:

- healthier stock resulting in increased production
- lower treatment costs due to decreased incidence and/or severity of outbreaks (e.g. lice, footrot, OJD, scabby mouth)
- greater market access and choice for the producer
- detailed records ready to be used for audits, investigations and paperwork such as NVDs and the NLIS
- decreased presence of pests and weeds on the property

Biosecurity on a farm-level is usually centred on stock control, feed and water, vehicles and visitors, and feral animals and pests.

New stock

Stock should always be bought from a reputable source and be of the same or higher health status than those you currently own. When buying new stock ensure you know their disease history and any treatments that the stock may have had. This could include such things as lameness, brucellosis status, OJD programs, vaccinations, drenches or any treatments for external parasites. Make sure they have proper documentation and that their movements have been kept up-to-date.

When introducing new stock onto the property it is a good idea to isolate them from existing stock for a minimum of one week. This allows time for any treatments that need to be done, and an adequate quarantine period to minimise the risks of disease being spread to other stock before it is noticed. This is particularly true for footrot and worms. New stock also needs to be drenched and vaccinated, and a faecal egg count should ideally be taken two weeks later to confirm that drenches have been effective and there is no resistance present.

Feed and water

Feed should only be purchased from quality assured suppliers - preferably locally - with a Commodity Vendor Declaration, By-product Vendor Declaration or Fodder Declaration. Even then feed and water can easily be contaminated so should be checked for

Simple practices go a long way in protecting your property and stock from potentially harmful risks. Even something as innocuous as a few seeds on the tyre of a visiting vehicle can bring weeds into a previously clean property. This is why it is important to keep on top of everything coming in and out of the property. It ensures that something easily avoidable and seemingly harmless at the time does not cause big problems down the track.
quality and presence of weeds seeds and/or plants. The only animal material that can be fed to any stock is tallow. FeedingRestricted Animal Material to cattle and swill to pigs is not only illegal but can have huge ramifications if BSE or FMD were to enter your property.

**Vehicles and visitors**

Vehicles and visitors have the potential to carry disease onto your property. Facilities should be provided for visitors to wash their hands and boots when entering and leaving, and vehicles should be limited to certain areas. Having a single access point and recording movements to and from your property can help trace the source of a disease if an outbreak occurs.

**Feral animals and pests**

Feral pests can attack your livestock and spread disease. Having a feral animal control program in place will minimise the opportunity for these animals to mix with your livestock. Don’t allow feral animals to come into contact with feed or water. Chickens should have netting or covers over their runs and be drinking treated water to avoid spread of disease from wild birds.

Measures as simple as these can go a long way in preventing any disease outbreak and protect you against the potentially devastating effects an outbreak on your property could have on your stock and livelihood.

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**Merry Christmas from the staff at Riverina Local Land Services**

We would like to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year.

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**The offices of Riverina Local Land Services will be closed from:**

Monday 22^{nd} December 2014 to Friday 2^{nd} January 2015.

If you have an emergency during this period, please contact:

Ray Willis – Manager Biosecurity & Emergency Services on 0429 910 132

or alternatively:

Exotic Animal Disease Hotline  1800 675 888

RSPCA (For animal welfare emergencies)  1300 CRUELTY (1 300 278 3589)

More information:

**Riverina Local Land Services**

1300 795 299