Animal Health Update

Footrot: Maintain vigilance!
Final year Sydney University student Jung Min and District Veterinarian Rahul Shankar

Around this time of year, District Veterinarians and Biosecurity Officers are busy assisting with inspections for properties suspect or under an undertaking for virulent footrot in sheep and goats. As a reminder, footrot is a notifiable, highly contagious disease in sheep and goats that can have a significant impact on productivity and profitability on your farm. Footrot will spread with the right environmental conditions:
- Significant rainfall in the past month (at least 50 mm).
- Temperatures between 10-20 degrees celsius
- Actively growing pastures containing a high percentage of clover or other moisture retaining plants.

If you suspect virulent footrot in sheep or goats, it is your general biosecurity duty to inform your Local Land Services office immediately. This applies to not only farmers, but to private veterinarians, contractors, livestock agents and any other person that may suspect virulent footrot.

What should you be on the lookout for with footrot?
- The main footrot spread periods are spring, wet autumns, and early winter. However with the right conditions, summer rainfall can cause the disease to spread as well.
- Lameness that is not improving or worsening with time, particularly during dry periods. Footrot is a disease that affects the hooves of sheep and goats. It normally affects more than 1 hoof and more than 1 claw. It can have a strong, sharp smell, however and this must be stressed do not use this as your guiding factor when examining sheep for footrot.
- The disease spreads rapidly amongst sheep of all ages, particularly lambs under the right conditions (as described above). If you notice there starting to be under-run or lift of the hoof of any sheep you should report this immediately as this is classified as suspect virulent footrot.

Do not jump to any immediate conclusions! There are a variety of issues that can affect sheep’s hooves. This is why it is of the upmost importance to notify an authorised officer of the Local Land Services so that a definitive diagnosis can be made.

For more information about virulent footrot in sheep and goats please visit https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/102381/Primefact-1533-Footrot-in-Sheep-and-Goats.pdf or contact your Local Land Services office.

National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP) success!
District Veterinarian Tim Biffin

Since December last year you may have noticed talk in the news of a disease called Bluetongue Virus (BTV) in Echuca, Victoria and wondered, why is that significant?

Globally, there are many different “strains” of BTV. Generally, the ones that cause disease in livestock are exotic to Australia. We do have some of the serotypes, but they don’t do much other than circulate between midge flies and livestock – without causing disease.

Several of Australia’s international trading partners decline to buy live animals that have come into contact with any versions of the virus, so even the strains
which don’t cause overt signs of disease can potentially impact a producer.

The National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP) identifies where the virus exists so that farmers outside of these areas can sell live-export animals into these markets. Traditionally, the virus has only been identified in the more tropical climes of Australia (see the dark yellow section of the map).

On 13th October 2017, a temporary BTV transmission zone was set around a property in Echuca following the detection of BTV antibodies in cattle – well outside the known exclusion line. This zoning was lifted on 7th December 2017, following an extensive investigation which identified that the virus was in fact not circulating in Echuca. This event was particularly significant as negotiations are still on-going in attempt to open up these particular live-export markets for farmers around Echuca.

**Image 1:** The Australian BTV transmission zones as dated 13th October 2017 (which defines the areas in which no viral transmission has been detected for the past 2 years).

**Image 2:** The Australian BTV transmission zones as dated 12th February 2018 (which defines the areas in which no viral transmission has been detected for the past 2 years)

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**Vaginal prolapse in ewes**

**District Veterinarian Emily Stearman**

We have had multiple reports over the past year of vaginal prolapse in ewes. It is not a common condition and the exact cause is unknown. Vaginal prolapse typically only affects low percentages in a flock when it occurs. This article aims to outline some of the causal factors and help producers better manage ewes during gestation to reduce risk of disease. Vaginal prolapse can occur when abdominal pressure is increased. Risk factors include:

- Heavy body condition, late gestation ewes expecting twin or triplet pregnancies.
- Heavy breed animals, in heavy body condition in late gestation spending increased time lying down
- Ewes are higher risk than maidens - previous lambing injury or uterine torsion can predispose to prolapse
- High fibre diets

Foetal blood supply and therefore nutrient supply, develops during the first trimester of gestation. Ewes in good body condition on adequate nutrition during this time develop a strong foetus. It is advised that ewes should not be allowed to gain weight between joining and scanning. If available feed is unlimited through the remaining stages of gestation the ewe will maintain excessive condition, resulting in increased abdominal pressure.
Manipulation of body condition in late gestation is impossible without inducing metabolic disease. Concentrating energy and safely reducing the dietary fibre may help; trail feeding grain by gradual daily increase, with available hay is recommended. Separate ewes at scanning into twin and single mobs; prevent grazing late gestation, heavy twin bearing ewes on steep country. Perhaps the biggest impact is had in the first trimester of gestation; ewes should be joined at ~BCS2.5-3/5, with a gradual rising plain of nutrition throughout pregnancy; during the first trimester balance energy provision to support development of the foetal blood supply without increasing ewe condition.

Individually affected ewes can be treated by a private veterinarian if identified in early stages. Prevention is always better than cure. For any further queries please contact your local district or private veterinarian.

**NLIS Quiz**

*District Veterinarian Courtney Simkin*

1. True or False?  
   I just bought some sheep at the saleyards. Before I get on the road to take them home, I need a movement document to ensure the movement is legal (separate to the NVD filled out by the seller).

2. I want to sell old bulls but my facilities are not good enough to be handling the beasts to put NLIS tags in their ears. What should I do?  
   a) specify on the NVD the bulls in the consignment are un-tagged  
   b) ask my agent what to do  
   c) ask the LLS what to do  
   d) persevere with poor facilities to get the tags in their ears

3. I finish lambs. From lamb consignments I have purchased I keep an excellent record of all the PICs listed on the NVDs I receive. When I sell these lambs if I just transcribe this list onto my own NVD I am very likely to miss tags that physically exist in the mob. Why do you think this is the case?

4. What’s wrong with this picture?

**Image 3:** What's wrong with this picture?

**Answers to the Quiz can be found at the end of this newsletter**

**How many serves of vegetables and fruits should livestock eat?**

*District Veterinarian Sophie Hemley*

Do you feed your livestock fruit and/or vegetables? If you said yes, your livestock could be at risk! Many producers may be surprised to know that feeding fruit and vegetables can actually be harmful in some situations.

Fruits such as melons are typically high in digestible carbohydrates and sugars and have a low fibre and nutrient content. Excessive carbohydrate consumption results in increased volatile fatty acids (VFAs) and a subsequent reduction in the rumen pH. This more acidic environment favours lactic acid-producing bacteria (predominately *Streptococcus bovis*), thereby further increasing the acidity of the rumen. This is the same process that livestock undergo with acute grain poisoning.

Watermelons and rockmelons have also been associated with outbreaks of salmonella, listeria and campylobacter in humans. These bacterial infections have been associated with poor sanitary preparation of the fruit or fruit by-products, or pasture contamination with livestock faeces.

Citrus pulp has a high pectin (soluble fibre) and water soluble sugar content. Citrus pulp is a good source of trace elements. Ruminants consuming citrus pulp are less likely to get acidosis as the high fibre content increases digestion times thereby increasing the amount of saliva (which contains a buffer) produced,
and when degrading citrus pulp produces acetic acid which is less likely to reduce rumen pH compared with lactic acid. Adult cattle can eat 50-60kg of fresh citrus pulp/day.

Root vegetables such as potatoes, have a high starch content but are also low in fibre. Potatoes are not highly palatable and for animals to get the most value from the starch (for energy) they should be boiled or steamed. Interestingly potatoes also have laxative qualities, and therefore should be introduced slowly. Adult cattle can be fed up to 15-20kg of raw potatoes/day without adverse health effects.

Botulism toxicity is a risk when feeding fruit, vegetables and their by-products out in the same area daily. Decaying organic matter (the fruit and vegetables) can contain the *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria and when consumed can result in neurological signs and death within 24 hours. Producers should ensure animals are fed from clean troughs, or dump areas are rotated frequently to reduce the risk of animals eating rotting organic matter.

Producers should also be aware that feedstuffs such as citrus pulp, fruit pomace, grape marc and vegetable skins often have higher residues than the commodity from which they were derived. There are some chemicals which are used in fibre, fruit and vegetable crops which are not registered for use on stockfeeds. Ensuring you obtain a commodity vendor declaration with feedstuffs you purchase is a great way to ensure you are not feeding out product with residues.

**Do you have pigs – even a pet pig?**
**New NLIS requirements are now in place…**

**Regional Veterinarian Elizabeth Braddon**

From 1 February 2018, new NLIS arrangements have been put in place for the identification and traceability of pigs across Australia - INCLUDING PET PIGS. These NEW requirements are:

1. All pigs under 25kg must now be permanently identified with a breeder or post-breeder ear tag prior to being sold off the property they were born on.
   - Breeder tags are Yellow
   - Post breeder tags are Orange
   - All tags must be approved NLIS tags for pigs and contain the NLIS logo and the letter “P” in a circle as well as the Property Identification Code (PIC) of the property the tags are registered to
   - Tags can be ordered through tag providers such as Allflex, Datamars or Leader Products.

2. Pigs over 25kg can also be tagged with an NLIS approved ear tag as per above, or be branded/tattooed as per current Regulations (the preferred method) prior to being sold.
   - If slap brands are being used:
     - Animals bred on the property should be branded on the left hand side shoulder (eg. Breeder)
     - Animals of an unknown origin or no longer on the property of birth should be branded on the right hand side shoulder (eg. Post Breeder)

3. Movements of pigs off a property must be recorded on the PigPass database as a mob based movement.
   - Saleyards and abattoirs will do this movement record on producers’ behalf when selling through these systems
   - Private sales: the movement recording is the responsibility of the new pig owner
   - This movement must be recorded within 2 days of the movement
   - All movements must be accompanied by a PigPass NVD (National Vendor Declaration)

What do Pig Producers need to do?

- Get a Property Identification Code (PIC) for your property if you have one or more pigs (including pet pigs)
- Identify your pigs with a registered swine brand or ear tag linked to your PIC prior to moving them
- Fill in your movement document - PigPass National Vendor Declaration
- Report pig movements with 48 hours to the Pig Pass database
- Keep PigPass NVDs for a minimum of 3 years
- To register for a PIC - Contact your Local Land Services office.

To register for PigPass NVDs - contact the PigPass Helpdesk on 1800 001 458 or [www.pigpass.com.au](http://www.pigpass.com.au)

To order ear tags - Contact your local rural supplier to place your order from any of the approved tag suppliers (Allflex, Datamars, and Leader Products)
To order a registered brand - Contact your Local Land Services office to register the brand and obtain details of brand manufacturers.

Image 4: Pigpass

**Grain feeding sheep**
District Veterinarian Kristy Stone

As a reminder to producers: always introduce grain slowly to livestock. This message is being reiterated after a few cases of grain poisoning recently. When highly fermentable carbohydrates such as grain or pellets breakdown in the rumen, they cause a rise in volatile fatty acids (VFAs) and lactic acid. As a result of large quantities of VFAs and lactic acid, the pH of the rumen decreases and we see a reduction in the rumen's buffering abilities and fermentation. Depending on the severity/change in pH levels, acidosis can cause rumenitis or abomasitis (inflammation of the rumen or abomasum respectively) leading to pneumonia, lameness, liver abscessation, diarrhoea, dehydration, severe illness, and death.

A few points to remember are:

- **Slowly introducing grains** allows the rumen environment to adapt to the increase in starch/increase in lactic acid production. Start feeding at 50g per head per day increasing by 50-100g per head per day and allowing a minimum 14 day period to allow the rumen to adapt to the grain ration. Different grains vary in their starch content and therefore their risk of causing acidosis. Grains such as wheat and barley are more often associated with grain poisoning than oats or lupins.
- **Adequate fibre** must also be provided as this helps keep the rumen environment healthy to allow it to perform at its best. It also stimulates saliva production which helps buffer the rumen. Allow for 10-20% roughage in the finishing diet and ensure roughage is of sufficient chop length (5-10 cm long).
- Lick feeders are not a means of avoiding acidosis altogether. Sheeps still require slow introduction of grain and provision of roughage to allow for gradual adjustment of the rumen. If the feeders run dry, reduce the amount of grain being fed and increase roughage temporarily. Shutting the feeders down after periods of adverse weather is also important as feed intake may have been limited during those times.
- Buffers are also important but as with lick feeders, should not be relied on solely to avoid acidosis.

Other key points when feeding grain:

- Ensure sheep have had at least two 5in1 or 6in1 vaccines prior to introduction to grain to prevent enterotoxaemia (pulpy kidney)
- Grain is low in calcium so 1-1.5% ground limestone should be added

**Answers to the NLIS quiz**

1. True – The NVD provided by the seller only shows the movement of the sheep from their property to the sale yard. Another document (e.g. a Travelling Stock Statement (TSS)) is legally required to detail the movement of the sheep in your name from the sale yard to your property. You cannot use an NVD from your property as that would show movement starting at your PIC. Recently a B-double driver was fined $440 when moving sheep from the Griffith Sale Yard to a property in Victoria as he allegedly had no additional paperwork for the journey. [CLICK HERE](#) for details of the report.

2. C – Never put yourself in harm’s way to get NLIS tags into livestock. Contact your Local Land Services office and we will organise a solution with you. We can only help producers in this situation if we know about it prior to the movement occurring.

3. People make mistakes and with multiple consignments on one NVD: there can be tags missed or incorrect additional tags added. You will receive these mistakes on the NVDs you receive. Your two options are (i) physically check each sheep tag individually and record these tags onto your NVD before each consignment; or (ii) place post-breeder tags (pink tags), with your PIC details, into the lambs’ ears. You will only have to record on the NVD that the consignment is non-vendor bred, and contains post-breeder tags (as compared to a massive list of PIC numbers). Failure to comply with these options is your gateway to electronic tags in sheep – poor
compliance in this area may be the downfall in the NSW Government’s defence of the current Sheep NLIS system.

4. This sheep has two ‘breeder tags’ in its ear. In the yards there is no way to tell which PIC the animal was bred on. Only ‘post-breeder (pink) tags’ must be used in this circumstance. As mentioned above, this may be the easiest way for you to ensure NLIS compliance with non-vendor bred mobs. Post-breeder (pink) tags must be used if you want to put an additional tag with your own NLIS/PIC tag onto your sheep. If there is already a post-breeder tag in the ear you are allowed to add your own additional one.

**Announcements**

**Call for participants – Jurox lamb study**

Jurox, Australia’s Animal Health Company, is searching for farm sites to recruit into a lamb mulesing study in 2018.

The study will investigate the efficacy of several topical insecticide sprays for the prevention of blowfly strike on mulesing wounds.

From January to December 2018, the 6-week study will be conducted at a number of farm sites across Australia.

Requirements for farm sites to be enrolled into the study are:

- Farms that have at least 400 unweaned lambs (all of the same breed or crossbreed) between 2 and 12 weeks of age at the time of mulesing.
- Farms with facilities appropriate for mulesing and for separating 8 groups of lambs and ewes for up to 24 hours after mulesing.
- Farms where mulesing will be conducted by farm staff or by a contractor organised by the farm owner/manager.
- Farmers that are happy for their 400 study lambs to be tagged with study ear tags and weighed by the Jurox research team just prior to mulesing.
- Farmers that are happy for mulesing to go slowly (i.e. 400 lambs mulesed over one or two days) so that the Jurox research team can apply topical sprays and record study data.
- Farmers that are willing to check lambs every day for 6 weeks after mulesing to identify, photograph and treat any lambs that are blowfly struck.
- Farmers that are prepared to complete study paperwork and are happy for Jurox staff to visit their farm multiple times during the 6-week study (follow-up visits will require yarding and handling of study lambs at 1 week and 6 weeks after mulesing).

All study medications will be provided and all study costs will be paid for by Jurox. As a token of appreciation, participating producers will receive Jurox products such as Strikeforce-S and Q-Drench for their own personal use after the completion of the study at their farm.

Producers who are interested in participating in the study in 2018 are encouraged to contact the study coordinator:

Jenna Fraser (Research Veterinarian) - (02) 4931 8096, 0418 247 722, jenna.fraser@jurox.com.au

**Seasonal Update in Young on MARCH 14, 2018**

Speakers include:

- **Phil Graham**: Livestock nutritional needs, pasture production and animal health issues update
- **Gary Allen**: Bureau of Meteorology
- **Michael Hayes**: Fox baiting
- **Eliz Braddon**: Animal Health Update

**Location**: ‘Bloomfield’, Henry Lawson Way, Young, NSW, 2594

**Start time**: 8:30AM

Please bring a chair if you are attending. RSVP is not required.
Invitation to Participate in Gudair® vaccine research

Research conducted in the past 15 years has shown that vaccination with Gudair® substantially reduces mortalities but sheep in some flocks continue to shed Johne’s disease causing bugs in their faeces. Why is the efficacy of Gudair® different on different properties? What are the reasons for the persistence of the disease on some properties? This project funded by Meat and Livestock Australia will answer these and other similar questions.

We cordially invite you to participate in Phase 1 of this research project to answer some crucial questions about the efficacy of Gudair® vaccine.

How can you participate in this research?

You can participate in this exciting research by:
- clicking this link https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GGZSBJD
- by calling Dr Jeff Eppleston on 0429 652 888 or emailing him at jeff.eppleston@sydney.edu.au
- or by writing to us at the following address:
  A/Professor Navneet Dhand
  The University of Sydney
  425 Werombi Road, Camden
  NSW 2570

After receiving your response, we will contact you if you meet the eligibility criteria for the 2nd phase of the study. Your name will also go into a draw to win one of the ten $50 gift vouchers.

We sincerely thank you for your anticipated cooperation. Your participation in this research will help in better management and control of Johne’s disease in Australia!

Thank you!

Hay Ag & Pastoral Innovation Expo

An expo to showcase innovation and technology for production in extensive agriculture zones. This can encompass equipment, technology, telecommunications, software programs and training plus so much more for livestock and cropping producers.

12:00pm 9th Mar - 12:00pm 10th Mar 2018

Shear Outback, Cobb Hwy, Hay

Contacts:
Annabel Lugsdin (Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc): 0428 549 647 or alugsdin@mli.org.au
Sally Ware (Riverina Local Land Services): 0429 307 627 or sally.ware@lls.nsw.gov.au
Stacey Lugsdin (Hay Merino Sheep Show Inc): 0428 931 931
or birriwa@bigpond.com

The profitable integration of cropping and livestock in Southern Australia (workshop)

Workshops exploring the findings from MLA project ‘The profitable integration of cropping and livestock in southern Australia’

9:00am – 1pm, Canowindra, Tuesday 27 February
9:00am – 1pm, Young, Wednesday 28 February
9:00am – 1pm, Jerilderie, Thursday 1 March

More information CLICK HERE

Help DPI survey for Tomato potato psyllid in NSW

NSW DPI are looking to DPI and LLS staff across the state to assist in the surveillance activities of the Tomato potato psyllid.

Do you have a veggie patch at home?

Are you growing tomatoes, eggplants, potatoes, capsicums, chillies or sweet potato?

Why not participate in an insect trapping survey to help DPI Biosecurity prove NSW is free of an insect called tomato potato psyllid?

Tomato potato psyllid is a serious threat to Australia’s potato, tomato and capsicum crops. It causes damage to plants when it feeds, but is also a vector for the plant disease Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum. It was found in Western Australia in 2017.

We need data from across NSW to prove this insect is not present here. Your participation will contribute to a
greater insect surveillance project that also includes commercial growers and nurseries.

If you would like to be involved contact Bernie Dominiak (bernie.dominiak@dpi.nsw.gov.au or 0458 798 159) for your free trap kit. The kit has everything you need and instructions on what to do. All you need to do is place the sticky trap in your veggie patch for a week before posting it back to DPI in the reply paid envelope provided.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Bernie Dominiak directly for more info.

**Future Flock Forum Wagga Wagga**  
(conference/ seminar)

Thursday 15th – Friday 16th March, 2018.

More information [CLICK HERE](#)

**Review of the National OJD Management Plan**

The sheep and wool industry is being invited to have its say on the future management of Ovine Johne’s Disease (OJD) in Australia. WoolProducers Australia (WPA) and Sheep Producers Australia (SPA) are seeking industry feedback, with the 2013-2018 National Ovine Johne’s Disease Management Plan (NOJDMP) due to finish in 2018.

More information [CLICK HERE](#)

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**Riverina Local Land Services**  
**District Veterinarians**

Please note new office numbers

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<td>Elizabeth Braddon and Rahul Shankar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kristy Stone</td>
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Wagga Wagga
Tim Biffin and Emily Stearman
6923 6300