



updates from the field



March is AVA **Polite Pets Month** and we're offering an **initial FREE consultation (in March)** to clients concerned their pets are misbehaving. Ring us to make an appointment to talk about the latest treatments for problem behaviour in cats and dogs.

Pregnancy Diagnosis

One of the most valuable tools in the management of beef cattle herds is pregnancy diagnosis – and now is the right time to schedule it into your herd program.

Pregnancy diagnosis enables producers to make informed decisions about selling non-productive animals and acquiring replacements, and planning feed requirements. It also assists with the diagnosis of diseases causing infertility and identifying bull failure.

Efficient producers join their cows and heifers for 6 weeks only (ie 2 cycles). If you're focused on achieving a highly productive herd, you have to be tough about culling heifers and cows that don't conceive during this 6 week period.

It's important to know quickly if a problem has occurred at joining. By testing heifers 6 weeks after a first joining, producers can dispose of empties, often at market premium.

Experienced pregnancy testers are fast, efficient and accurate after 6 weeks of gestation. Our vets use ultrasound (best between 6-20 weeks post-joining), *always* in combination with manual testing.

Bovine Pestivirus

Pestivirus spreads quickly in situations of close contact between cattle. The disease is complex and needs individual herd programs for control.



Pestivirus is one of the most common viruses found in Australian beef cattle herds – it's estimated around 70% of cattle herds are actively infected with the virus, and this district is no different.

Pestivirus causes a range of serious disease syndromes in cows and calves, including reproductive failure, abnormal calves, illthrift, diarrhoea and respiratory disease. Major losses occur when a previously uninfected herd becomes infected during the mating period and in early pregnancy.

Pestivirus is one of the most invasive of cattle viruses and has been found in virtually every body tissue – that means infection is spread quickly through close contact between animals.

CVH can undertake simple testing to determine the status of your herd. It's important to have an accurate picture of the immunity in each herd and/or to detect the presence of carrier animals. This helps us develop a strategy for control of the disease within specific herds. It is a complicated disease, but it can be managed to minimise losses.

It's a good cost effective strategy to carry out testing at the time of pregnancy testing.

A vaccine is available for use in some situations, but it is relatively expensive and it may be possible to manage existing pestivirus infection with a combination of testing and/or vaccination.

Contact us on (02) 4832 1977 to speak with one of our vets about this complex disease and its detection and control.

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Summer can be dangerous ...

Summer is hot and dangerous for working dogs and pets – heat stroke, snakebite, grass seed infestation and tick paralysis are 4 hot season medical hazards commonly presented at CVH.

Heat stroke

Hyperthermia or heat stroke causes irreversible brain damage if not treated rapidly and intensively. Please remember to leave windows down and park in the shade if you must leave your dog in the car for short periods – and *always provide access to water*. Never put dogs in the boot to transport. Well-meaning dog owners have forgotten their dogs with fatal consequences.

Grass seeds

Country dogs often suffer when grass seeds follow a good season. Most grass seeds are designed to burrow into the soil to germinate – and into dog's ears, noses, eyes, skin and muscle tissues.

Don't underestimate their potential for causing persistent and very serious infections!

Common lodging places include deep down ear canals, behind dogs' third eyelids (leading to corneal ulceration and loss of sight if not removed early), and between toes (where they puncture the skin and migrate into deeper tissues – even as far as the elbow joint). We've removed seeds from potentially fatal granulomas in the abdomen of dogs with peritonitis – in fact we've found grass seeds in just about every bit of canine anatomy.

One of the easiest ways to minimise grass seed damage is to clip dogs in summer, especially around the ears, eyes, abdomen and between the toes, and check daily for invading seeds.

Snakebite

There are sixty-five venomous snakes in Australia – at CVH, we regularly see envenomation in dogs and cats from 4 of these – brown, copperhead, black and tiger snakes. All can kill rapidly, depending on the bite location and amount of venom injected.

Symptoms in **dogs** vary, from sudden collapse to staggering and trembling, dilated pupils, salivation, vomiting, distressed respiration, brown urine and progressive paralysis. **Cats** show generalised weakness progressing to complete paralysis.

If in doubt, ring us first on our 24 hour line (02 4832 1977), then bring your pet in immediately. We can confirm snakebite and identify the species with blood tests. This assists in the choice of anti-venene (and we always have in stock polyvalent anti-venene, which covers all Australian snake venoms).

Tick paralysis

The paralysis tick, *Ixodes holocyclus*, is one of the deadliest parasites affecting dogs and cats. So far, this small killer hasn't reached cold Crookwell, but at CVH we regularly treat dogs with tick paralysis 5 to 7 days after they return from the coast. Treatment is expensive and paralysis can still be fatal.

We strongly recommend preventative medication for your cats and dogs if you travel to warmer places. A 24 hour trip to Sydney is all it takes, and if your pets travel regularly, year round tick protection is essential. This can be conveniently combined with flea and heartworm prevention – ring and talk to our staff.

When in tick country, search your pet's coat daily, checking ears and other hard-to-find places. Remove ticks safely with tweezers or fingernails by grasping the tick close to the skin and pulling firmly.

Remember, even if you've removed the tick, signs of tick paralysis can still develop over the next few days – be alert for a strange bark followed by progressive weakness in the back legs and ring us immediately if you are concerned.

Contact us

Opening hours 8.30am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday | 9am – 12pm Saturday

24 hour emergency service on (02) 4832 1977

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