

North Coast - Spring Update

Animal health disease watch

Our district veterinarians and animal health biosecurity officers are on the ground to support livestock managers across the North Coast to assist with diagnosing animal diseases to maintain livestock health.

Good animal health and livestock welfare is fundamental to farm productivity. Improved husbandry practices and the capacity to prevent, diagnose, and treat livestock disease contributes to an increase in individual animal and whole-herd performance as well as a reduction in livestock morbidity and mortality.

The team have been active over the last month and have seen several diseases in livestock.

Malnutrition

The main problem being seen recently is weight loss resulting in cattle in poor condition from a lack of sufficient nutritious feed. This is common at this time of the year in our region due to our summer-growing grasses being dormant, but it is particularly noticeable this year due to the relatively dry summer/autumn leading up to a very dry winter.

Sown winter pastures have helped some producers but growth has generally been poor due to the continued dry period. Recent rain at the time of writing will hopefully kick the summer grasses into gear but follow up rain will be needed.

Coccidiosis

Cases of coccidiosis have been seen in beef calves recently.

Coccidia are protozoal parasites that can lead to diarrhoea, often with blood, in young cattle. Affected calves are often seen with their tails held up and straining to pass faeces.



Black tarry faeces often seen with coccidiosis in calves

Pestivirus (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea)

Pestivirus can cause a range of clinical signs depending on the circumstances of the animal being exposed.

Animals exposed to the virus for the first time in their lives whilst pregnant can suffer stillbirth, calves born with developmental abnormalities or calves born as “persistently infected” animals (also called PI’s). These PI’s shed virus in all body secretions for life. Further information on Pestivirus can be found [by clicking on this link](#).

Worm burdens

We have continued to see roundworm burdens in cattle, sheep, goats, and alpaca over the recent weeks. There is an increasing incidence of drench resistance being seen on properties.



Barbers Pole worm in the 4th stomach (abomasum) of a steer

Producers are being reminded to carefully consider the drench actives they have been using.

Information on drench resistance and the Drench and Mineral Trial conducted on the north coast [is available on our website](#).

Vibriosis (Bovine venereal campylobacteriosis)

Vibriosis is a sexually transmitted disease of cattle leading to infertility and abortion. It is a significant cause of economic loss in affected herds. Vibriosis typically causes reduced conception rates. A spread-out calving pattern is often seen, with many calves born late. Occasionally, abortions may be seen. The disease can be prevented by vaccination. Further information can be found on Vibriosis [by clicking on this link](#).

Neospora abortion

Neospora caninum is a protozoal parasite that can cause abortion in cattle. It is one of the most common causes of abortion diagnosed on the North Coast.

Dogs can carry the parasite and become infected through eating infected fetuses or placenta. Cattle become infected through ingesting the parasite after it has been passed in dogs' faeces. There is no effective treatment available.



Aborted calf fetus

Control of wild dogs and ensuring farm dogs/pets cannot access aborted fetuses or membranes is important.

More information can be found [by clicking on this link](#).

Pneumonia

Cases of pneumonia have been seen in calves recently. In cattle there are several bacteria and viruses that can cause respiratory disease.

Affected animals may be seen coughing, breathing with their mouth open and reluctant to move.

Early treatment from your private veterinarian with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories is advised.



Lung from a calf with bacterial pneumonia

Beef Cattle Health and Husbandry for the NSW North Coast

Local Land Services helps farmers and landowners in all aspects of their environment, livestock and land. Managing livestock can be difficult, which is why we offer help and advice on:

- nutrition
- animal health and husbandry issues
- disease prevention
- animal welfare
- occupational health and safety.

Local Land Services also provides advice on:

- pasture management and sustainable grazing systems for beef cattle
- calf rearing
- store fattening
- cattle in farm forestry
- cattle on forages and grain.

The North Coast Beef Health and Husbandry guide includes information for beef cattle livestock farmers. It can be downloaded for free from the Local Land Services website:

<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/north-coast/articles,-plans-and-publications/beef-cattle-guide>

Additional information:

Neospora abortion:

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/beef-cattle/health-and-disease/parasitic-and-protozoal-diseases/neospora>

Worm burden:

<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/north-coast/latest-news-and-newsletters/newsletter/summer-2021/drench-and-mineral-trial-update>

Bovine Pestivirus:

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/beef-cattle/health-and-disease/viral-diseases/bovine-pestivirus-infection>

Vibriosis:

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/beef-cattle/health-and-disease/bacterial-diseases/vibriosis-cattle>

For more information

The North Coast Local Land Services District Veterinarians are available to help you with your livestock health and welfare questions.

Contact your nearest Local Land Services office on 1300 795 299 or visit our website www.lls.nsw.gov.au