



RIVERINA LOCAL
LIVESTOCK UPDATE

February



Local Land
Services

Case study: Eyes and flies

By Kristy Stone, District Vet

🔍 Cattle

CASE HISTORY:

A producer called concerned about an increasing number of mixed breed weaner calves showing signs of pinkeye. Approximately 15% of cattle over multiple mobs were noticed to be displaying signs of blindness with cloudy, red eyes.

CLINICAL EXAMINATION:

Affected cattle showed varying degrees of blindness in one or both eyes with excessive tear production. The eyes appeared cloudy, inflamed and ulcerated. Some animals were badly affected in both eyes.

DIAGNOSIS:

Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis (Pinkeye)

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis is a highly contagious bacterial infection causing inflammation and ulceration of the cornea. The primary infectious agent is bacterium *Moraxella bovis*.

There are many factors that contribute to the development of the disease such as other micro-organisms, immune status of the animal, eye irritation from dust, tall grass or thistles, flies and ultraviolet light.

The disease starts out as increased tear production, progressing to a cloudy appearance on the surface of the eye (cornea), and further progressing to a swollen pink eye (increased blood vessels) with a yellow ulcerated centre.

Scarring and permanent blindness can occur.



Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis (Pinkeye)

Early treatment and isolation of affected animals can help minimise the impact and prevent spread of disease to other animals.

Avoid unnecessary yarding of livestock as this can exacerbate and spread disease. However, yarding will obviously be required to treat animals as treatment is important from both a disease spread and animal welfare aspect.

This can be managed by wetting yards to reduce dust and minimising the time spent in the yards.

Treatment of pink eye involves topical antibiotics in the eye, injectable anti-inflammatories and sometimes injectable antibiotics, depending on the severity/stage of disease. A chat to your vet about which treatment option is the best for your situation is important. Covering the eye with patches can avoid further spread to other cattle, prevent further trauma to the eye and protect from ultraviolet light. In severe cases, surgery may be required to assist in healing the eye or to remove the eye all together.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT?

Reducing the extent of environmental aspects of pinkeye development and spread includes fly control, thistle control and minimising yarding during dusty periods.

A vaccine is available for the prevention of pink eye in cattle. This vaccine protects against three of the most pathogenic strains of *Moraxella bovis* and can prevent the cost and heartache associated with managing large outbreaks of pink eye in cattle. It's a single dose vaccine recommended to be given 3-6 weeks prior to the onset of the pinkeye season each year.

When an outbreak occurs, prompt treatment and removal from the mob is crucial to prevent further spread to other cattle.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Pinkeye in cattle (www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

Announcements and additional warnings

INTRODUCING JESS DALTON – DISTRICT VETERINARIAN AT GRIFFITH

Introducing Jess Dalton – District Veterinarian at Griffith

Jess Dalton has recently joined the team at Riverina Local Land Services in the role of District Veterinarian.

She will be working with Georgia Grimmond and the team based out of the Griffith Office in a part-time capacity.

Jess was born and raised in Griffith and completed her Veterinary Science degree at Charles Sturt University before taking up a role in mixed practice at Kempsey on the NSW mid north coast.

She returned to Griffith in early 2020 and is looking forward to the new role and exciting opportunities and experiences that come with working with production animals.

Outside of work, Jess has another part-time role as Mum to Darcy (2.5 years) and Xander (8 months) and is usually found hanging out with them and husband Dave.

She looks forward to meeting producers and making a difference to animal health, biosecurity and animal welfare in our region.



WEST NILE VIRUS DETECTION

West Nile virus has been detected in a small number of horses across NSW.

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus which can affect horses, people and other animals. Only mosquitoes can spread the disease.

The early stages of disease may be mistaken for colic. Initially horses may appear depressed and reluctant to move but these signs are soon followed by neurological signs.

Horse owners are encouraged to take extra precautions to reduce exposure to mosquitoes through rugging, insecticides and restricting grazing times when mosquitoes are most active.

West Nile virus is a notifiable disease in NSW. If you suspect a horse is showing signs of the disease, call the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

More information on West Nile Virus can be found on the DPI website at <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/horses/health-and-disease/west-nile-virus>



EXOTIC DISEASE AWARENESS - AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

Over the next few months, we will look at a number of exotic animal diseases that have been declared as priority diseases.

This means there is a high risk of these diseases entering Australia, and state and federal departments are on alert for any signs in our animals. These diseases are foot and mouth disease, avian influenza, lumpy skin disease, African horse sickness and African swine fever.

This month, our attention turns to African swine fever.

About African Swine Fever

African Swine Fever (ASF) is a highly contagious, viral disease that affects both domestic and feral pigs.

The virus spreads within pig populations by direct contact with infected animals, exposure to contaminated objects or people that have been in contact with infected pigs, or feeding contaminated swill to pigs. The virus can survive for long periods in uncooked, frozen or cured pig meat products.

It can persist in the environment for up to 30 days and is readily carried on equipment, clothing and vehicles.

Clinical Signs

Most outbreaks of ASF have resulted in a high mortality rate, however, signs can also include:

- fever
- loss of appetite
- lethargy
- reddening of the skin
- red-blue coloured blotching of the skin on the ears, tail, lower leg or thigh
- constipation or bloody diarrhoea
- breathing difficulties
- vomiting
- abortions in sows
- neurological signs such as convulsions.

As the virus is exotic to Australia, an outbreak would mean a high number of the exposed pig population would become infected.

How Are We Keeping it Out?

Australia is currently on high alert an ASF incursion, as the disease has spread to a number of Asian countries in recent years. Our borders are constantly being monitored for any illegally imported pork products. These products are seized and a proportion are tested for the virus by the CSIRO. This testing has found that a significant number of seized goods contained fragments of the virus, justifying the harsh penalties for bringing these products into Australia.

There are also very strict regulations around pork products that are permitted to be imported into Australia, which must follow criteria such as being from ASF-free countries.

The NSW DPI and Local Land Services have also provided pig producers with additional information specific to ASF and have introduced biosecurity management plans so that pig producers have the information they need to be alert to the signs of ASF, and how to keep their pigs safe from this virus.

Local Land Services conducts regular pest control programs to reduce the feral pig population as much as possible to protect the local pork industry.

What Can We Look Out For?

As the Australian pig population is currently free of LSD, if the virus enters Australia we can expect that large numbers of pigs will become infected. It is important to watch out for any suspicious signs, including those listed above.

As the signs are general in nature and can be caused by a number of infectious agents, it is important to seek veterinary advice to get a diagnosis when these signs occur.

If you suspect anything suspicious, please do not hesitate to call your local District Veterinarian or the Emergency Animal Disease hotline on 1800 675 888.

For more information on ASF, you can go to <https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/african-swine-fever-faq/>



Image: ASF in pigs (photo from www.agriculture.vic.gov.au)

FOOTROT IN SHEEP

Meg Connolly CSU Final Year Vet Student

What is it?

Footrot is a contagious bacterial disease caused by the organism *Dichelobacter nodosus* in association with numerous other bacteria. The disease is characterised by a lesion in the foot ranging in severity from mild to severe tissue damage.

How does it cause disease?

The primary footrot bacteria (*D. nodosus*) cannot cause infection unless there is prior damage to the interdigital skin. Foot scald, caused by *Fusobacterium necrophorum* bacteria, is the most common type of damage that predisposes sheep to footrot infection. Interdigital skin damage that occurs with foot scald allows for entry of the footrot bacteria into the hoof.

Does foot scald always become footrot?

No, infection with foot scald (*F. necrophorum*) alone does not result in footrot unless the footrot bacteria (*D. nodosus*) are also present.

Are there different types of footrot?

Yes, there are many strains of the footrot bacteria and they vary in the severity of the disease they cause. Footrot infection is classified as either benign or virulent at the flock level.

Benign footrot causes lesions that are mild and resolve as conditions dry off, without treatment. There is usually minimal economic loss.

Virulent footrot causes severe lesions associated with lameness and significant economic losses. Because of these animal welfare and economic impacts, virulent footrot is a notifiable disease in NSW.

What sheep are most likely to get footrot?

All sheep can become infected with footrot bacteria. Merino sheep and young sheep are the most susceptible, however it is important to remember that first-cross ewes and older ewes can develop severe disease under the right conditions.

When does footrot occur?

Footrot shows peaks of clinical expression in temperate areas of Southern Australia in late spring and early summer. The ideal conditions for footrot bacteria is when there is adequate moisture and ambient temperatures above 10°C.

What do sheep with footrot look like?

The first sign of footrot is generally lameness. Usually more than one hoof, with both digits, is affected. Footrot begins with inflammation of the interdigital skin and may progress to separation of soft tissues of the foot from the horn. The lesion has a distinctive foetid smell and moist, white-grey material is usually present on the surface of the soft tissue separated from the horn. Horn lesions are graded (score 1 – 5) according to the degree of damage to the interdigital skin.

Who can diagnose footrot?

Diagnosis of footrot can only be made by a registered veterinarian, but an authorised officer who is not a veterinarian can take initial actions to manage the biosecurity risks, for example at a public saleyard.

Who can report suspect virulent footrot cases?

Any person who suspects an animal, flock or herd is infected with virulent footrot must notify a NSW DPI or LLS authorised officer within 1 working day.

Notification can be done by –

- Phoning Local Land Services 1300 795 299
- Contacting a NSW Department of Primary Industries authorised officer
- Notifying online (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/animal/notifiable-animal-diseases-nsw>)

What happens once virulent footrot is diagnosed?

LLS veterinarians support producers in completing an eradication program. Although these programs will vary between enterprises, actions typically include

- Culling – varies from full destocking to culling of persistently infected
- Foot bathing with 10% zinc sulphate
- Foot trimming
- Quarantining
- Inspection of neighbouring properties
- Assessment of boundary fences

Can we prevent footrot?

Producers can decrease the likelihood of introducing virulent footrot into their flock by following these strategies –

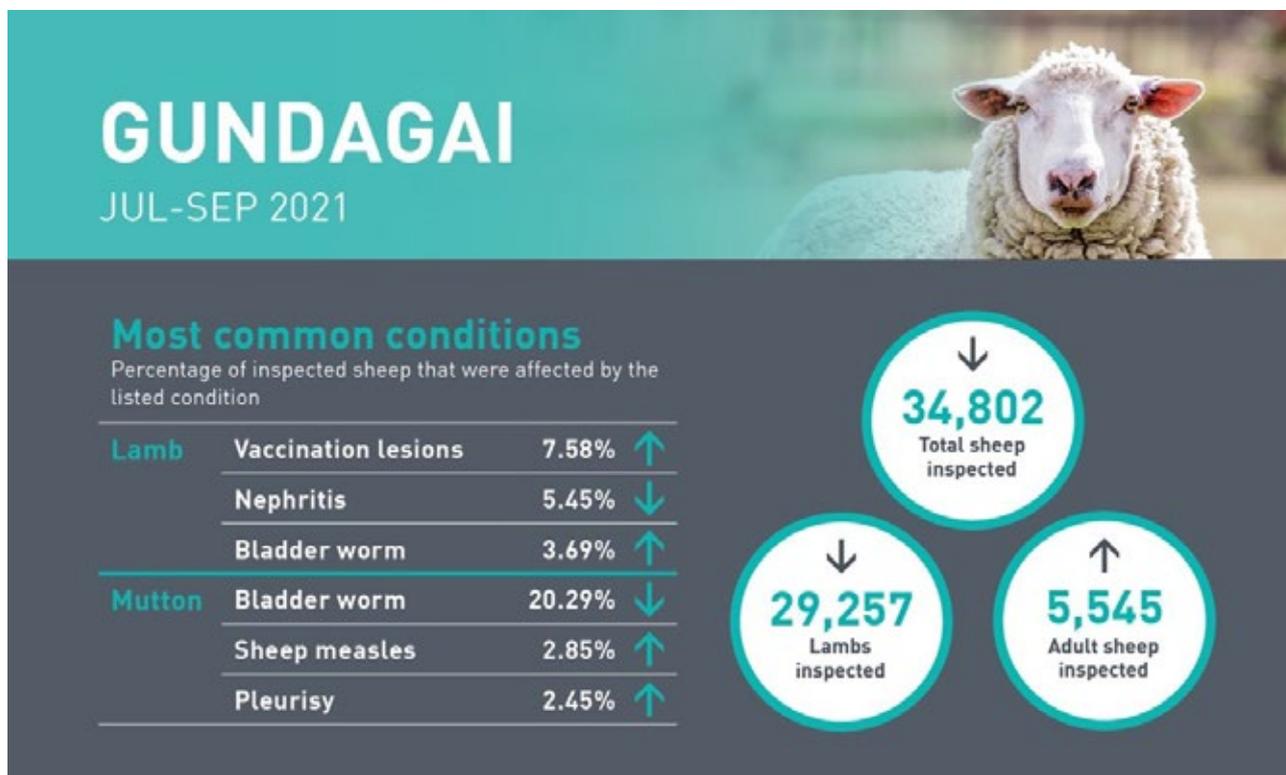
- Only purchase sheep from reputable suppliers with a National Sheep Health Declaration and examine sheep for lesions prior to purchase
- Quarantine all sheep on arrival to property and inspect for lesions, keep isolated and inspect again after 2 weeks. If clean, they may be integrated.
- Spell any suspected infected pastures for 7 days before introducing new sheep
- Ensure boots are disinfected after visiting saleyards or other properties with sheep or goats
- Ensure all transport vehicles are cleaned and disinfected prior to transporting livestock
- Monitor flock closely and consider foot bathing with 10% zinc sulphate during defined spread periods (spring and autumn)
- Avoid mustering sheep on roads or areas that have been used by other sheep in the previous 7 days
- Maintain yards and laneway surfaces, as wet / muddy environments will harbour the footrot bacteria
- Maintain boundary fences to ensure neighbouring stock are unable to enter your property

NATIONAL SHEEP HEALTH MONITORING PROJECT – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2021

The following information describes the most prevalent conditions and diseases found in sheep sold over the hook across the Riverina region in Quarter 3 (July-September) 2021.

Information is courtesy of the National Sheep Health Monitoring Project (NSHMP). The NSHMP commenced in 2007 to monitor lines of sheep in abattoirs for animal health conditions that reduce farm profit through productivity losses or increase meat processing wastage.

For more information about the NSHMP read the [Animal Health Australia Annual Report \(animalhealthaustralia.com.au\)](http://animalhealthaustralia.com.au).



Data are from sheep transferred directly from property to abattoir i.e. not through saleyards. Trend arrows show how the numbers compare to the same time period of the previous year. For more information on these conditions visit: www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/nshmp



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NARRANDERA

JUL-SEP 2021



Most common conditions

Percentage of inspected sheep that were affected by the listed condition

Lamb	Nephritis	6.20%	↓
	Bladder worm	3.06%	↓
	Grass seed lesions	2.45%	↑
Mutton	Bladder worm	13.33%	↑
	Vaccination lesions	10.98%	↑
	Nephritis	3.53%	↑



Data are from sheep transferred directly from property to abattoir i.e. not through saleyards.
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For more information on these conditions visit: www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/nshmp



WAGGA WAGGA

JUL-SEP 2021



Most common conditions

Percentage of inspected sheep that were affected by the listed condition

Lamb	Nephritis	8.19%	↑
	Bladder worm	6.70%	↑
	Vaccination lesions	3.63%	↑
Mutton	Bladder worm	15.82%	↑
	Nephritis	3.64%	↑
	Pleurisy	2.12%	↑



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For more information on these conditions visit: www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/nshmp



YOUNG

JUL-SEP 2021



Most common conditions

Percentage of inspected sheep that were affected by the listed condition

Lamb	Nephritis	4.63%	↓
	Bladder worm	3.95%	↑
	Vaccination lesions	2.92%	↑
Mutton	Bladder worm	14.52%	↓
	Vaccination lesions	5.17%	↑
	Sheep measles	4.28%	↑



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For more information on these conditions visit: www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/nshmp



CATTLE PRODUCER SURVEY!

Calling beef cattle producers with self-replacing herds, from commercial to stud – we would love to hear from you!

We are looking for feedback on where your skills lay. We will collate this feedback to target program delivery, providing you with the opportunity to upskill in areas you identify.

Please complete the survey and share your experience.

- [Complete the survey now.](#)

YOUR 2022 LOCAL LAND SERVICES RATES ARE DUE IN FEBRUARY

Your Local Land Services rates notice are arriving this month. Rates are returning in 2022.

Over the last three years the NSW Government waived Local Land Services rates as part of its close to \$4 billion in drought and water security support to help farmers through the worst drought on record.

With widespread improvements in seasonal conditions across the state, rates have been reintroduced in 2022.

[Find out more about rates and the value they deliver.](#)

Upcoming events

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT NATIONAL RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE AGENCY COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS

The National Recovery and Resilience Agency and Rotary Australia Community Outreach Events are coming to local communities in March 2022 to provide support and advice on the drought, bushfire, flood and other challenges.

These events will bring together all levels of government, charities, not-for-profit and agricultural organisations to support farmers and rural and regional communities living through the immediate and longer-term effects of drought.

It is an excellent opportunity for farmers, families and rural communities to grab a sausage sandwich, catch up with friends and neighbours and find out what support is available during drought and tough times.

The Community Outreach Events, part of the Australian Government's Drought Community Outreach Program, are coming to the following towns in March 2022:

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Monday 7 March	Theatre Royal, 90 Market Street, Balranald	4pm - 8pm
Tuesday 8 March	Moulamein Town Hall	10am - 2pm
Wednesday 9 March	Deniliquin Sunday School Hall, Cressy St, Deniliquin	10am - 2pm
Thursday 10 March	Coleambally Community Hall, Kingfisher Ave, Coleambally	8:30am - 12:30pm

If you're in the area, come along and say g'day!

AUTUMN BEEF WEBINAR SERIES - BETTER BULL BUYING

The better bull buying on-line series is your guide to selecting and buying bulls that best suits your breeding objectives, region and target markets.

In partnership with Southern Beef Technology Services, NSW Department of Primary Industries (Animal Genetic and Breeding Unit) and HVC Production and Breeding Services, Riverina Local Land Services will host a series of on-line webinar workshops for landholders and cattle producers during March 2022.

[Find out more and register](#)

MLA PROFITABILITY & PRODUCTIVITY WEBINAR SERIES UPCOMING WEBINARS

2nd March 2022: John Webb-Ware – Livestock staggers on phalaris & ryegrass-based pastures

16th March 2022: Colin Trengrove – The importance of trace minerals for ewes at lambing

[Register here Registration \(gotowebinar.com\)](#)



The poster features a background image of two people standing in a field. It includes logos for the Australian Government, National Recovery and Resilience Agency, and Rotary. The text reads: 'Community Outreach Events', 'Drop in for a chat to find out what support is available for farmers, farm workers and your community.', 'Free Rotary BBQ & \$500 Rotary vouchers available', and a list of dates and locations: 'Mon 7 March, 4:00pm - 8:00pm | Theatre Royal, 90 Market Street, Balranald', 'Tue 8 March, 10am - 2pm | TBC Moulamein', 'Wed 9 March, 10am - 2pm | Multi Art Centre Cressy Street Deniliquin', and 'Thur 10 March, 8:30am - 12:30pm | Coleambally Community Hall, Kingfisher Ave Coleambally'. At the bottom, it says 'For more information contact Claire on: 0427 563 876 or Claire.Burley@recovery.gov.au'.

Follow us at [@locallivestockvets](https://www.instagram.com/locallivestockvets) on Instagram to see photos and videos direct from the paddock!



CONTACT YOUR CLOSEST DISTRICT VETERINARIAN

WAGGA

Emily Stearman - 0437 644 714 or 6923 6300

Dione Howard - 0428 115 134 or 6923 6300

NARRANDERA/GRIFFITH

Georgia Grimmond - 0427 418 006

Jess Dalton (Tues, Wed) – 0427 696 895

HAY

Elizabeth Ferguson – 0439 557 567

GUNDAGAI

Kristy Stone (Tues, Wed, Thurs) – 0428 262 112

YOUNG

Evie Duggan (Thurs, Fri) - 0427 147 939