



RIVERINA LOCAL
LIVESTOCK UPDATE

April



Local Land
Services

Case study:

THE CASE OF THE SHAKING LAMBS

District Veterinarian Katelyn Braine



CASE HISTORY

A mixed consignment of 6-month-old lambs were purchased through a saleyard. Following the sale, the lambs spend a day in lairage at a second saleyard prior to arriving at the purchaser's property. During this time the lambs had access to fresh water but had been off feed for at least 48 hours.

On arrival the producer noted the lambs looked hollow and tucked up. They were provided lucerne hay and placed into a paddock containing short green feed. The next morning the producer found three of the lambs down in the paddock and several others staggering.

CLINICAL EXAMINATION

Affected lambs presented in sternal or lateral recumbency, were frothing at the mouth, some teeth grinding, mild muscle tremors, and a stilted/hoppy gait accompanied by a hunched body posture.

LABORATORY FINDINGS

Marked hypocalcemia was detected in the blood and eye fluid; with one lamb having concurrently low magnesium and glucose levels. The cause of death was the low calcium levels.

DIAGNOSIS

Hypocalcaemia (Often referred to as transit tetany).

SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Transit tetany is a disease associated with transport stress incurred by sustained periods of food and water deprivation while being transported or held in yards. Factors that make stock at a higher risk of developing transit tetany include:

- Stock coming off lush pastures
- Stock grazing cereal plant or grain diets or
- Stock from a drought affected area

Without knowing the history of the lambs prior to the sale, the two days off feed is suspected to be the main contributing factor in this case.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO TREAT TRANSIT TETANY?

Stock affected by transit tetany can be treated with solutions containing calcium, magnesium and glucose. An injection of this solution under the skin is highly effective in mild cases. In severe cases where the animal is recumbent and cannot rise, under the skin injections are recommended but where possible injections into the vein by a veterinarian are most effective. Clinical cases are an indication that the whole mob requires oral calcium supplementation. Access to legume and pasture-based hays with calcium containing loose licks are highly recommended for stock that have spent substantial time in lairage, especially for the first 48 hours post arrival.

In this case, injections of a calcium solution were administered under the skin and the producer noticed some improvement in clinical signs following treatment. A calcium, magnesium, salt loose lick was provided ad lib to the entire mob to increase dietary calcium and magnesium intake.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT TRANSIT TETANY?

Where possible avoid prolonged periods without access to feed, especially in young growing stock, poor conditioned stock or pregnant animals. Where this is not possible, ensure stock have access to feed, as recommended above, following transport.



Case study:

LAME AND DROOLING COWS

District Veterinarian Sophie Hemley



CASE HISTORY

A producer identified twelve mixed aged, pregnant Angus cows suddenly becoming progressively lame over a 24 hour period. The cows had a lameness in typically their forelimbs and some were becoming recumbent (lying down) resulting in a reduced feed and water intake. The affected cows were drooling and some had stringy nasal discharge. The other 40 head of cattle in the mob appeared to be unaffected. The cows were grazing a cropping paddock and the area had received good recent rainfall.

CLINICAL FINDINGS

Clinical examination of eight affected Angus cows revealed little of clinical importance, however there were a number of cows that had a significant lameness (Score 4 out of 5). The producer noted that the cows that were most significantly affected yesterday were improving. Blood samples were taken for analysis at the lab.

One pet Dexter cow that the producer identified as having a reduced appetite had an elevated temperature of 40.1 degrees but was otherwise clinically normal.

DIAGNOSIS

Bovine ephemeral fever virus positive from blood results.

SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Bovine Ephemeral Fever (BEF), or commonly known as three day sickness, is a viral disease of cattle and buffalo. BEF is an arbovirus (that is a virus spread by arthropods) in this case biting insects such as mosquitoes. BEF is uncommonly seen in inland Australia but when it is diagnosed it typically occurs in January through to April following storms when the weather is still warm, allowing arthropod populations to build up and move.

Affected cattle usually have a transient (short lived) fever, lameness typically in one limb with or without swollen joints, heavy cows and bulls are most likely to become recumbent and many will have excessive nasal and oral discharge. Cattle typically self recover within three days (hence the name) but in some cases veterinary interventions may be required for secondary complications. Pneumonia is a common complication of BEF as the virus can affect the nerves that control swallowing, so animals forced to eat or drink may end up with foreign material on their lungs which progresses to pneumonia. An important consideration following a BEF outbreak is the complications of fever - pregnant cows may abort and bulls may become temporarily infertile.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT BEF?

Vaccination is possible, however may not be economically advantageous in many beef enterprises throughout inland Australia - this is something to discuss with your vet. Immunity can develop for a number of years in individual cows following exposure to the virus, however in our climate most cows would only be exposed to one or two outbreaks in their lifetime.



Picture: cow with bilateral nasal discharge and a left forelimb lameness 3/5.

We're still here!

In these challenging times we are still here to for advice and to assist with disease investigations. While the way we operate has had to change slightly in response to Covid-19, maintaining production and ensuring the health of your stock is still our priority. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your local district veterinarian on their mobile.

CONTACT YOUR CLOSEST DISTRICT VETERINARIAN

WAGGA

Emily Stearman - 0437 644 714 or 6923 6300

Dione Howard - 0428 115 134 or 6923 6300

YOUNG

Evie Duggan - 0427 147 939 or 6381 4700

NARRANDERA/GRIFFITH

Sophie Hemley - 0427 696 895 or 6960 1300

HAY

Courtney Simkin - 0427 418 006 or 6990 1304

GUNDAGAI

Kristy Stone - 6940 6900

Katelyn Braine - 0428 262 112 or 6940 6900

CHANGES TO NVD IN 2020

In response to a review of the current systems, changes have been made with the aim to create an easy to use system for producers. The changes include:

- NVD version updates
- Release of a new electronic National Vendor Declaration (eNVD) system &
- Decommissioning of the eDEC system.

Updated versions of NVDs will be available from 1 July 2020. The current versions of NVDs will continue to be acceptable up until 31st December 2020.

The new eNVD system is focused on being user-centric. The eNVD will be a system for completing all consignment paperwork digitally including livestock assurance and health declarations. It is available to all LPA accredited producers, feedlots and value chain stakeholders.

For more information and links to log into the new system see:

https://www.integritysystems.com.au/about/news--events/nvd-changes-on-the-way/?dm_i=4PKF,1Y7B,E6MAK,5YI4,1

<https://www.integritysystems.com.au/on-farm-assurance/national-vendor-declaration-nvd/>

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

African swine fever (ASF) is getting ever closer, having been confirmed as the cause of death of over 300 pigs in Papua New Guinea. ASF has already killed ¼ of the world's pig population.

ASF is a viral disease that is highly infectious to pigs. The mortality rate of the acute form is 100% and 30-70% in the subacute and chronic forms. It is spread through infectious tissue - meaning that in Australia our highest risk for introduction is through infected animal meat being fed to pigs.

Preventing swill feeding and implementing strict biosecurity laws is critical to preventing the introduction of African Swine Fever to Australia. An outbreak would be devastating for our pig production and health. A webinar hosted by Sheep Connect NSW, Dr Jason Trompf spoke on strategies for flock rebuilding - including joining management, scanning, lambing management feeding and other tips that will assist in getting the best flock reproductive performance possible. With many flocks running lower numbers of ewes, having reduced numbers during drought - managing those ewes for performance will be critical to build up flock numbers.

Dispose of your food scraps thoughtfully!

African swine fever is continuing its spread throughout Asia

It is deadly for pigs

Feeding pigs food scraps that contain meat or have been in contact with meat or meat products, spreads disease

It is also against the law

The infographic features a purple background with white and pink text. It includes icons of a trash bin, a pig, and a bowl of food. A pink checkmark is next to the text 'Dispose of your food scraps thoughtfully!' and a pink X is next to the text 'Feeding pigs food scraps that contain meat or have been in contact with meat or meat products, spreads disease'. The NSW Government logo is in the bottom right corner.

UPCOMING EVENTS

While many events have been postponed, take advantage of the range of webinars and online courses that are available.

MLA Productivity and Profitability Webinar Series:

A series of webinars that cover topics ranging from Resistance to Cattle Drench to Infectious Causes of Abortion in Sheep. The webinars are designed to assist sheep, cattle and goat producers to increase the productivity and profitability of their businesses.

Visit the following link to access: <https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/productivity-and-profitability-webinars/>

Or visit the MLA website and you will find the webinars under extension, training & tools.

Leading Sheep - Series of Webinars for new & aspiring sheep producers.



Strategies for Flock Rebuilding Following Drought by Sheep Connect NSW.

A webinar hosted by Sheep Connect NSW, Dr Jason Trompf spoke on strategies for flock rebuilding - including joining management, scanning, lambing management feeding and other tips that will assist in getting the best flock reproductive performance possible. With many flocks running lower numbers of ewes, having reduced numbers during drought - managing those ewes for performance will be critical to build up flock numbers.

Follow this link to find the recording, along with many other webinars on various topics: <https://sheepconnectnsw.com.au/tools/>

PODCASTS WORTH A LISTEN

RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness Australia & New Zealand by Rabobank.

An informative podcast that is put together by 90 analysts working in local teams across the worldwide Rabobank network. The episodes cover a wide range of topics and complex factors that are affecting our markets and production. It covers sectors from dairy, beef, lamb, cotton and grain production - so scroll through and pick out what interests you.

The Yarn

A podcast created by AWI, it speaks with wool growers, manufacturers, designers and everyone in between who is involved in the wool industry.

Scene + Herd: Podcasts from Beef + Lamb New Zealand

While some of the episodes are specifically related to the market and ag sector in New Zealand, there are many episodes that discuss husbandry management and herd health disease that relate to us in Australia. It's an interesting glimpse into the ever innovative New Zealand beef and lamb sector.