



Rochester Veterinary Practice, 72 Lowry Street Rochester 3561, Phone (03) 54842255 admin@rochyvet.com.au

Water Intoxication in Cattle

Over summer, we often see cases of water intoxication. Water intoxication occurs when stock have been deprived of water for a period of some days and are then given free access to water.

It seems natural to give stock free access to water after they have been deprived of water.

However, after water deprivations, when cattle drink a large amount of water all the cells in their body swell, including brain cells. This is because while they are deprived of water, they lose a lot of salt as well. When they drink large amounts of fresh water there is not enough salt to keep fluid in the bloodstream and so it moves into the body's cells.

When brain cells swell cattle show nervous symptoms such as stumbling, blindness and convulsions.

Any livestock that have been deprived of water for a long time should not be allowed to drink very large amounts of water straight away. The addition of electrolytes such as calf scour electrolytes will also reduce the danger of brain swelling due to water intoxication.

Treatment with hypersaline can help reduce the symptoms of water intoxication.

Veterinary advice is recommended as soon as you find out that some livestock have been deprived of water. We will be able help formulate a plan to slowly re-introduce water to the livestock.