

Flocknews July 2022


This edition is going to cover some interesting diseases we have seen in the area over the last few months.

Pulpy Kidney – also known as enterotoxaemia

What: Enterotoxaemia is essentially a disease of over-eating/rise in nutrition in unaccustomed sheep. The clostridial bacteria (*Clostridial perfringens type D*) is normally present in the sheep's intestines. However, when there is a rise in nutrition in unaccustomed sheep– increased grain feeding, lush clover pasture etc there is an overflow from the rumen to intestines which allows the bacteria to increase in numbers. The bacteria produce a toxin that has several effects on the body but ultimately affects the brain, resulting in death.

Clinical signs: usually sudden death. If found alive you may see seizures, weakness and diarrhoea.

There is a highly effective vaccine available but for optimal efficacy the labelled instructions must be followed. It is possible to get caught out with only giving one vaccine and forgetting the important booster at marking/weaning time. Have a chat with one of our vets next time we are out on farm to discuss your vaccination schedules.



6 in 1 vaccine offers protection against: Pulpy Kidney (Enterotoxaemia), Black Disease, Blackleg, Malignant oedema and Tetanus (clostridial diseases) and Cheesy Gland.

Red Gut

This condition is most commonly caused when grazing lush monoclonal lucerne (without weeds or grass present). When sheep eat such feed, the fermentation is shifted from the rumen to the intestines (from the fore-gut to the hind-gut). This change causes distention of the intestines and subsequent compression of the blood vessels. As a result, the blood supply to the intestines is lost which sends the animal into shock and then death.

Clinical signs: usually sudden death. If still alive, affected sheep may be lethargic and show signs of colic (kicking at belly etc).

We have seen red gut after recent rainfalls in particular this season. If you are concerned about lucerne grazing and would like some prevention advice, make sure to book a consultation with us.



Image of lush lucerne

Foot abscesses

With the wet weather over the last few months and heavy pregnant ewes in paddocks, foot abscesses have been a common complaint. Foot abscesses can be severely debilitating for sheep due to the pain involved. Essentially, the first joint in the sheep's foot is infected and the ligaments in this area can be damaged. Late pregnant ewes can suffer from metabolic diseases when feed intake is reduced and having a lameness issue can influence this. Sheep hoof care is very important and there are a few steps that can be taken that can help reduce the incidence of foot abscesses. If you think your sheep's hoof care could be improved, organise a farm consult soon.



Image of a discharging foot abscess

Footrot

Footrot has been around a little bit this season with concern of more cases appearing as the weather gets warmer. Footrot is caused by a specific bacteria called *Dichelobacter nodosus* which only survives in sheep feet. There are benign and virulent strains which can either be controlled or eradicated. If you have concerns about lame sheep a farm visit is a good idea to examine some feet and form a diagnosis which will lead onto treatment options.



Image of a lamb with footrot – note beginning of sole underrunning

Just a few reminders for this season:

- **WORMS** – do not forget to plan which paddocks your weaned lambs will be placed onto and your ewes. Are they low risk for worm pick up? If you have any concerns about possibly 'wormy' sheep remember not to drench routinely and to collect a faecal sample for an egg count. We are happy to chat further about worms and how to prepare worm plans for your farm.
- **Heavy pregnant ewes** should avoid time off feed as this can put them at risk of metabolic diseases such as low calcium and low energy. If husbandry events **MUST** be performed have a chat to us about setting up for success to avoid down, sick ewes.



Please call the clinic to update our system with your email account for future newsletter editions (03) 5484 2255. Do not hesitate to get in touch with Rochy Vets today!