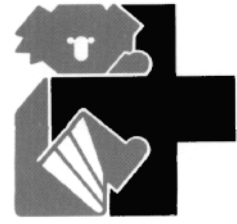


Spring Newsletter



September - November 2008.

Grass Seeds and Dogs

As the warmer months are approaching it is a good time to talk about grass seeds and the problems they can cause your dog. The major issue with grass seeds is their ability to burrow through the skin and find their way into various narrow areas of the body. The main areas usually affected are the ears, eyes and feet. Grass seeds can also bury themselves into the skin in all other parts of the body as well. The trouble is that the seeds tend to be abrasive and they also carry environmental bacteria on their surface. For this reason they tend to set up infections where they lodge, which can be very painful.



The clinical signs of a grass seed problem will depend on where the grass seed ends up. In the ears they tend to cause shaking of the head or tilting to one side, as well as scratching at the ear. With time an infection will develop which may bring redness of the ear and discharge and smell from the ear canal. In the feet grass seeds tend to form abscesses between the toes. There will usually be a red and sore bulge with a small hole draining infected material to the outside. These abscesses tend to be very sore and often cause a visible lameness and may cause licking at the feet. Grass seeds in the eyes will cause squinting and with time a discharge from the eye. They are very serious because it does not take long for the seed to abrade the surface of the eye which can progress to full rupture of the eyeball if untreated. Grass seeds in the eye can be quite tricky because they often hide behind the 3rd eyelid where they are difficult to see. Grass seed abscesses in other parts of the body tend to look like a raised red lump with a small hole discharging infected material.

The treatment of grass seed problems involves retrieval of the seed and a course of antibiotics and pain relief to deal with the infection and soreness associated with the seed. Unfortunately it is often necessary to sedate or anaesthetise the patient for this because they are often very sore and uncooperative. In doing this it gives us the best chance to retrieve the offending seed because without doing this it is very difficult to get the infection to resolve.

As with many things prevention is better than cure. We recommend that dogs are not allowed to run freely in areas where grass seeds are prominent. If this is unavoidable it is a good idea to have your dog's paws clipped to stop grass seeds lodging in the hair between the toes where they can then burrow into the skin. It is also a good idea to regularly examine your dog's feet, ears and coat and pull out any grass seeds that have attached themselves before they can do harm. If a problem begins to develop it is much easier to retrieve the seed sooner rather than later as with time the seeds can migrate further and begin to degenerate making complete retrieval very difficult. Some simple preventative steps combined with prompt treatment can make grass seed problems much less of a headache this Spring and Summer.

MICROCHIPPING

Microchipping is now mandatory for all new registrations in Wangaratta
Microchipping is on special for **\$31.50** at present, a saving of **45%**

Calving Problems

It has been a pretty good winter for rainfall in many areas of the district. This is a scenario that we have not seen for a few years due to the drought conditions we have unfortunately been experiencing. With this rainfall has come good winter pastures and fatter cows. As a result of this we have been called out to many cows having difficulty calving in the late winter and early spring. These are often due to a combination of larger calves from the mother's better nutrition and a narrower pelvic canal from additional fat that has been laid down during the pregnancy. Unfortunately it is too late to do much about this combination of problems for this calving season, but it doesn't hurt to look ahead to next year where hopefully we will experience a wetter winter again. In addition to this it is a good time to remember that regular checks of calving cows and timely veterinary intervention when they are having difficulty will bring the best results in terms of live calves on the ground and value for your veterinary dollar.



To reduce the incidence of calving problems there are several things that can be done. Firstly it is important to ensure that heifers have grown out sufficiently before they are joined. Young/Small heifers represent a significant number of the animals we see having difficulty calving. In normal conditions it is recommended that heifers are not joined prior to 15 months of age. This allows them to grow to a big enough size to carry the calf and deliver it without too much difficulty. If you suspect that a heifer has been mated prior to this time we strongly suggest that she is treated with medication to abort the pregnancy and stop any calving problems down the track. In years like this it is important to monitor the cows and determine if they are increasing in condition during the pregnancy. This is especially true of heifers. There is a fine line between having cows and heifers in good condition and having them over conditioned which leads to calving difficulty. It may be necessary to restrict their access to very good pastures periodically throughout the winter in wet years to stop them getting too fat. It is important to remember that we do not want cows losing weight during the pregnancy as underweight cows can have as many troubles delivering their calves and feeding them as overweight cows can.

A normal presentation for a calf is with the nose and front feet coming first. They will be within the amniotic sac for a period during the labour. Once this sac has ruptured and the fluids released the calf is ready to be delivered. If you can feel the nose or feet distinctly, or better still see them the cow is trying to deliver the calf. We recommend that you call a vet for assistance if you cannot feel the normal presentation or the cow has been straining for over 1-2 hours. You should never try and pull a calf out if you cannot feel the normal presentation, and calves should never be pulled by one leg or using utes/tractors/motorbikes. Excessive force is not the way to deliver a calf and will injure the cow. Correction of the legs and head to a normal presentation is the key to delivering a calf that the mother is having difficulty with. If you have any doubts about the calf's presentation or the cow has been trying to calve without success it is better to have the vet earlier than later as the longer the delay the greater the chance of the calf dying or the mother being injured.

“King Valley Run”

A service provided every Tuesday charging TRAVEL fees from Greta, Moyhu or Milawa.

“Beechworth & Myrtleford Valley Run”

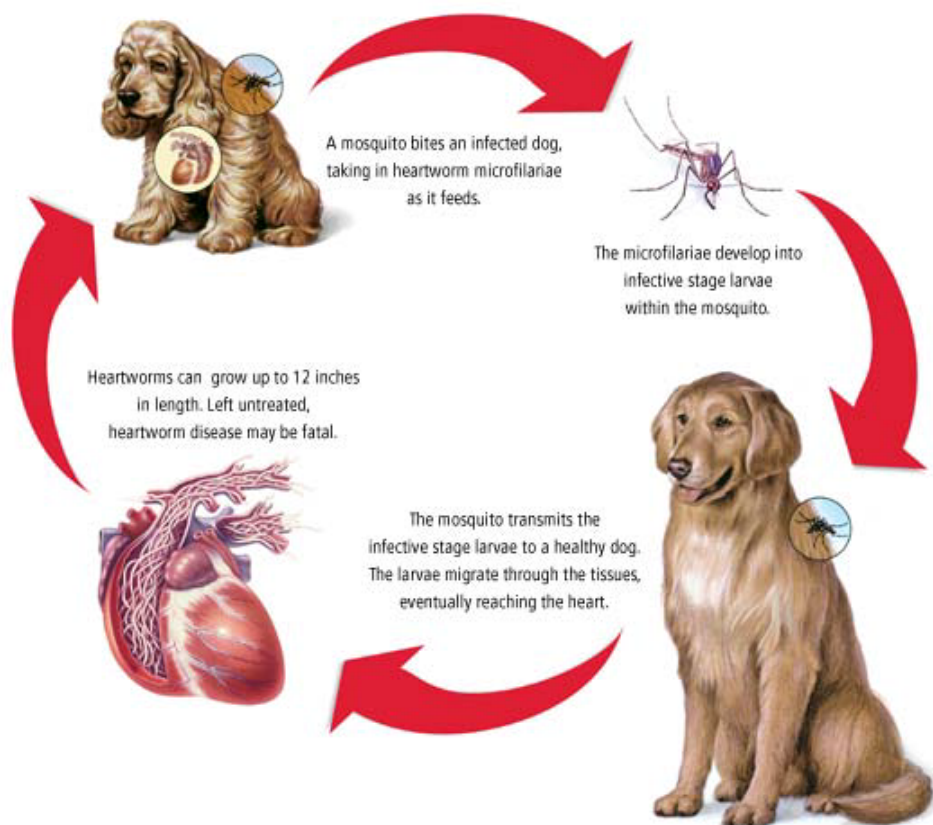
A service provided every Thursday charging TRAVEL fees from Markwood, Everton, Beechworth and Myrtleford

Heartworm Prevention in Dogs

Heartworm Disease is a potentially fatal disease caused by a worm that inhabits the chambers of the heart and the large blood vessels of the lungs. The worm is transmitted by mosquitoes and left untreated will eventually lead to clogging of the heart and great vessels followed by heart failure and death. There is a summary of the Heartworm Life Cycle in the picture below.

Heartworm Life Cycle

The life cycle of the heartworm begins when a mosquito bites and feeds on the blood of an infected dog that is carrying tiny immature heartworms in its blood. During the next two to three weeks, the larvae develop into the infective stage within the mosquito. When the infected mosquito feeds again, it can transmit heartworm larvae to a healthy cat or dog.



A recent study of unprotected dogs in Wangaratta revealed that 5% of unprotected dogs were infected with Heartworm. Although this is not a huge number the severity of the disease makes it a very good idea to protect your dog from this parasite. In addition to this any travel with your dog to the Murray River or coastal Victoria will increase their risk of heartworm greatly.

The good news is that Heartworm prevention is very simple. It can be achieved with a once a year injection or with once a month tablet or spot-on treatment. These treatments are virtually 100% effective at preventing the disease when used properly and should be part of your dog's routine health care. If you have a new puppy or an older dog that has not begun its heartworm preventative routine please give us a call (57217177) to organise the best routine.

Why Not Get Your Pet Desexed Now?!

The RSPCA is currently subsidising our routine desexing!

\$25 off male desexing

\$30 off female desexing

Please call the clinic on 5721 7177 to book you pet in!

Thankyou to the RSPCA for their wonderful support.

Sore Footed Horse?



It is spring time & many a horse is sore footed at the moment.

What is founder/laminitis?

Founder is typically a disease of ponies & horses. It is a term meaning that there is inflammation in the feet & is often triggered by new growth of spring grass. Some horses get a bout every year, others are less affected. Typically horses that are paddock rested, unfit & overweight are those most prone, however, many other horses & ponies can be affected.

Laminitis essentially means inflammation of the interconnections of the hoof wall with the coffin bone of the foot. In a heavy horse, it is easy to imagine the upward pressure from the ground on the hoof wall & the downward pressure of the body weight on the coffin bone – all leading to pain when there is inflammation between the two.

What can be done to prevent founder?

Prevention requires preparation.

- Carry heavier horses & ponies with reasonable weight through the winter i.e. avoid obesity.
- Before there is a spring flush of grass, those prone to founder should be confined to a dry area with minimal pick & supplemented with dry pasture hay. This will reduce weight & prevent consumption of too much green pick.
- Horses & ponies in lock-up need to keep moving. Exercise is important in maintaining normal skeletal function & good blood flow. Ponying behind another horse may help, alternatively for those that are sore, gentle walks on the lead twice a day are useful.
- Good trimming is also of benefit in prevention of founder. Keep all horses regularly trimmed & balanced, or regularly shod.

What can be done to manage acute founder?

- Lessons from observation of brumbies, as well as scientific research have shown that cooling the feet & pastern area (i.e. standing in streams) can prevent the development of sore feet into a much larger problem. As soon as sore feet are found, try cooling the feet by hosing or strapping cool packs around the foot & up above the fetlock.
- Consult your veterinarian regarding pain control & diet recommendations
- Have the feet tended to. If the feet are too long, there may be some pain relief afforded by reducing the length of the toe. Support for the frog & sole may also help: consult your vet or farrier.
- Confining, dietary management & exercise (pain levels permitting) as mentioned before.

What can be done to manage chronic founder?

- Lameness from founder should be diagnosed by a vet. This will involve careful examination of the horse & feet & may include X-rays.
- In chronic cases, radiographs (X-rays) of the foot can give us a clearer picture of the relationship between the bone & the hoof wall.
- Therapeutic trimming & farrier work may alleviate pain & help with the mechanics of the feet.
- Horses dealing with chronically lame feet often have sore backs & necks from shifting weight all the time. Chiropractic work or massage can help with general comfort.

Newsletters online

Would you like to receive our quarterly newsletters via Email?

If so, fill out the form below and drop it in to us at Warby Street.

Name:
(first name) (surname)

Email Address: