



Warby Street  
Veterinary Hospital

# Warby St Vet Hospital Newsletter and Wangaratta Equine Hospital



## SUMMER 2013

With a few hot days under our belts and a few more in the forecast it is pretty clear we are headed into Summer. Snake bites, grass seeds problems and heat stress are occupying our days at work already.

### Transporting your Cat to the Vet

#### Transporting your kitty cat to the vet clinic

Most cats are not particularly happy travellers. The reward of exploring somewhere new at the end of a journey does not enthuse the average feline in the same way as it does the canine adventurer! Cats are usually strongly bonded to their own territory and feel very vulnerable in a strange environment. Naturally, it is no surprise that one of the reasons commonly cited by pet owners for not seeking veterinary care includes the cat's stress or fear associated with the practical difficulties of transporting cats to receive veterinary care.

Routine annual health check-ups with your vet are just as important for cats as they are for dogs. It is well known that preventative veterinary care can improve quality of life, detect illness earlier and therefore, reduce the long term expenses associated with a pet's health care.



#### ***Suggestions for overcoming the stress of transport for cats:***

Socialize kittens early to the carrier and to travelling. Keep the carrier out and accessible in the home. Create a positive association with the carrier by making it a comfortable resting or play location. Feed treats in the carrier at home.

Apply a calming synthetic pheromone (feliway®) and/or place familiar clothing from a favourite person in the carrier on a routine basis and just prior to transport. The cat will be less alarmed if the carrier smells familiar and reassuring.

#### **Inside this issue:**

Withholding food prior to travel may help prevent motion sickness and is beneficial if blood is to be collected.

- |                                   |          |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------|--|
| Transporting Cats                 | <b>1</b> | Never travel with the cat loose in the car and always use a robust carrier that is easy to clean. Choose carefully - cardboard is no match for a resolute cat! A carrier that opens at the top may be much easier to use for the crafty cat that can be gently lifted in or out.   |
| Summer time & Pets                | <b>2</b> | Provide cover/hiding options during transport (ie. a blanket draped over the carrier). Stay calm so the cat doesn't pick up stress from you. Be reassuring and avoid loud noises. Drive carefully to avoid the cat being thrown around. Secure the carrier in the car in a foot well or on a seat (with a seatbelt) so it cannot move. |
| Newsletter Subscription           |          |  |
| Flystrike                         | <b>3</b> | On arrival at the clinic, avoid rushing. Keep your cat in the carrier – avoid swinging it or banging it against objects/your legs.   |
| Tetanus                           |          | Take some spare bedding (smelling of home) in case your cat is sick or soils the carrier.  |
| Impaction Colic                   | <b>4</b> | Note: If your cat knows the carrier means a vet visit/car trip and suddenly disappears – keep the carrier hidden until just before you put your cat in it and don't let your sneaky kitty outside.   |
| Angular Limb Deformities in foals |          |  |



## Summer Time and Pets

Summer is a great time to be out and about with our pets. The weather is warmer, the days are longer and everyone enjoys BBQ's, time at the river or beach and many other outdoor pursuits. At the vet hospital summer presents us with a yearly influx of similar problems due to both the warmer weather and the fact that people are spending more time with their pets.

The most common problem we encounter is that of grass seeds. These seeds find their way into any and all places in a dog or cat. Common sites include the ears, feet, nose and coat. It is much better to remove these seeds before they have a chance to cause any great damage (infection or irritation). Daily examinations of your pet's paws and coat are a good idea if they are exposed to grass seeds. Clipping long haired animals shorter is also a good idea as most grass seeds get lodged in the fur before burrowing into the skin.

Snake bite is a constant worry during summer in the North East, especially for pets on farms. Keeping pets in the home yard and protecting it with snake mesh or electronic snake repellents is a good idea. Avoid leaving a lot of water and food around as this can also attract snakes. Snake bite usually causes weakness and collapse. It also often causes drooling, vomiting and dilation of the pupils. If your pet is at risk of snake bite and is showing these symptoms it is best to get them to the vet hospital as soon as possible for assessment and treatment.

BBQ's present a host of worries, particularly to dogs who are pretty keen to get involved in the festivities. Fatty foods like sausages or pork chops can cause pancreatitis (a nasty pancreatic inflammatory disease) and many BBQ items can present intestinal obstruction hazards if ingested. Corn cobs, satay skewers and stonefruit seeds are some of the things that have been removed from dogs after a BBQ mishap.

Summer activities can also lead to injuries or mishaps in our pets. Fishing hooks are a particular problem. Cats will often play with hooks that have colourful lures on them and dogs are commonly "hooked" accidentally either while fishing or before you even get there. Injuries are also common when camping in the bush or when dogs are running off the lead. Keeping pets on leads in the bush can help reduce the risk of encounters with kangaroos or spearing themselves with sticks. Enjoy your time with your pets this summer, but please take care!

## Newsletter Mailing List

We produce a 4 page newsletter every season to keep our clients informed about the goings on at Warby St Veterinary Hospital and the Wangaratta Equine Hospital. We send the newsletter out with our statements each time it is printed, but also deliver it electronically by email. If you would like to receive the newsletter in your email inbox you can either email me your address at [tim@warbyvet.com.au](mailto:tim@warbyvet.com.au) or fill out the slip below and return it to Warby St Vet Hospital or Wangaratta Equine Hospital in person or by snail mail.

YES! I'D LIKE TO RECEIVE THE QUARTERLY WARBY ST VET HOSPITAL NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL!

NAME: .....

EMAIL ADDRESS: .....

### “KING VALLEY RUN”

A service for routine work provided most **TUESDAYS** charging travel fees from:

Glenrowan, Greta, Moyhu or Milawa.

### “BEECHWORTH AND MYRTLEFORD RUN”

For routine work most **THURSDAYS**, travel fees from:

Markwood, Everton, Beechworth, Myrtleford

## Fly strike

### Fly strike

Humid conditions over the past month have led to an increased incidence of fly strike in sheep. The primary blowfly responsible for fly strike is *Lucilia cuprina*. The adult fly is approx 10mm long, and has a bright green shiny body. The hairy maggot fly (*Chrysomya ruficacies*) is a secondary strike fly, which will breed on carcasses and strike after a *Lucilia cuprina* strike.

Fact: adult flies will not travel more than 3km from where they hatch during their lifespan.

Breech strike on ewes, and pizzle strike in wethers is the most common. Urine leads to moist conditions on the skin, causing a dermatitis that is very attractive for the flies.

Management practices can significantly reduce the incidence of fly strike. Mulesed sheep have a very low incidence of breech strike. Timing shearing and crutching to be around peak blowfly period (early spring to late summer/autumn) will have a big impact on the number of cases seen.

Some excellent chemical products exist to prevent and treat fly strike. The newer class of insect growth regulators give long lasting protection against flies (up to 14 weeks). This class provides excellent prevention, but other compounds (such as organophosphates) may be better for treatment of cases. Chemical selection will depend on the season, sheep to be protected, wool growth on the sheep, and chemical residues. It should be decided on an individual farm basis.

Regular monitoring of sheep during the danger period is essential to minimize losses, as it can cause significant morbidity and mortality in a mob.



*Lucilia cuprina*: The Sheep Blowfly

## Tetanus

### Tetanus

Tetanus is a nasty disease caused by toxins of the anaerobic bacterium *Clostridium tetani*.

The bacteria is widespread in the environment, found as spores in the soil, and in the intestinal tract of animals. It can enter a human or animal and produce toxins when a wound causes a break in the skin barrier. Puncture wounds are particularly dangerous, as *C. tetani* is an anaerobic bacteria, so thrives in wounds where there is little oxygen. Even wounds in the oral cavity caused by shedding juvenile teeth and getting adult teeth coming through can be susceptible to tetanus entry.

Tetanus is not a contagious disease, but the spores can live in the environment for several years.

The disease is characterised by painful muscle spasms, which can cause respiratory failure, and ultimately death in untreated cases. It is also known as 'lock-jaw', as muscle spasms in jaw muscles early in the stage of the disease can cause difficulty eating and opening the mouth. The ears may also be pulled back causing a facial expression that looks like a grimace. The third eyelid gland is often pulled part way across the eyes also.

Tetanus can be very effectively prevented with a vaccination program. This is inexpensive, and prevention is much better than treatment of this disease. An anti-toxin is available, but unless treatment is initiated early, the fatality rate can be high.

Vaccination against *Clostridium tetani* is a component of the cattle and sheep 5 in 1 vaccines. Two vaccinations 4-6 weeks apart, followed by annual boosters are required for this vaccine.

Horses can be vaccinated with either tetanus alone, or a combined tetanus/strangles vaccine. From 3 months of age, horses require 2 vaccinations 3-4 weeks apart, followed by a booster injection 12 months later. This will provide long term immunity, with boosters required every 5 years thereafter. The combined tetanus/strangles 2 in 1 vaccine requires a slightly different protocol.

Dogs are also susceptible to tetanus, but less so than livestock and horses. Dogs can also be vaccinated for tetanus. Tetanus vaccination should be considered an essential part of animal husbandry.

## Impaction Colic

### Impaction colic in horses

The dry weather and feed over the past few months in the North East has resulted in a large increase in the number of impaction colics we have seen. An impaction is essentially a firm mass of ingesta (feed) that blocks the digestive tract of the horse and causes colic (abdominal pain). They are most often formed in the large colon.

Causes can be poor quality roughage that is difficult to digest, ingestion of large quantities of grain, poor teeth resulting in feed not being chewed sufficiently (common cause in older horses), sudden change in diet, restricted access to water or dehydration, and poor water quality.

These impaction colics typically cause low grade to moderate abdominal pain that can go on for several days. Horses will go off their food, and pass only very small amounts of feces or faecal balls covered in mucous. Often if treated promptly, these horses can be managed without surgery. Treatment involves pain relief, administration of faecal softeners and large volumes of fluid via nasogastric (stomach) tube, and intravenous fluids in severe cases.

## Limb Deformities in Foals

### Limb deformities in foals

Foals commonly are affected by flexural or angular limb deformities shortly after birth. If correctly managed, these foals can often grow up to have good conformation.

Flexural deformities relate to the tendon structures of the front and hind legs. Foals can be very upright and have difficulty walking, appearing to have 'contracted tendons'. These can be managed with controlled exercise, splinting the leg on occasions – although care must be taken that pressure sores do not develop, and often the drug oxytetracycline is given. This can be very useful at relaxing the tendons. Foals can also have tendons that are too relaxed shortly after birth, making it difficult for them to stand. Fetlocks may nearly touch the ground in severe cases, and the toe will want to point upwards. Corrective boards or plastic shoe slips may be strapped on to the foot to give heel support in these cases, and often they will improve as the foal becomes stronger.

Angular limb deformities often develop as the foal grows, and is basically crooked legs. Common problems are 'knock knees' or 'pigeon toes'. These can be improved often with corrective trimming, combined with rest (stable or small yard) and occasionally casting the leg.



Valgus (outward) deformity



In more advanced cases, surgical procedures such as 'periosteal stripping' or screw placement may be required. In general, fetlock deformities should be addressed in the first few weeks of life, and knee/hock deformities by the age of two to three months. It is always best to get professional advice on these foals early, as management from an early age has the best chance of correcting the deformity.