



# Warby St Vet Hospital News

## and Wangaratta Equine Hospital

The weather has taken a definite turn towards crisp and frosty mornings. Time to break out the winter rugs and coats for all our 4 legged friends.

Winter edition 2010



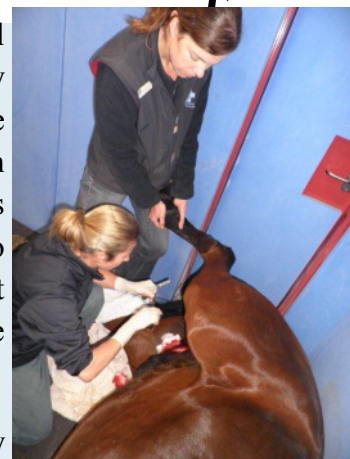
## Wangaratta Equine Hospital News



Work has begun in the new Wangaratta Equine Hospital (WEH) building at the Tone Rd site. The facility has already proven itself with several surgeries taking place within the confines of the padded boxes or indoor crush well away from any rain, dust or other environmental debris. Rapid results from on site digital x-rays and video-endoscopy have also been attained and the ability to leave a horse and collect it at the owner or trainer's convenience seems to be a welcome service.



We are pleased to announce that the WEH will be officially opened on the horse's birthday, Sunday the 1st of August 2010. There will be an open day to allow our clients and the general public to tour the new facility. We are excited to have people along to witness the state of the art equipment and building that has been painstakingly fitted out to provide the best possible care for our equine patients. Come along and join in the fun. Further details will be made available closer to the day.



Dr Sarah Norman removes an equine sarcoid assisted by equine nurse Melinda Roberts.



## Equine Dental Month in July



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August has traditionally been dental health month for dogs and cats. This year we are extending our FREE dental check services into July for our equine patients.

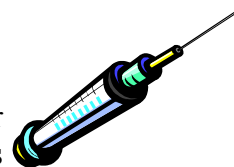
On Friday the 2nd and Saturday the 3rd of July at the WEH (Tone Rd) we will be conducting FREE dental health checks on horses. A dental check is usually \$88 so this is a great saving.

Any dental work that is recommended and carried out on the day will attract a 10% discount off the normal fee for the service. Bookings are essential and any work done will require payment on the day. One word of warning is that some horses will not tolerate examination of the mouth or dental rasping without sedation, so we apologise if this fee has to be added. Sedation is usually around \$85 depending on the size of the horse, but we will apply a \$15 discount from the sedation price if it is needed.

In addition to the dental checks we will be providing discounted microchipping. Microchipping is normally \$88 for a visit and \$31.50 for the microchip itself. On these days we will microchip horses for the cost of the chip alone, ie \$31.50. As with the dental checks bookings are essential and payment will be on the day.

## Triennial Vaccination for Dogs

Recent developments in vaccine technology have led to the production of a longer lasting C3 vaccine for dogs. The vaccination regime for puppies remains unchanged. They will still require a vaccination at 6-8 weeks of age and 10-12 weeks of age followed by a booster one year later. After these 3 initial vaccinations however the new vaccine will be protective for a 3 year period. This technology is only applicable to the C3 (canine 3) vaccine component. The C3 protects against 3 deadly viral diseases of dogs, namely hepatitis, distemper and parvo viruses. The vaccine for kennel cough and the once a year Heartworm Prevention injection will still be needed annually. The new vaccine will be more expensive than the current annual vaccine as it is a new product that has had significant research and testing to allow its accreditation.



We are happy to provide this new product for puppies or adult dogs, but strongly stress that the annual health check remains the cornerstone of maintaining your pet's health. A yearly examination and checkup will help to detect any diseases much more promptly than an examination only every 3 years. To put it in perspective only going to the vet every 3 years is like us only seeing a doctor every 21 years! Chances are your pet will come in each year for an examination with their kennel cough vaccine or heartworm preventative, but if not you should make it a priority for them to have a health

## Small Animal Dental Month

August is Small Animal Dental Health month. As usual Warby St Vet Hospital will be providing FREE dental health checks for your pets right throughout August. For your pet's free check make sure to give us a call and book it in.

## Senior Pet Information Night

We are pleased to announce that we will be hosting another seminar in July. The information night will centre around the Care of Pets as they Get Older. Dr Sarah Norman of the Warby St Vet Hospital will make a presentation along with two guest speakers from Hills Pet Nutrition and Boehringer Ingelheim.

As your pet ages the concerns for their health change also. The emphasis shifts away from the problems of younger life such as accidents and injury to things such as dental health, arthritis and chronic disease. The seminar aims to cover the main things that owners and vets can do together to ensure their older pet is looked after as best as possible in its later years.

The venue will again be the TAFE Auditorium in Docker St. The date is Tuesday the 27th of July 2010 and the time 7:00PM. A small admission of \$5 will be charged which will include supper after the information session.

Please RSVP to the Warby St Vet Hospital on 5721 7177 if you would like to attend.

### *"King Valley Run"*

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

### *"Beechworth & Myrtleford Valley Run"*

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

# Stringhalt in Horses

Several cases of stringhalt in horses have occurred in the North East of Victoria in recent weeks.

This very debilitating condition is a nerve disorder primarily in the back legs of horses. The horses have an exaggerated flexion of the back legs, causing a “high stepping” action.

The action is much worse when the horse is excited or tries to move quickly.

Although the cause is not proven, it is believed that stringhalt occurs in NE Victoria after summer rains, when the “flatweed” ( *Hypochaeris radicata*) is in flower. The “flatweed” is often incorrectly called “dandelion”.

Some horses like eating the “flatweed” flowers which harbour a toxic fungus or some such thing which grows after summer rain. Usually by the time we see stringhalt the pastures are no longer toxic. The message to horse owners is to watch for the flowering “flatweed” in late summer and make sure horses are well fed with plenty of good quality hay as an alternative. Horses usually will not choose to eat the “flatweed” unless no other food is available.

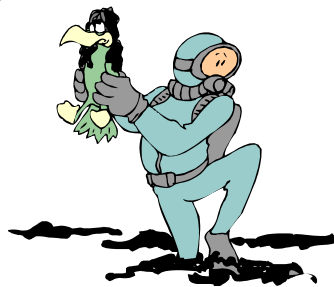
Most horses will recover with time, but if very severe, the horses literally cannot graze and it is difficult even to drink.

If horse owners have paddocks with lots of flatweed, they should consider pasture improvement. Top dressing with fertiliser, and re-sowing with better grasses will out compete and reduce the flatweed in the paddock.

If early signs of stringhalt are suspected remove them from the pasture and seek attention from your veterinary surgeon immediately.

Dr Graeme Blanch BAgSc BVSc MACVS

## Oil Spills and Wildlife



Marine wildlife are greatly affected by spilt oil in their natural environment. The effects vary depending on the type of oil, but the main issue is the coating of animals with thick and sticky oil. As time goes on the stickiness of the oil often increases making successful cleaning and rehabilitation more difficult. Unfortunately marine birds and mammals do not always avoid oil spills. Some fish are attracted to oil on the water as it looks like floating food. These schools of fish attract other larger predators like seabirds, seals and dolphins who then become coated or otherwise affected by the oil. Marine birds and mammals have a highly evolved specialised covering on their bodies. Whether it be fur or feathers the end result is a highly water resistant and insulating layer that protects them from water and cold. Coating with oil destroys these properties making the animals highly susceptible to hypothermia. In the case of seabirds it also makes flight very difficult or impossible. Oil is also an irritant substance. It causes inflammation of the eyes and if swallowed or inhaled can do much internal damage. These are the primary affects of sticky oils like crude or bunker fuel. Treatment of these animals involves cleaning them thoroughly with mild detergents, then keeping them warm, hydrated and fed until they can be re-released to the wild.

The secondary effects of oil are the longer lasting ones and in the end often the worst. Poisoning of the environment can be a very long term problem especially when more refined petroleum products (like petrol) are spilt. These can poison algae and smaller prey animals which leads to problems the whole way up the food chain. Further sickness, infertility and deaths are likely for some time after a spill. In some severe oil spills cleanup operations are still finding oil in the environment many years after the initial spill.

The national government has a strategy called the "National Oiled Wildlife Response Guide" which is activated when a spill affects wildlife. It is a requirement by Australian law that oiled wildlife is treated quickly and humanely.



*Hypochaeris radicata* or “Flatweed”  
The offending plant in Stringhalt

## Grass Tetany

Grass Tetany is a condition that we see over winter and spring in North East Victoria.

Clinical signs are caused by low magnesium levels in the body. Affected cattle typically show in-coordination, hyperaesthesia ('mad cow' look, very reactive to stimuli), have muscle spasms and convulse. Cattle will die if not treated. Often cattle are found dead with signs of a struggle on the ground.

Low magnesium is due to either inadequate consumption of pasture, or inadequate levels of magnesium available in the pasture. Lactating cows will lose some magnesium to the milk, and may be more prone to developing grass tetany.

In this area we often see grass tetany associated with bad weather, where cattle take shelter rather than graze, thus not consuming enough magnesium for dietary requirements. Prolonged yarding and transport can have a similar effect. In the spring, grass tetany can be seen in cattle on lush pastures with high levels of potassium and nitrogen, which reduces the absorption of magnesium from the forestomach.

Hypocalcaemia (milk fever) may also occur with some cases.

Treatment ideally involves intravenous administration of preparations containing magnesium, then another deposit of solution under the skin for longer term effect. Often a combined solution of calcium/magnesium/glucose and phosphorus is given. Mildly affected animals may respond to this

treatment under the skin, but many will require the solution into the vein. Care must be taken when doing this and ideally the heart listened to for the development of arrhythmias which can cause sudden death.



Preventative methods include Causmag (magnesium oxide) on hay daily, magnesium pellets, magnesium bullets, salt blocks, top dressing of pasture with magnesium-rich fertilizers, and provision of shelter. Addition of Causmag to hay is probably the most cost effective and reliable method to prevent grass tetany.



## NEWSLETTERS ONLINE

If you would like to receive our newsletters in your email please fill out this slip and return it to us at the hospital. Alternately you may email me at [tim@warbyvet.com.au](mailto:tim@warbyvet.com.au) and I will add you to the mailing list.

Name: .....

Email address: .....