



AUTUMN 2017

Hard to believe but Autumn is here. Arguably the best time of the year to get outside with your animals and enjoy the prolonged warm weather.

New Strain of Rabbit Calici Virus Released in March

If you have a pet rabbit, now is a very good time to make sure they are vaccinated.

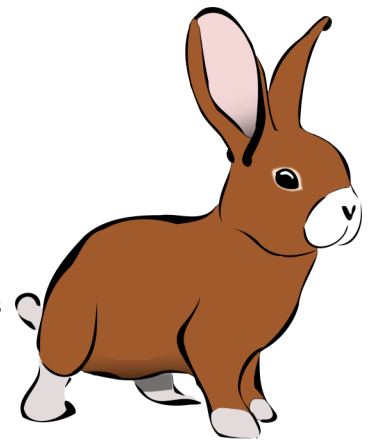
In the first week of March a planned national release of a new strain of the deadly rabbit calicivirus will go ahead throughout Australia to aid in population control of feral rabbits.

It is a Korean (K5) variant of the existing (Czech) virus already widespread in Australia after it was released in 1996. A study undertaken by the NSW Department of Primary Industries indicates that the existing vaccine for pet rabbits is effective against the new strain.

Calicivirus is contagious and is spread via direct contact with infected rabbits, things that infected rabbits have touched, and flying insects such as flies.

We recommend that all rabbit owners:

- Ensure their rabbits' vaccinations are up to date before the release of the new strain.
- Prevent contact between pet and wild rabbits.
- Don't cut grass and feed it to pet rabbits if wild rabbits may have been near the grass.
- Wash hands with warm soapy water between handling rabbits.
- Insect proof the hutch or keep rabbits indoors. This is also very important for prevention of myxomatosis, for which there is no vaccine available in Australia.
- Isolate infected rabbits.
- Thoroughly clean all cages and equipment and disinfect with 10% bleach, 10% sodium hydroxide, or other viricidal disinfectants. (Remember to use the material safety data sheets when using disinfectants)



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The recommended vaccination regime for a pet rabbit depends on their age and their level of risk. Young rabbits should be vaccinated at 8 and 12 weeks of age for the best protection. Rabbits over 12 weeks of age that have never been vaccinated need only one dose of the vaccine to become protected. Usually repeating the vaccination once a year is required to maintain protection. In high risk situations (such as bordering onto farmland) repeating the vaccination every 6 months will provide better protection against the virus.

There is also another type of calici virus (as opposed to a different strain) that has been isolated in Australia in 2015. Interestingly no one can definitively say where the virus came from as it was not released by government authorities. This virus version acts differently to the usual calici virus and kills rabbit kittens at a much younger age (4 weeks). Unfortunately the vaccination available for the usual calici virus is not fully protective against this version. This makes the above preventative measures even more important, especially in young rabbits.

Lupoid Onychodystrophy (Weak and Crumbling Toenails)

Some dogs seem to be very good at catching their toenails on things and pulling them off, but there may be an underlying weakness to the nails that contributes to this phenomenon. A disease called lupoid onychodystrophy is a rare occurrence in dogs but is seen a few times each year in our clinic. The disease is auto-immune in nature where the dog's own immune system wrongly targets the tissues of the nail beds. This leads to weak attachments to the nails, crumbling dry nails and repetitive nail bed infections or dislodged toenails. It often presents as repetitive toenail injuries, limping or ongoing licking at the feet. It can affect all 4 feet or be somewhat patchy, with some toes appearing to be OK.

It is not a disease that can be cured as the body's willingness to continue attacking the nail beds will continue for life. However, with some time and treatment successful management can be initiated to strengthen the attachment of the claws and improve the quality of the toenail material being produced.

Ideally immune modulation is achieved without the use of long term cortisone. The antibiotic doxycycline is also used as an immune modulator to prevent the wrongful damage to the nail beds. In conjunction with Vitamin B3 supplementation, Omega 3 and 6 oil supplementation (from fish oil and evening primrose oil) and regular trimming of the nails to prevent breaks successful management can be achieved. The Hills pet food company has recently released a new dog food called Derm Defence that is rich in the omega 3 and 6 oils and can be an easier way to supplement these things in their diet. It can be useful in the control of various other types of dermatitis as well as this toenail problem.

If your dog seems to be breaking its toenails regularly it would be worth seeing your vet to have them assess the quality of their toenails and their attachment to the underlying nail beds.

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 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!

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Why do we see an Increase in Sand Colic in Autumn.

Colic, including sand colic in horses can occur at any time of year but Autumn can be a particularly. As the months get cooler and rainfall starts to increase we see a flush of fresh green growth. Pasture with short coverage and poor root supply increases the chances of sand being pulled up and ingested whilst horses are grazing.

As sand builds up in the gastrointestinal tract of the horse signs of colic will start to occur. These signs can be subtle such as a reluctance to eat, tail swishing, looking at the flanks and kicking at the belly or more dramatic such as lying down, constantly getting up and down or rolling.



What should you do if you suspect sand colic:

- If your horse is actively colicky, call a veterinarian! Medical attention of these cases is required!
- Begin a treatment regime of psyllium husks in the diet. Psyllium helps to collect up sand from the gut and expel it in the faeces.
 - * Include one cup of psyllium husks a day in a hard feed ration for 7-10 days. Follow this with a dose once a week for 4-5 weeks.
- Check faeces for evidence of sand. Pick up some faeces in a long glove or plastic bag and mix it up with generous amount of water to disperse the faeces evenly. Hang the glove/bag on a fence for 24 hours. Any sand will be easily visualised after this time as it settles to the bottom of the glove or bag.

How can you avoid the occurrence of sand colic:

- Don't feed out hay or grain directly onto the ground. Instead use buckets, feeders or hay nets.
- Avoid grazing pastures until there is a good root supply of fresh growth, particularly if the soil is sandy.
- Implement a 'maintenance' regime with psyllium husks treatment.
 - * For example a cup of psyllium in feed once a fortnight during high risk periods.

Have you “Liked” our Facebook pages?

Search ‘Warby Street Veterinary Hospital’ and ‘Wangaratta Equine Hospital’ to follow us and keep updated on pictures of our staff, patients and other fun things every week



Selecting A Bull-Factors To Consider

When looking for a bull it is important to look for animal that has great genetic potential to optimise production and to combat weakness within your herd. The following are factors that you may not have considered when selecting your bull.

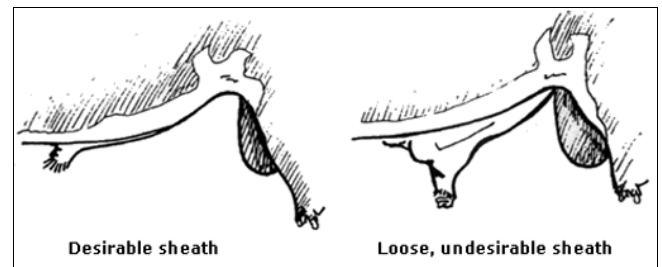


Traits which impact fertility:

Conformation and condition of sex organs

Abnormal sex organs can indicate underlying health issues, affect sperm production and quality and are often heritable characteristics. For example a bull with unusually low hanging sheath or testicles may be more prone to traumatic injuries. On the other hand a bull with high carriage of his testicles may have poor sperm viability due to an increased testicular temperature. There is also a strong correlation between scrotal circumference and fertility.

A thorough examination of the external sex organs (the scrotum, penis, sheath and prepuce) alongside a rectal examination of internal sex organs by an experienced veterinarian is important in identifying potential problems.



Traits which impact serving capacity

The ability of a bull to *detect* cows on heat:

Eyesight and sense of smell are vital here! A thorough examination by your veterinarian will help identify problems.

The ability of a bull to mount and serve cows throughout joining:

Structural Soundness will help to increase bull longevity and minimise breakdown of bulls at a young age. Important factors to look for include the conformation of the legs (particularly the hind legs which will undergo a lot of wear and tear during mounting). Evaluation of the feet is also important and includes conformation of the feet, hoof quality and the presence of growths between the claws. Weight, body condition and musculature along the back and topline also play an important role in overall structural soundness.

General Health

Always ensure to enquire about health, vaccination and breeding history. Ensure any bulls entering the property are up to date with their 7in1 and campylobacter vaccines and have been screened for BVD. This screening process will greatly decrease the chances of you introducing diseases into your herd.

NB: The NSW DPI website has lots of great resources on bull selection and structural soundness such as the examples shown

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/beef-cattle/breeding/bull-selection/>

