

Murray Region Animal Health Update | Autumn 2023

[Murray Local Land Services <animalhealth.murray@lls.nsw.gov.au>](mailto:animalhealth.murray@lls.nsw.gov.au)

Mon 15/05/2023 11:16 AM

To: Cooperative Secretary <secretary@dte.coop>;

[View this email in your browser](#)

Murray Region Animal Health Update | Autumn 2023

*An animal health update for livestock producers across the Murray region,
brought to you by the Animal Biosecurity & Welfare team.*

If this update is not relevant to you, or you are not interested in receiving these updates, you can unsubscribe at the bottom of this email.

Emily Stearman | Acting Team Leader

Albury | 0428 256 431

emily.stearman@lls.nsw.gov.au

Linda Searle | District Vet

Deniliquin | 0427 629 740

linda.searle@lls.nsw.gov.au

Katelyn Braine | District Vet

Deniliquin | 0499 339 018

katelyn.braine@lls.nsw.gov.au

Eve Hall | District Vet

Holbrook | 0439 078 989

eve.hall@lls.nsw.gov.au

Sally Osborne | Snr Biosecurity Officer

Deniliquin | 0407 496 714

sally.osborne@lls.nsw.gov.au

Neale Whitsed | Snr Biosecurity Officer

Autumn lambing is upon us

Katelyn Braine | District Veterinarian | Deniliquin

For sheep producers across the region, autumn lambing is underway. During this time, it's important to be on the lookout for metabolic issues, such as [pregnancy toxaemia](#) and [hypocalcaemia](#). While these two conditions have similar signs, they have different causes and treatments. It is important to understand, recognise and prevent both diseases in lambing ewes.

Pregnancy toxaemia, also known as “lambing sickness” or “twin lamb disease” is caused by an energy imbalance. Pregnancy toxaemia commonly occurs in ewes carrying twins or triplets where the energy required to support these foetuses often outweighs the blood energy level of the ewe. When ewes cannot meet the energy demands from her diet alone, she will then utilise her fat reserves. This process creates ketones, an inefficient energy source for sheep.

Signs of pregnancy toxaemia in ewes can include dullness, inappetence, isolation from the mob with a “hollowed out” appearance, recumbency and death. Ewes are more likely to develop pregnancy toxaemia if they: are carrying multiple pregnancies, are off feed for prolonged periods of time such as at crutching, grazing poor-quality feed or lush green pastures which are often high in water, and low in dry matter and nutrients.

Treatment involves replacing the energy of the ewe. This can be achieved in sick ewes by administering a '4-in-1' solution containing glucose under the skin, or an oral liquid containing propylene glycol such as Ketol. However, the more severe the clinical signs the ewe is showing, the poorer the prognosis of recovery.

Prevention is the key when it comes to pregnancy toxaemia and can be achieved by dietary supplementation with grain or pellets to meet energy demands. Scanning to separate single bearing ewes from multiples can be a useful step to ensure you can provide the right nutrition levels for the demands of the ewe.

Hypocalcaemia, is a deficiency of blood calcium levels. Ewes in their last six weeks of pregnancy and the first month of lactation are most at risk of hypocalcaemia as the ewe is providing calcium for the developing lamb and then milk production.

Signs of hypocalcaemia generally have a rapid onset and include a stiff uncoordinated gait, muscle tremors, weakness, being unable to rise, recumbency and death within 24 hours.

You can use a calcium or '4-in-1' solutions under the skin to treat hypocalcaemia. Response to treatment is usually rapid, within 30 minutes in mild-moderate cases. Treatment can be repeated but the longer the ewe is down, the poorer prognosis. If there is no response to treatment, you should consider other complicating conditions at the same time.

Like pregnancy toxaemia, good nutrition is the key to avoiding hypocalcaemia. Avoid sudden changes in feed or prolonged periods off feed. You can also supplement calcium in the form of a loose lick. This is especially important when the diet is mainly lush green feed or heavily grain based.

A simple recipe involves one bag of agricultural lime, one bag of salt and half a bag of causmag, mixed together and delivered to paddocks in plastic tubs.

An initial mix where causmag is no more than 25% of the mix is recommended, causmag is quite bitter and can prevent intake initially.

If you would like further information regarding pregnancy toxaemia and hypocalcaemia around lambing [contact your nearest LLS District Veterinarian](#).

Worm woes

Emily Stearman | District Vet & Acting Team Leader | Albury

Do you have a worm plan for sheep on your farm?

The last two summers of mild temperatures and continued rainfall have been detrimental to controlling worm eggs on pasture. The requirement to repeatedly drench sheep flocks is not only time consuming but detrimental to the long-term management of worms on your farm. As we head into winter, now is the time to plan for future worm management, leading away from simply drenching.

Setting up for a low-risk property

Have an annual control program with a specific focus on monitoring. Some standard treatments may need to be included at weaning and lambing. Consider your [local area plan on WormBoss](#) but be aware in atypical years this plan may not work. Consider a full range of tools including worm egg counts, treatments, paddock management and flock management. Australian

sheep breeding values now include WECs, you may consider breeding sheep for worm resistance.

Pasture management

The aim is to reduce the uptake of worms by sheep. You can calculate the worm burden on a paddock using worm egg count results from the sheep running on that paddock. High output of worm eggs in conducive conditions makes for high uptake in subsequent grazes. To reduce worms on a pasture, consider:

- Grazing with cattle or dry sheep. Cattle are not susceptible to most sheep worm species while dry sheep have some resistance to worms. Both classes can destroy large numbers of worm larvae.
- Rotational grazing - timing of rotation before grazing varies. Things to consider include the length life cycles of various worm species, stocking rates as well as key pasture drivers that impact sward height.
- Spelling for long periods – it takes 3 months of prolonged warm-hot conditions to reduce worm burden on pasture by 90%.
- Cropping, resewing pasture or harvesting for fodder will also reduce worm burden on a paddock.

Treatments

Multi-active drenches have the highest efficacy. When considering the use of long-acting products, it is important to note they should not be used on their own. Use an effective drench 2 weeks prior to a long-acting product. Monitor worm egg counts at 30, 60 and 90 days of the product and ensure an exit drench is used to clear residual worm eggs. Quarantine drenches should include at least four actives, one of which should include a new active i.e. Startect or Zolvix. Consider using Wormboss' [Drench Decision Guides](#) or discuss with [your nearest LLS District Veterinarian](#).

Liver fluke

Eve Hall | District Vet | Holbrook

Managing internal parasites is a crucial part of all livestock operations. Have you considered how the management of [liver fluke](#) fits into your program?

Liver fluke are internal parasites that live in the bile ducts of the liver in cattle, sheep and goats. The parasite has a complex lifecycle that involves a certain species of indigenous freshwater snail which acts as an intermediate host. The

host snail inhabits wet marshy areas including slow trickling creeks, swamps, drains and dam spillways. Livestock can become infested when they consume pasture around these areas. Liver fluke can cause damage to the liver and in chronic cases this can lead to jaundice, illthrift, anaemia and overall lowered productivity.

For livestock grazing fluke-prone areas, control can be achieved through strategic testing and drenching. There are two main tests available for detecting liver fluke: 1. **Liver fluke egg counts on manure samples**, although it can sometimes be unreliable as fluke egg shedding can be intermittent, and 2. **Liver fluke ELISA on blood samples** which give an indication of the level of exposure to the parasite. It is worth factoring in some routine monitoring tests with your vet, particularly during the late summer and early autumn, to help determine the presence of liver fluke on your property and guide drench decision making.

Late autumn, after the first few frosts, is an ideal time to drench for liver fluke. Colder temperatures generally kill off the host snail and is an ideal time to break the life cycle of the parasite. Burdens may be heavy and made up of both adult and immature fluke, so at this time of year be sure to use a drench which is effective against all stages of liver fluke (ie. a triclabendazole-based drench).

Remember, because of the complex lifecycle of liver fluke, burdens can vary on and across properties. There is no one-size-fits-all approach for managing liver fluke, so speak with your vet for specific recommendations.

Lame sheep?

Neale Whitsed | Senior Biosecurity Officer | Albury

Following two wetter-than-average years, lameness in sheep continues to be an ongoing issue for local producers. Moist conditions make feet vulnerable to bacteria resulting in foot problems such as [foot abscess](#) or [footrot](#).

As we move into autumn and winter, sheep feet will become more susceptible to these bacteria. Sheep producers need to monitor for increased lameness in their flock.

It is important to know what is causing lameness in your flock.

Having an accurate diagnosis will help you to put the right measures in place to reduce the number of sheep affected and reduce the effect on individual sheep.

Local Land Services District Veterinarians can diagnose the causes of lameness in your sheep and assist in forming a plan to manage the lameness.

Key points:

- There are many causes of lameness in sheep, some of which are notifiable in NSW.
 - Biosecurity, monitoring and foot bathing are central to preventing and managing lameness.
 - [Contact your LLS District Veterinarian](#) or Biosecurity Officer if you have lameness concerns.
-

NLIS: Setting up your NLIS database account

Sally Osborne | Senior Biosecurity Officer | Deniliquin

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is Australia's system for the identification and traceability of cattle, sheep and goats. NLIS reflects Australia's commitment to biosecurity and food safety and provides a competitive advantage in a global market.

By keeping your database account and records up to date, you'll assist our industry to stand by what it sells.

Before you get started on the NLIS database, you must obtain a property identification code (PIC). PICs are issued by state and territory departments, such as Local Land Services.

Apply for a PIC

To set up your NLIS account, head to www.nlis.com.au and follow the step-by-step [NLIS how-to guide](#).

If you need further help you can contact ISC Customer Service on 1800 683 111 (Monday - Friday between 8am-7pm AEST) or email info@integritysystems.com.au.

Keep your pet pig healthy and happy

Linda Searle | District Veterinarian | Deniliquin

Do you feed treats to your pets? It's not unusual for pet dogs to be given scraps as treats. They often beg at mealtime and will con you out of a bit of what is on your plate.

But what if your pet is a pig? What are you feeding them? Did you know that it is illegal to feed some things to pigs? This is because of the potential disease risks, to both your pet pig and other animals.

Known as prohibited pig feed (and traditionally referred to as 'swill'), items such as pies, sausage rolls, deli meats, bacon and cheese rolls and tables scraps which contain or have been in contact with meat must not be fed to pigs.

Pigs are very susceptible to picking up disease from eating contaminated meat, like [foot and mouth disease \(FMD\)](#) and [African swine fever \(ASF\)](#), both currently exotic to Australia. If they become infected with FMD, pigs amplify infection by producing thousands of virus particles. These virus particles then go on to infect other nearby, cloven hooved animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and deer.

So, [what should you be feeding your pet pig?](#) You are allowed to feed your pig commercial pig food, grain, vegetables, fruit, milk or milk products that are of Australian origin (or legally imported into Australia for stock feed use), eggs and non-meat bakery foods such as bread (as long as it hasn't been in contact with meat).

Take home message - next time you want to give your pet pig a special treat, remember, stay away from meat!

Is it Fit to Load?

Katelyn Braine | District Veterinarian | Deniliquin

As a livestock producer, you have a responsibility to ensure your stock are fit to load before being transported. Take this quiz to check your knowledge. Hint - there may be one or more correct answers to each question.

1. Who is responsible for the welfare of livestock?
 - a) The owner of the stock
 - b) No one
 - c) Everyone – the producer prior to loading, the transporter/driver during

- loading, unloading and during the journey, and the receiver (processor, agent, saleyard etc) after unloading.
2. Livestock are regarded not fit to load, if:
 - a) They are unable to walk on their own by bearing weight on all legs
 - b) They cannot see well enough to walk, load and travel ie blind in both eyes
 - c) They are showing symptoms of a condition that is likely to cause increased pain or distress during a journey ie embedded horns, cancer eyes
 - d) They are in late pregnancy
 - e) They are not strong enough to make the journey ie dehydrated or emaciated
 - f) All of the above
 3. If livestock are affected by eye cancer/s, are they fit to load?
 - a) Yes, if the cancer is greater than 2cm in size and not affecting vision ie the animal is not blind in both eyes
 - b) Yes, in some cases it may be acceptable to transport animals with small eye cancers (less than 2cm), provided the lesion is free of discharge and not infested with fly larvae
 - c) If you are in doubt if it is fit to load, you should consult a veterinarian
 4. If an animal is unfit to load, what are your options?
 - a) Treat the animal and transport when recovered
 - b) Still send it on the truck, the truck driver, stock agent or saleyard will deal with it
 - c) Consult a veterinarian and transport only under veterinarian advice
 - d) Humanely destroying the animal
 5. If you come across an animal that you are not sure if it is fit to load or not, what should you do?
 - a) If in doubt, leave it out
 - b) Send it anyway, it will be ok.

Answers: 1ac, 2f, 3bc, 4acd, 5a

For more information around fit to load check out the [MLA Fit to Load Guidelines](#). You can pick up a free glove-box guide booklet at your nearest LLS office.

Free veterinary laboratory testing

The NSW Government is subsidising veterinary laboratory testing for new livestock disease investigations until 30 June 2023.

Testing is available for disease investigations conducted by private veterinarians on livestock that are susceptible to foot-and-mouth disease.

Samples must be first approved by a LLS District Veterinarian and processed by the NSW Animal and Plant Health Laboratory at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) to be eligible.

For more information visit the [website](#) or [contact your nearest LLS District Veterinarian](#).

*Local Land Services acknowledges that it stands on Country
which always was and always will be Aboriginal land.*

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters,
and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging.*



Copyright © 2023 Local Land Services, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
Murray Local Land Services
931 Garland Avenue
ALBURY NSW 2640

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).
