



updates from the field

News



Outback volunteering

CVH vet Dr Penny Ovenstone travelled to Central Australia in November to volunteer in an animal health program for the not-for-profit organisation AMRRIC (Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities).

During her time in Central Desert Shire, Penny, with AMRRIC vet Dr John Skuja and 2 volunteer vet nurses, desexed over 55 dogs (and 2 cats) and worked with local Indigenous community members and other volunteers to treat hundreds of dogs against intestinal worms and sarcoptic mange.

All this was achieved in 45°C (in the shade), operating in outdoor "surgeries", battling dust storms and broken down cars! Travelling from Alice Springs, Penny and the team worked in the desert communities of Ti-Tree, Ti-Tree Station, Willowra and Willora. To give you an idea of where Penny worked, Ti-Tree is 200km north of Alice Springs and over 300km south of Tennant Creek.

CVH has been a longstanding supporter of AMRRIC (www.amrric.org) - visit the **News** section of our website to read more.

Summer livestock alerts

Preventing fly strike, planning pregnancy testing, monitoring and controlling Barber's Pole and being alert for pink eye can help ensure healthy livestock and maximised production during and after summer.

Preventing fly strike

Female blowflies (*Lucilia cuprina*) can lay an astonishing 3,000 eggs over 3 weeks and in the current warm, moist conditions, larvae will moult and develop into adult blowflies in 6 to 17 days. Insect growth regulators (IGRs) interfere in this life cycle by stopping larval development at a critical stage. At CVH we stock two IGRs: Cyrofly 60 and Clik. Both products are preventative and should be used before an anticipated fly wave: first stage larvae are the most susceptible and established strikes may not respond well to treatment.

Pregnancy diagnosis

Summer is the time to schedule pregnancy diagnosis (PD), one of the most valuable tools in the management of beef cattle herds. By testing heifers at their first joining 6 weeks after removing the bull, producers can determine if a problem has occurred at joining and dispose of empties – often at a market premium. Highly productive herds are achieved through sticking to a strict 6 week mating period and culling heifers and cows that don't conceive during these 2 cycles. PD also assists with the diagnosis of diseases causing infertility and identifying bull failure. CVH vets pregnancy test using an ultrasound but *always* with manual testing as back-up. Ultrasound PD is most effective between 6 to 20 weeks post-joining.

Summer drenching

Like blowflies, the intestinal worm Barber's Pole (*Haemonchus contortus*) thrives with heat and rain, infective worm larvae developing from dormant eggs on pasture. *Haemonchus* can cause ill-thrift, poor condition, pale gums, bottle jaw and in severe cases, death. Routine faecal egg counts conducted in-house at CVH are diagnosing high worm infestations – often in apparently healthy sheep and alpaca flocks (faecal culture may be required to confirm the diagnosis). We strongly recommend scheduling faecal egg tests in January.

Pink eye

Pinkeye – infectious bovine kerato-conjunctivitis – is painful and debilitating and left untreated, can lead to permanent blindness. It can spread rapidly through a herd and early treatment is essential to minimise eye damage and limit spread within the herd. While vaccination earlier in the season may prevent pink eye, long-acting Opticlox ointment is still the most effective treatment for clinical cases.

Please ring us on (02) 4832 1977 for advice and appointments. The Animal Care section on www.crookwellvet.com.au has more information on all the above topics.

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Dogs have prostates too

Human males are not the only mammalian species with a prostate gland – in fact, almost all male mammals have prostates, though their size and shape differs significantly among species. The purpose of the prostate – an accessory sex gland – is to provide protective nutrients and fluid to help sperm movement and survival when an animal mates.

In the dog, prostatic health issues are quite common and most frequently diagnosed in entire (non-castrated) males. It's estimated that by the time an un-neutered male dog reaches 8 years of age, he has a greater than 80% chance of developing prostate disease.

Prevention is straightforward - castrating non-breeding dogs before 1 year of age essentially stops the development of the most common prostatic disorders seen in the dog.

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) is the most common prostate condition diagnosed in dogs. It is a non-malignant increase in the size of the prostate gland related directly to the influence of the hormone testosterone. It can start as early as 5 years of age but like most prostatic disease, BPH is seen more commonly in older dogs.

Prostatitis, a bacterial infection of the prostate gland, is less common and is often seen with cystitis (infection in the bladder). Alongside painful defaecation and urination, signs can include fever, depression, vomiting and an infected discharge from the prepuce. The dog will be miserable and in obvious pain.

Fortunately for the dog, **prostate cancer** is much rarer than in the human male but it can be very aggressive and difficult to treat. As this cancer is not influenced by testosterone, it is the only condition of the prostate to occur in both neutered and intact male dogs.

Symptoms

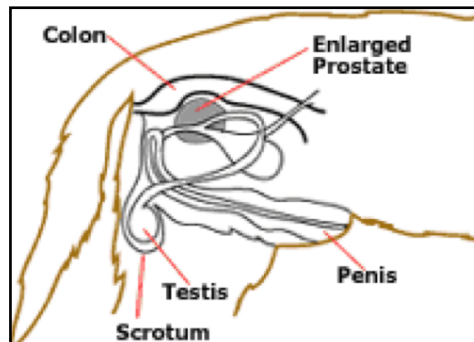
Clinical signs are similar in all three disorders and relate to enlargement of the gland leading to pressure on the rectum and/or the urethra.

As the prostate enlarges, it pushes up into the rectum, obstructing the passage of faeces. The first symptoms are usually straining and pain on defaecation. Constipation leads to lethargy, refusal to eat and vomiting. The enlarged prostate can also press on the urethra, causing straining during urination. When an infection is present (prostatitis), a discharge may drip from the prepuce.

Diagnosis and treatment

All the above symptoms in an older entire male dog point towards prostate gland problems. Digital rectal examination (and ultrasound if required) will help confirm prostatic enlargement. Urinalysis can show signs of infection or help detect cancer cells.

Castration is the treatment of choice – the prostate gland decreases significantly in size within a short time following neutering. Because the prostate starts to develop by puberty, dogs that are neutered before then have minimal levels of testosterone. This slows the normal development of the prostate and male dogs desexed as pups have very little prostatic tissue as adults.



In the dog, the prostate surrounds the neck of the urethra and sits below the rectum, within the bony pelvis. Image courtesy Pet Education website.

If treatment for severe constipation is required, a hormone is administered to temporarily decrease the size of the gland until the dog is well and in a better condition for surgery.

For breeding males, synthetic hormone injections can be effective, but they are temporary and prolonged use can lead to diabetes or adrenal gland problems.

Dogs with prostatitis will require antibiotics to get the infection under control. This can be a prolonged and difficult process and prostatitis can become a chronic, recurring condition. Again, the most effective long term treatment is castration.

Cancer of the prostate is very difficult to treat and requires chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy. Castration has no effect on the tumour.

CVH Diagnostics

CVH is a genuine large and small animal vet practice. Our four full time vets treat dogs, cats, birds, rabbits/rodents, sheep, cattle, alpacas, horses, wildlife (including snakes) - in fact, pretty much anything that walks through the door! That means we must have excellent diagnostic facilities to provide the best possible service for our clients' animals (and native wildlife).

Our in-house pathology lab is constantly busy, from livestock faecal egg counts to running comprehensive blood tests for sick animals. We perform a large range of diagnostic tests in-house, including snake bite species identification, heart worm, parvovirus and pestivirus. Our vets have ultrasound training - ultrasound is a very useful diagnostic tool and we have both small and large animal ultrasound units, including a machine for pregnancy diagnosis in cattle. Our X-ray facilities include the latest digital radiology equipment, giving us the ability to distribute radiographs electronically to specialist vets for second opinions.

Contact us

Opening hours 8.30am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday | 9am – 12pm Saturday

24 hour emergency service on (02) 4832 1977

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