



updates from the field

News

February is Desexing Month



Jess van Groningen

We discovered Jess's diverse skills, thoughtful attitude to work and compassionate personality when she filled in as vet nurse while a staff member was on leave. She fitted the CVH team perfectly and when we had to say a sad farewell to our much-valued receptionist and administration manager, Denise Sheldon, we immediately invited Jess to step into the role.

Jess began her varied career as an Early Childhood Teacher in Australia and Indonesia. She later worked as an equine nurse while studying for a Bachelor of Equine Science and in 2013, completed a Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing.

Jess remains a part time educator. Since 2011 she's worked for the Responsible Pet Education Program NSW, taking her German Shorthaired Pointers Mojo and Ned into preschools, childcare centres and primary schools, teaching children about being safe around dogs and how to be responsible pet owners.

Responsible pet owners ensure ALL their pets – cat or dog, male or female, young or old – are desexed. February is our 2017 Desexing Month and we're encouraging pet owners with non-desexed pets to make this important decision.

We're offering 10% off all desexing surgery, an added bonus for older pets of half price geriatric blood screening before surgery, and the chance to win \$100 worth of veterinary services.

When are pets too old to desex?

Almost never. At CVH, we take particular care of senior pets and run geriatric blood screens before surgery if we're concerned about a pet's health.

Why desex your ageing pet?

While it can be a difficult decision for owners to desex an older pet, there are significant health benefits (find out more about pyometra and prostate disease in the Animal Care section of our website www.crookwellvet.com.au).

Pyometra

Entire (non-desexed) female dogs, and more rarely cats, can develop pyometra (literally 'pus-filled uterus'), a life-threatening infection of the uterus seen in middle-aged to older non-desexed female dogs 8 to 12 weeks after coming into season. If the cervix stays closed, pus builds up in the uterus and can't escape – it's not uncommon to remove a pus-filled uterus that weighs over a kilo. The resultant severe infection causes bacterial endotoxins to enter the blood stream, affecting the function of all body organs and the pet becomes extremely ill. A key symptom is excessive drinking and urinating. The sick pet is stabilised before surgery to remove the infected uterus (and the ovaries, as in routine desexing).

Prostate disease

Prostate disease is diagnosed frequently as entire male dogs age. It's estimated that an un-neutered 8 year old male dog has a greater than 80% chance of developing prostate disease, most commonly Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia. The enlarged and painful prostate pushes up into the rectum, obstructing the passage of faeces. It also often presses on the urethra and the dog is seen straining to pass faeces and urine. Castration is the treatment of choice – the prostate gland shrinks significantly following desexing. Prevention is straightforward – castrating dogs before 1 year of age stops the development of prostatic disorders.

Is early age desexing safe?

Yes! Significant research into the impacts of early desexing of kittens and puppies has resoundingly debunked fears of causing, for example, behavioural changes or feline urinary tract problems. In fact, it is now accepted that desexing puppies and kittens from 8 weeks of age has important benefits for the pet, the community and the environment.

CVH has long practised early desexing and we were proud to be invited by the Cat Protection Society of NSW to contribute to The Good Neighbour Project, a NSW state government initiative aimed at encouraging responsible cat ownership. You can see us on the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOXEtvHXGxk>. Continued over ...

updates from the field

Early desexing



Kittens and puppies can be safely desexed from 8 weeks of age, with significant health and environmental benefits.

Good Neighbour Project and early desexing continued ...

Cat Protection Society CEO Kristina Vesk, who launched the program in Bathurst last December with the Minister for Local Government, told CVH staff "I wish to thank you SO much for your amazing assistance and support. The Good Neighbour Project will help cat owners provide the best care for their cats while also being considerate of the natural environment and their human neighbours."

Health benefits of early desexing include:

- Females desexed before their first heat have little to no risk of developing mammary tumours, the most common cancer in female dogs
- Desexed female pets will not develop life-threatening pyometra
- Desexing male dogs and cats before puberty reduces aggressive, territorial and hypersexual behaviour
- Castrating dogs before 1 year of age stops the development of prostatic disorders and testicular cancer
- Desexed male cats are less likely to urinate inappropriately and engage in the fierce territorial fights that cause abscesses and increase the risk of contracting potentially fatal viruses such as Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (feline AIDS) and Feline Leukaemia Virus.

Environmental benefits of early desexing

Cats are supreme hunters, amazing survivors in the wild and very effective breeders: feral cats exist right across Australia and kill massive numbers of native birds and small mammals. Desexing cats, both male and female, is critical for protecting our precious native wildlife.

Herd health savings

Save time and money and boost herd health

Summer and autumn are the seasons for cattle pregnancy diagnosis. While your cows are in the yards, it's the perfect opportunity to save time and money and combine pregnancy testing with testing for bovine pestivirus and liver fluke.

Pestivirus

Pestivirus is one of the most common viruses found in Australian beef cattle herds – it's estimated around 70% of cattle herds are actively infected with the virus, including in this district. With those statistics, it's not surprising the virus is one of the most invasive of cattle pathogens. It has been found in virtually every body tissue – that means infection is spread quickly through close contact between animals.

Pestivirus causes a range of serious disease syndromes in cows and calves, including reproductive failure, abnormal calves, illthrift, diarrhoea and respiratory disease. Major losses occur when a previously uninfected herd becomes infected during the mating period and in early pregnancy.

A vaccine is available for some situations (for example, in disease-free herds), but it is relatively expensive and it may be possible to manage existing pestivirus infection with a combination of testing and/or vaccination.

Blood testing a sample of the herd at the time of pregnancy diagnosis is an excellent cost effective way to establish an accurate picture of the level of immunity in your herd and to detect the presence of carrier animals. This knowledge helps our vets develop a strategy for control of the disease within specific herds. Pestivirus is a complicated disease, but it can be managed to minimise losses.

Liver fluke

The good news is that the same blood samples used to detect pestivirus can be used to test for liver fluke.

The ELISA blood test for liver fluke is more accurate than other tests, including faecal egg counts. Knowing the liver fluke status of your herd by autumn is important as the most strategic and effective time to drench against fluke in cattle is *after the start of frosts*. Killing fluke at this time means reinfection won't be an issue until spring.

Clipping to minimise grass seeds

This is a bumper grass seed season! Grass seeds are designed to burrow into the soil to germinate – that means they can also penetrate and travel up and into a pet's ears, noses, eyes, skin and muscle tissues causing serious and persistent infections. Our vet nurses are skilled at expertly clipping dogs and cats to minimise the potential for infection from grass seeds and to increase their comfort in hot weather.

Contact us

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

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