



Updates from the hospital

News

Jayde and Will would like to thank everybody for their continued support and welcome all our new clients. We have had a relatively trouble free transition into ownership and this has been mainly due to the fantastic support from our clients and our wonderful staff.



Ciara Joins CVH

CVH welcomes our new vet, Ciara Halliday. Ciara recently graduated from the University of Sydney where she achieved many academic honours including awards in parasitology, pharmacology, large animal and equine fields. Ciara was also awarded the Deans List.

We first met Ciara when she was completing her rural placement at CVH as a 4th year student, she really impressed us then. On returning in her final year for a month we were able to see how much Ciara had grown in her knowledge and skills.

Ciara also has a degree in human nursing which she completed before embarking on becoming a Vet. With an interest in both small and large animals Ciara is looking forward to getting out on properties helping the farmers as well as looking after your pets. Ciara has a cat called Zac and Ruby the Groodle, although I think Ruby has been taken hostage by her parents and has not yet made the move to Crookwell.

Obesity in our pets

One the major factors leading to a prolonged and healthy life for your pet is their weight. A 2005 study by the University of Sydney found that 33.5% of pet cats and dogs were overweight and around 7.6% were classified as being obese.

Overweight pets may have a shorter lifespan and poorer quality of life, this is due to being more prone to a range of medical conditions such as:

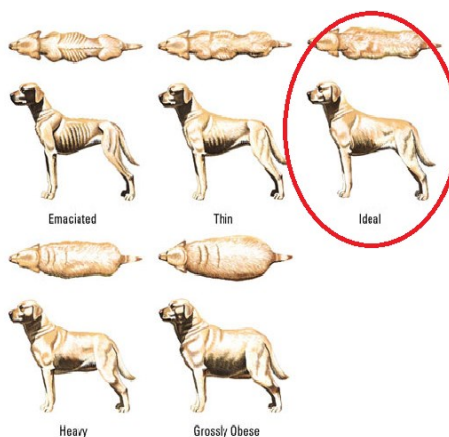
- Osteoarthritis
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Liver and pancreatic disease
- Increased anaesthetic and surgical risk
- Heart disease
- Reproductive disorders
- Increased susceptibility to infection
- Increased risk of some types of cancers.

There are however other factors that we can control, including how much we and exercise them. Most obesity is simply because a pet eats more calories than they need. This, in combination with a lack of exercise means the excess calories are stored as body fat. Those extra snacks and treats during the day add up.

So how do we know if our pets are too fat? You should be able to feel your pets ribs and top of their spines. Your pets waist should curve in between the hips and the ribs.

What can be done to help control your pets weight? Feeding them the right diet and the right amount to meet their energy demands. Take your dogs for walks, play games with your cat. Ensuring everybody in your household knows when to, and how much your pet gets fed. Cut out those extra treats and scraps.

The vets and nurses at CVH can help develop a weight loss plan for your pet. We have special diets designed to aid in weight loss. Come in and talk to our staff and don't be offended if they say your animal is a bit chunky! We are just trying to help your pet stay as healthy as possible and live the best possible life.



Updates from the field

Pestivirus/BVDV

Pestivirus or Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Virus (BVDV) is a very complex disease that is probably misnamed as its major impact to production is via reduced herd reproductive rates, not diarrhoea. It is estimated in a recent study that up to 70% of cattle and dairy herds in Australia have evidence of pestivirus infection.

When naïve cattle (have never been exposed to the virus) become exposed they become transiently infected. This transient infection results in the animal becoming immunosuppressed, which means it has a higher risk of picking up other viral or bacterial diseases.

Pestivirus causes economic loss via 3 main processes.

- fertility loss, in breeding herds this is the most important.
- Persistently infected PI calves (the carriers)
- Immunosuppression due to transient infection

Effect on fertility

Fertility rates can be decreased to as low as 30% due to pestivirus infection. Naïve females that come in contact with carriers (PIs) during joining and gestation can become infertile. Abortions, stillbirths and premature births can also occur. Calves can be born weak, ill thrifty or abnormal with birth defects, such as fused joints or disproportionate body parts. Bulls can also be transiently infected leading to decreased semen quality resulting in lower conception rates.

Persistently infected—PI Calves

PI calves are produced when a naïve female comes in contact with PI in the first 100 days of gestation. PIs secrete large amounts of the virus and are highly contagious. Most PIs are usually easily picked as they are poor doers, and die before 2 years of age. They are immunosuppressed and are more susceptible to infections such as pneumonia, scours, pink eye etc. PIs can be bred on your property or bought in, but don't forget your neighbours can be a source of pestivirus.

However, every so often you will get a hidden PI, one that doesn't show signs and seems normal. These are the difficult ones to find and can cause the most damage.

Immunosuppression due to transient infection

When a naïve animal comes in contact with a PI they become transiently infected, which causes suppression of their immune system and makes them susceptible to infections such as bovine respiratory disease, footrot and lameness, pneumonia, gastrointestinal infections, pink eye, warts and ringworm. This in turn decreases growth rates and can lead to increased morbidity and even death.

Contact us

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

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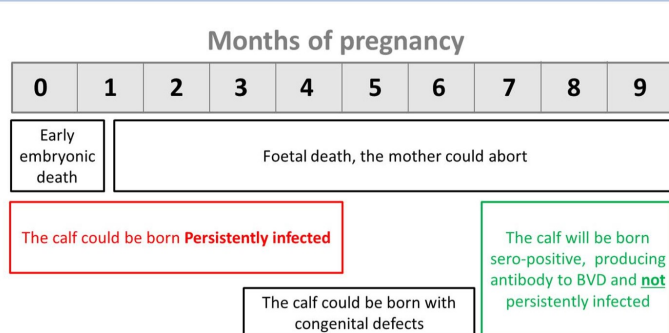


Fig 1. Possible outcomes of pestivirus infection during pregnancy

Control

Control methods aim to minimise the economic loss caused by pestivirus, by ensuring females are either exposed to the virus before they are joined or are protected from being exposed via vaccinating and biosecurity.

The first step involves defining the pestivirus status of a herd by serological (blood) testing of herds. This can be done by a vet at pregnancy testing. Depending on this result the next step may involve vaccinating, trying to identify PIs, or doing nothing until the following year when the next lot of heifers should be serological tested a minimum of 6 weeks prior to joining.

Biosecurity is very important in the control of pestiviruses. This includes ensuring purchased cattle are tested prior to being introduced to the herd. In addition keeping naïve cattle separated from new introductions and boundary fences where neighbours cattle might run, during joining and gestation.

Pestivirus is a very complicated disease which can have a huge impact on your bottom line. Contact CVH and organise getting your herd tested and control program developed. With the current value of cattle you only need to save one calf to make testing and control worth while.

