

**September  
2018**

# Rhodes Vet Clinic

**Volume 8  
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**Newsletter**

## Nitrate Poisoning in Cattle

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In the past few weeks we have seen numerous cases of nitrate poisoning. Nitrate poisoning occurs when nitrate is ingested and is converted to nitrite in the rumen making the blood less able to carry oxygen.

There are a variety of plants and weeds that contain high levels of nitrate. One of the most common responsible for poisoning is Capeweed. Winter conditions of decreased light from cloud cover, shortened day length and low temperatures can cause Nitrate levels to increase dramatically and they become highly toxic.

Farming practices such as spraying with Nitrogen rich fertilizer can also lead to high levels of nitrate being consumed by stock.

The most common signs seen with nitrate toxicity include respiratory distress, and irritability leading to cattle going down. Sudden death can occur if not treated.

'Chocolate' coloured milk can also form in the udder and this is often mistaken for mastitis. But other signs of mastitis such as a high temperature, pus in the milk and inflammation of the udder are not present.



If you suspect Nitrate poisoning remove stock from paddock, feed hay and seek veterinary assistance immediately. Prevention can be achieved by avoiding letting hungry stock into areas where there is lush Capeweed even if sprayed. Non-ruminants such as horses are not at risk.

### **We provide:**

- Surgery & Medicine for small and large animals
- Herd Health Advice
- Soft Tissue & Orthopaedic Surgery
- Dentistry
- Digital X-ray
- Ultrasound
- In House Blood Testing
- Nutrition
- Prescription Diets
- Microchip Identification

**NITRATE ITSELF IS NOT TOXIC TO ANIMALS BUT AT ELEVATED LEVELS IT CAN CAUSE NITRATE POISONING**

#### **Simpson Office:**

Our Simpson Office is open  
Monday & Friday  
10am to 3pm  
P: 03 5594 3257

#### **Colac Office:**

Our Colac Office is open  
Monday to Friday  
8am to 6pm  
Saturday 9am to 12 noon  
[www.rhodesveterinaryclinic.com.au](http://www.rhodesveterinaryclinic.com.au)

**We are available 24/7  
for emergencies.  
Our emergency number  
is:**

**5232 2111**

## Bladder Stones

Bladder stones are large masses that form in the bladder. The pet presents with symptoms of cystitis / urinary tract infection.

You will notice that your pet will try to urinate and yet very little urine is excreted. The animal walks forward only to try again and again and again.

We treat the animal for its symptoms but if it does not resolve in a few days then further examination is required with the use of x-rays.

As seen by our picture bladder stones are very obvious on a radiograph.

Surgery is required and removal of the stone occurs.

The animal is then placed on a special medicated diet to reduce the bladder stones from recurring.



## Footrot in Sheep

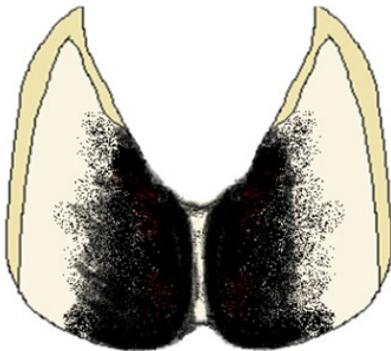
With the wet weather fully upon us now lameness in sheep is becoming a problem we are commonly seeing. There are many causes of lameness in sheep but 'Footrot', a contagious bacterial disease requires special attention.

Wet conditions cause maceration of the tissue in and around the foot allowing infection to develop. As it progresses animals become severely lame on one or more feet with numerous sheep often affected.

The middle section in between the toes will be swollen with black/brown discolouration, hair loss and most notably an EXTREMELY foul smell.

If left the animals can become very unwell with problems other than lameness developing. Rapid action is needed to prevent further spread throughout a flock and treatment requires the use of antibiotics and footbaths.

If you are having problems with lameness tip those worst affected to examine their feet. If you notice any of the descriptions mentioned above seek veterinary advice to assess the scale of the problem and to implement controls strategies.



## RVC Footy Tipping 2018

The Annual Rhodes Veterinary Clinic AFL Football Tipping has come to a close for another year!

Thank you to all who participated in the weekly fun.

It was a very close ladder all season.

Congratulations to our winners.

