

**March
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Rhodes Vet Clinic

**Volume 11
Issue 3**

Newsletter

Ehrlichiosis

We provide:

- Surgery & Medicine for small and large animals
- Herd Health Advice
- Cattle Pregnancy Testing
- Bull Fertility Testing
- Lameness in Cattle
- Equine Consults
- Soft Tissue & Orthopaedic Surgery
- Dentistry
- Digital X-ray
- Ultrasound
- In House Blood Testing
- Nutrition

You may have heard about a new disease in dogs in Australia on the news, a disease called Ehrlichiosis. It was found in Northern Australia in 2020 and has since moved south and been confirmed in South Australia recently. Ehrlichiosis is a serious disease that can result in death if left untreated.

How is it spread? Ehrlichiosis is a bacterial disease (*Ehrlichia canis*) that is spread through the brown dog tick. The bacteria lives in the tick and infects the dog while the tick is feeding. Dogs cannot spread the disease directly. It must go through a tick.

What does the disease look like? Ehrlichiosis can present in several forms. Initially in the acute phase dogs can be sick with general signs such as fever, lethargy, and weight loss. If untreated the dog can then enter a subclinical phase where the bacteria lives in the dogs spleen for months to years and the dog seems healthy. Some dogs will then progress to a chronic phase which carries a poor prognosis.

In this stage signs can include bleeding, bone marrow suppression, neurological signs, eye abnormalities and more.



How is it diagnosed? Lab tests to identify the bacteria (PCR) or the bodies reaction to the bacteria (serology) are used to definitively diagnose Ehrlichiosis.

Is it treatable? Appropriate early treatment is the best chance to cure Ehrlichiosis, in the chronic phase dogs can still die despite intensive treatment. But even better than cure is prevention! Tick control is the way to go. Using a good product regularly, avoiding high tick areas (such as bush) and checking your dog for ticks daily will give your dog the best chance of not catching Ehrlichia.

Take home message: If you are travelling and taking your dog ensure they are on good tick prevention. Come into the clinic for a chat if you are unsure if the product you are using is sufficient.

**We are available 24/7 for
emergencies.**

Our emergency number is:

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Akabane Disease

Infection in cattle during early pregnancy with akabane virus results in congenital deformities of the limbs and vertebral column. This shows up as fixation of joints. The calves born show neurological problems as the virus causes shrinkage of the brain. Abortions and still births can also occur.

The dam is infected but shows NO sign of infection. The virus is passed from the mother across the placenta to the foetus in the first trimester. This virus does not affect the calf in the later 2/3 of pregnancy. The virus affects the stem cells when they differentiate into different body parts. It is here that the virus cause the defect to the foetus.



The disease is spread by "Culicoides" which are blood sucking "sand flies". This is when the virus passes from insect to cow. The insect is the vector that spreads the disease. This is why we do not have the problem in the cold months as there is little to no insect activity.

Therefore the problem is in the summer months when an infected cow is bitten by the insect and then it bites an unaffected cow who is in her first three months of pregnancy. This virus then circulates within the cow and passes into the developing foetus.

Unfortunately, the owner of the animal is unaware of the problem of akabane virus until the animal is birthing and the deformities are present. We tend to see this problem in young heifers more than older cows as the young animals are more likely not to have been infected. A way to prevent problems is insect control on your young animals, especially if you are joining them in the summer months.

2021 AFL Footy is back this month....



If you would like to join us for our 2021 weekly AFL tipping competition please let Cindy know by Monday, 15th March

Tips must be either emailed (cindy@rhodesvet.com.au), or delivered to the clinic by 5pm on the day of the first game of each round.
Tips will not be accepted by telephone.

We will accept several entries from each house. If more than one person wishes to participate ... just ensure the tips are named.

There is a small cost of \$1/round (\$23 for the season).

As per other seasons we will have a small get together at the end of the season to present the winning tippers with their rewards