

**February  
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# Rhodes Vet Clinic

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**Newsletter**

## Rye Grass Staggers

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Perennial rye grass staggers or PRGS is seen when cattle and sheep graze tall, dry ryegrass particularly in late summer and early autumn and often following sufficient rain to stimulate limited pasture growth.



Animals present with temporary incoordination, hence the term "staggers". This occurs when fungus is present in the older strands of the rye grass. The fungus produces a toxin that protects the plant from insects, but also interferes with the animal's nervous system. PRGS develops within 7-14 days of the ingestion of toxic pasture.

The first signs of PRGS are usually fine tremors of the head. This becomes worse when the animals are stressed or are exercised, such as when mustering. This may include stiff movements and incoordination, which can result in the collapse of the animal. The ingested toxin may also induce high body temperatures. You may find animals trying to cool down in dams and troughs.



There is no specific treatment for PRGS. It is best to remove affected animals from the source of the problem into another paddock. It is important to do this calmly, without stressing the animals, which could worsen their symptoms.

If exposure to the toxin is prolonged, permanent neurological damage may occur. Animals normally recover, in a couple of weeks, once removed from the affected pasture

PRGS could be a significant issue this season as a result of the rainfall seen across parts of Victoria of late. This has led to significant pasture growth and standing feed bank going into summer. It is recommended that you act early to graze off your ryegrass to prevent having tall, dry ryegrass in late summer.

### 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

**Simpson Office:**

Please call 5232 2111

[www.rhodesveterinaryclinic.com.au](http://www.rhodesveterinaryclinic.com.au)

**Colac Office:**

Monday to Friday

8am to 6pm  
Saturday 9am to 12 noon

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

**Our emergency number  
is: 5232 2111**

## Ehrlichiosis

In June 2021, the first case of Ehrlichiosis was detected in Victoria. The infected dog lived in the Wimmera and originated from the Northern Territory. The disease has now spread across Australia.

Ehrlichiosis is caused by the Ehrlichia Canis bacteria and is transmitted by the brown dog tick through biting and infecting dogs.

Some dogs do not show any signs of being infected. Others may become very sick and can die from their symptoms. Symptoms may include fever, tiredness, conjunctivitis, cloudy or red eyes, abnormal bleeding such as nose bleeds and swelling of the body and limbs.

Unfortunately, there is no vaccine for Ehrlichiosis, but antibiotics may assist in managing the infection if the affected dog is treated early.

Tick prevention and control is essential in protecting your dog against Ehrlichiosis by using regular tick treatments that are registered to control and kill ticks on your dog, specifically the brown tick which can spread Ehrlichiosis. It is always best to check with your vet, if you are unsure if your treatments protect against the brown tick.



It is also important to regularly check your dog by running your fingers through the dog's coat and over their skin, feeling for ticks or any abnormal bumps.

To remove the tick, grab the tick adjacent to your pet's skin (at the tick mouth-parts), twist the tick gently, then pull the tick away from the skin. Take care not to squeeze the tick's body as you pull it off your dog. Removed ticks may still be alive, so be sure they don't escape to find another host to feed on.

If your pet has become unwell after being bitten by a tick it is essential to seek veterinary assistance immediately.

**2024 AFL Footy is back next month....**



**If you would like to join us for our 2024 weekly AFL tipping competition please let Cindy know by Friday, 1st March**

**Tips must be either emailed ([cindy@rhodesvet.com.au](mailto: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.**

**Cost is only \$25/person 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**