

SUMMER 2022-23

WANGARATTA VETERINARY CLINIC



Mosquito-borne Heartworm

With the recent rainfall and flooding in the North East of Victoria, it's important we educate everyone about heartworm.

Heartworm earn their name as the adult worms live within your dog's heart and associated blood vessels. Adult female heartworms produce heartworm larvae, more commonly called microfilariae, which circulate in the blood of an infected dog.

Heartworms are transmitted from one dog to another by mosquitoes which pick up the microfilariae in the blood when they bite an infected dog. The heartworm larvae develop in the mosquito and are transmitted when the infected mosquito bites another dog. The heartworm larvae then migrate through the dog's tissue and circulatory system, eventually reaching the heart and lungs, where they grow and mature into adult heartworms.

Heartworms may cause no clinical signs in the early stages of infestation. However, over time they can cause serious damage to the heart and lungs and dogs may develop heart failure which can be fatal. As the disease progresses you may notice signs such as coughing, lethargy, enlarged abdomen, weight loss, exercise intolerance and trouble breathing.

When it comes to protecting your dog from heartworm, prevention is better than cure. To protect against heartworm we can offer you injectable, topical or oral treatments.

Proheart is a yearly injectable preventative. Dogs under 7 months can go straight onto Proheart. Dogs older than 7 months need a blood test to make sure they aren't already infected with heartworm, followed by a retest in 6 months. We are currently offering the initial blood test FREE.

Contact the office today for more information!

Jo's Jabber

Well, that was Spring – what a wet one! I hope you weren't too badly affected by the floods. We were very fortunate – plenty of wet paddocks and some of our team had close calls, but no major damage in the end. I did enjoy seeing 'Water up to Yogi's nose' as an official flood level measurement on the Vic Emergency app!!

Our team have been making the most of being able to travel again with trips to QLD, New Zealand, Singapore, Bali and Melbourne. And Adam got to stand at the northern most tip of Australia before riding a motorbike down to Cairns!

Congratulations to Nicole (and Ross) on their marriage – they found a way even though a week out from their wedding the venue had to cancel due to flooding.

A few changes to our team this summer - Floss has rejoined the crew, working two days a week for the next few months and we will be joined by our new vet Emily in January. And exciting new chapters for Claudia early next year as she heads off to Uni and for Freya who will be on maternity leave.

On behalf of all of us at the clinic – thank you for all your support this year and we hope you have a fgnamus Christmas!



Case of the Quarter

Bodie the Labrador, came to the clinic feeling very sorry for herself as she had been vomiting all day. X-rays were taken of Bodie and it looked like there was a foreign something in her tummy! Dr Lorna & Dr Freya performed an exploratory laparotomy followed by enterotomy & gastrotomy to remove a long piece of plastic.

Bodie has recovered well from surgery and is happy at home!





Delightful Debb!

DEBB BARR - VETERINARY NURSE

If you could only choose one song to play every time you walked into a room for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Slice of Heaven - Dave Dobbyn

If you were an animal, what kind of animal would you be and why?

A house cat. A nice kicked back life with a good family and plenty of downtime.

Where is home?

Cobram

What keeps you out of trouble?

My fur-kids and playing in bagpipe bands - I'm a drummer.

What would your best friend say is your best quality?

I'm quiet to start with and an odd sense of humour.

Pets at home:

3 cats - Audrey, Chester and Batman.

Favourite...

Lolly: Musk sticks

Vegetable: Cauliflower

Singer/Band: 2 Cellos

Movie: Trainspotting

FUN FACT

Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards

EYE ROLLER

What is more amazing than a talking dog?

A spelling bee!

Blinded by the light.. or lack of Thiamine

DR JOANNE WILLIAMS

Thiamine (vitamin B1) is produced by bacteria in the rumen of cattle and sheep on well balanced diets. Thiamine deficiency leads to polioencephalomalacia or PEM (softening of the brain tissue).

Thiamine is broken down in the rumen by chemicals (thiaminases) that are produced by micro-organisms in the stomach or from ingestion of some plants. Excessive sulphur, especially after fertiliser, in the diet can make the rumen an unfavourable environment for thiamine production.

PEM is most commonly seen in the early summer months in recently weaned calves. Adult animals are occasionally affected but the condition usually affects 6-18month olds.

Clinical signs include depression, tremors, convulsions and neurological signs. Commonly we see blindness, aimless wandering, head pressing, down animals star gazing (as pictured) and death.

There are other conditions that may cause similar signs such as listeria infection in the brain, grass tetany, lead poisoning and salt poisoning.

Diagnosis is made predominantly on clinical signs and history. Bloods tests are not readily available but post mortem examination reveals distinct changes to the brain.

Treatment involves injections of vitamin B1 into the vein initially followed by intramuscular injections. The injections are given every few hours initially then continued less frequently over the next few days. If treatment is started early in the condition or in animals with less severe signs it is usually successful. As the disease progresses treatment is not as rewarding.

There is not much in the way of prevention because cases are sporadic and don't often have a predisposing event. If a large number of cases are being seen investigation into plant species may help identify if these are the cause and if paddocks should be restricted.

As with most conditions prompt treatment underpins success so please contact us, even just to ask questions, if you think you have sick animals.

