

FACT SHEET

LIVESTOCK DISEASES FOLLOWING FLOODS

This is a short fact sheet regarding some of the common diseases that may occur post flood events. Producers impacted by flooding should check their livestock for unusual symptoms of illness

Stiffness due to inactivity:

- Swollen legs
- Standing but reluctant to move on
- Able to rise with help

Encourage animals to move out, away from mud. Can provide Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) to help reduce any swelling/inflammation due to inactivity. It will be important to determine if animals have developed secondary disease

Three day sickness or Bovine ephemeral fever (BEF) is a viral disease of cattle that is spread by mosquitoes and biting midges. While clinical signs usually only last three days, they can be debilitating in older animals. Signs of BEF are listed below.

- Depression.
- Lameness, muscle stiffness, shivering, twitching, droopy ears.
- Drooling saliva, watery eyes, runny nose.
- Recumbency.
- Reduced water and food intake.
- Abortion.
- Heavier and older animals are more severely affected because long periods of recumbency leads to muscle damage.

Vaccination can be undertaken in the face of an outbreak. The BEF vaccination will be required to be given twice, two weeks apart. Supportive care including the use of NSAID's is recommended to improve outcomes.

Pneumonia: can be caused due to a number of disease organisms, however often presents in the same way.

Signs include

- Fever (greater than 38.5oC)
- Depression and inappetence (hollow looking)
- Nasal discharge (may be clear or coloured) from a single or both nostrils.
- Stiff movements
- Shallow and rapid breathing. May or may not cough.

The treatment for pneumonia involves antibiotics and NSAIDs for best outcomes. In weak, compromised animals pneumonia can very quickly become fatal. Calves are particularly at risk when kept in pens.



Dehydration

- Sunken eyes
- Hollow guts
- Reduced urination frequency or volume
- Skin will 'tent' when pinched (not return to flat immediately)

Many animals will be dehydrated during this time. It is important to identify these animals and allow rehydration to occur. You may need to drench animals with electrolyte solutions. Commercial products such as Lectade are available or electrolyte solution can be made at home from;

- 1 Teaspoon table salt
- 1 Teaspoon baking soda (Bi-carb soda)
- 125ml Dextrose Or glucose syrup

All into 1.2L of warm water. Dissolve well and drench.

Rain-scald: often occurs in animals exposed to a wet conditions over a prolonged period. Calves and horses can be affected.

- Appears like large clumps of hair that may “fall” off body
- Can causes significant secondary infection in compromised animals

Treatment involves cleaning the affected skin with dilute antiseptic wash. Chlorhexidine based washes such as “Malaseb” or povidone iodine scrubs such as “Bedadine” are effective in controlling Dermatophilus. For large numbers of animals a 1:9 solution of Bleach can be made up and sprayed onto these animals. Apply the diluted antiseptic, and scrub gently to remove the scabs. Leave the solution on for 10 minutes and rinse with warm water and pat dry the skin. Remember that these areas can be very painful. It may require a number of washes over several days to remove the scabs. Oxygen helps to control the condition so keeping these animals as dry as possible will help recovery. For severely affected animals Penicillin is required to help with the treatment.



Lameness: Cattle standing in wet mud for days can become lame when required to move over hard ground. If large animals of cattle are lame, care needs to be taken when moving them over distances. If possible, walk short distances on soft (but dry) ground. Some of these animals may develop abscess if they receive penetrating wounds to their feet. Animals standing in water or mud for long periods may develop footrot. These conditions may require treatment with NSAID's and antibiotics.

Clostridial Diseases: Moist conditions provide an excellent environment for diseases such as blackleg, leptospirosis and rotting carcasses can spread botulism. If animals have not received any vaccinations for clostridial diseases a “5 in 1” or “1 in 7” vaccination program should be considered. Either a 1 year or 3 year botulism vaccination should be given if needed. If you have vaccinated animals within the last 1-2 years they may be covered. Please contact your vet for further information.

Signs of these diseases are listed below:

- Botulism: Usually found dead or down. Causes paralysis in animals, which may present as flaccid tails, downer animals. May see animals chewing carcasses to correct phosphorus deficiency.
- Blackleg: Found dead with rapid bloating of carcass, swollen limbs. Usually will have some injury that allows disease to develop
- Lepto: Depression, fever, blood in urine. May result in abortions months after infection.

Toxic Plants

Plants such as Crotalaria that are rapidly growing may result in toxicities in animals. Signs of toxic plant ingestion may include;

- Jaundice, weakness or collapse, apparent blindness, diarrhoea.

Animals can recover however it is important to remove them from the areas where plants are growing and provide supportive care. Please contact your vet if you have concerns for toxic plant ingestion.



Blight

Insects and dust are likely to cause issues including eye conditions. Pinkeye, blight and ulcers are likely to occur. Insect control is very important. If you can treat animals with an insecticide, it will be highly recommended. For horses we recommend topical treatments and flyveils.

There are many more conditions that may occur post flood event. If you have concerns please contact your local veterinarian to seek advice. There is also a free call 1800 number provided by the Australian Veterinary Association that will put you in contact with experienced cattle veterinarians who can provide advice and referral to your nearest vet clinic. This is a volunteer service provided for graziers in our area.

For advice for veterinary care call 1800 62 19 18