

PORT PERRY VETERINARY SERVICES

-QUARTERLY-

RABIES

As many of you have learned in the news, ten cases of raccoons infected with rabies have been confirmed in the Hamilton area. Rabies is an acute viral infection of carnivores and bats that affects the brain and nervous system caused by a strain of Lyssavirus. In Canada, bats, raccoons, foxes, and skunks are common transmitters of rabies. The virus is transmitted through saliva via bite wounds or saliva getting in contact with open wounds or scratches. Once the virus enters the body it moves through the nerves to the brain and then spreads to the salivary glands and the rest of the body.

Animals can only transmit rabies while currently showing clinical signs. The clinical signs of rabies do not appear until two weeks to two months after infection. Clinical signs are primarily behaviour changes. The animal often becomes

excited, aggressive, severely agitated, may attack others and often experiences paralysis before death. Sometimes the affected animals show minimal behavioural changes and are simply severely depressed, experience paralysis and die. Once clinical signs appear, there is no successful treatment. If you suspect your animals have been exposed to a rabid animal please notify your veterinarian so post-exposure vaccinations can be administered. Rabies must be differentiated, by your veterinarian, from other neurological diseases (ex: WEE/EEE, West Nile, tetanus, encephalitis/meningitis) many of which are also preventable with prophylactic vaccinations. Diagnosis of rabies is done by examining the brain after death.

Vaccinating your animals against rabies is very important. Since rabies is lethal and there

is no treatment, vaccination is key. Vaccines are licensed for 1-3 years of protection against this virus, depending on the species. Horses, goats, and cattle should be vaccinated annually, whereas sheep, cats and dogs should be vaccinated every 3 years, after receiving their initial series. Boosters should be administered every 1 or 3 years depending on the species involved, to ensure your animals are sufficiently protected against rabies. Waiting longer than the recommended time for boosters puts your animals at risk of contracting the virus.

If you suspect you animal is exhibiting signs of rabies, has been exposed to a rabid animal or if you have questions about vaccinating your animals please call the clinic at (905)-982-1243.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE CLINIC?

Thank you for your patronage this past year. We hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and wish you all a safe and Happy New Year!

As most of you know, Dr. Allison Doherty is on maternity leave. She and her husband Curtis welcomed their son Carson James this past October. Everyone is doing well!

You may have noticed that our invoices have changed. We have recently moved to a paperless system to improve our efficiency (and to be more environmentally friendly!) If you have any questions about this feel free to give us a call.

For continuing education this fall, Dr. Lisa Sharko attended the Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners (OABP) fall education meeting. She learned a lot about different bedding and housing methods and how they relate to certain lameness issues or other diseases in a herd. There was also an interactive discussion on stall design and how to make changes to improve the overall health of your herd.

CELLULITIS/LYMPHANGITIS IN HORSES

Cellulitis and lymphangitis are similar syndromes in horses causing swelling in a leg and occasionally cellulitis can lead to lymphangitis if left untreated. Cellulitis is the less serious of the two and is an infection in the subcutaneous (just under the skin) tissues of the leg. Lymphangitis is an infection of the lymphatic system of the leg. Because the infection is in vessels the spread is much faster and further than cellulitis. Where cellulitis generally stays below the hock or carpus (knee), lymphangitis will go up the entire leg and into the body wall. We have seen a number of cases of

both so far this winter.

Signs of cellulitis include diffuse swelling of the limb, usually the lower part, heat and pain on palpation and lameness of the affected limb. Lymphangitis presents with swelling in a limb (usually hind) that very quickly rises higher, non-weight bearing lameness or reluctance to move at all, heat and often they have a fever and are not eating. The leg will usually weep serum the second day.

The cause is usually a break in the skin in the lower limb from a cut or mud fever for example, that allows the infection to get into the subcutaneous tissue of

the leg and then potentially into the lymphatic system. The usual bacteria are *Staphylococcus* sp. and *Streptococcus* sp. but occasionally something else will cause it. Culture is not usually possible unless a pocket of fluid can be found using an ultrasound machine, so treatment includes broad-spectrum antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs to help with the pain, swelling and fever. These conditions are something you should have looked at quickly as they can become a serious problem. Once a horse has had cellulitis or lymphangitis they are prone to experiencing it over and over again.

THE NEXT STAGE OF PROACTION FOR ONTARIO DAIRIES

You've all endured the long and tedious process of preparing for and undergoing your CQM evaluations, and now some of you have had your annual updates as well. Now that 2016 is upon us, the CQM implementation process has been completed across all dairy farms in Ontario, and the DFO will begin to move on to the Animal Care and Livestock Traceability section of the ProAction program. This will be implemented over the next year and a half to be complete by September 2017.

Hopefully at this point you have realized the benefits in improving your herd management with the CQM logs. The Animal Care and Livestock Traceability program will include more record-keeping, but the good news is that if you have adhered to Grade A standards with CQM you have already done part of the job. With the increase in

animal welfare propaganda and misleading information influencing public perception of our agriculture industry, it is especially important that we can protect our industry by providing proof that we produce the safest and most welfare-friendly animal products possible. Here we intend to present a brief introduction to the basic requirements for this program.

The Animal Care sector of this stage of the program will begin with a questionnaire about the existing practices on your farm. The records you will be responsible for maintaining relate to colostrum management and calf feeding, animal health practices, euthanasia, shipping, and tail docking. Individual cattle are assessed for chronic injuries or lameness. You will also be required to prepare standard operating procedures for each of these situations, which you

may do with the assistance of your veterinarian. You will be examined and certified, or given areas with room for improvement as you were for CQM.

The traceability sector of this program will require appropriate animal identification and reporting of premises and movement. All cattle will be required to have ear tags in both ears from one week of life going forward. This will all be logged onto a traceability database.

The integration process should be similar to CQM, and for those that would like veterinary assistance we will be letting you know when a training program is ready to be implemented. For now there is information regarding this program on the DFO website (www.milk.org). Also, feel free to contact us at the clinic at (905) 982-1243 with questions or for assistance going forward.