



PAWS, CLAWS & ALL FOURS



Summer 2024

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2024

Clutha Vets deals with both farm and pet animals. What we now see a little more of are the animals that fall in the gaps between the two groups, typically on lifestyle blocks. Pet sheep and Llamas for instance are not treated as production animals but neither are they pets in the same way as cats and dogs. Lifestyle block owners often do not have the pastoral experience or equipment that farmers take for granted. That is why we have included an insert on flystrike in our small animal newsletter.

Summer brings with it the usual problems. Dry grass seeds regularly cause problems getting between toes, into ears and eyes and pretty well any other opening. We also see Heat Stroke in hot weather. See the articles below.

Heat Stroke (Hyperthermia)

Peter Heslip (Veterinarian - Balclutha)

Dogs will continue to exert themselves in very hot weather if you encourage them and this can raise their body temperature (hyperthermia) to dangerous levels (heat stroke). We see this more often if we have one unexpectedly hot day which catches people out, more than a string of hot days. You need to be especially aware in the short-nosed breeds like French Bulldogs and Pugs.

If your dog is showing signs of hyperthermia (collapse, difficulty breathing) immediately cool them down with wet towels or in water and rest them. If they do not improve rapidly they should be seen at the clinic as they may need IV fluids. Heat stroke causes severe metabolic complications which can lead to kidney failure and death.

New Medications

Peter Heslip (Veterinarian - Balclutha)

There has been a procession of new drugs recently, including new long-lasting and highly effective medications for fleas and other skin parasites. Another broad group of drugs are the monoclonal antibodies. These medications block some of the chemical mediators of disease - for instance Beransa is a monthly injection which blocks nerve growth factor a mediator of pain in osteoarthritis and Apoquel a daily tablet blocks JAK, a molecule in the itch pathway. We can expect more drugs in this group. The good news is they are effective and safe, but can be expensive

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Upgrades

Peter Heslip, (Veterinarian - Balclutha)

Clutha Vets aims to provide the best service and outcomes for our patients and clients. Continually improving our equipment is part of this. In the laboratory we have some new machinery for running blood tests and urine tests. This allows us to have results in a matter of minutes. Results for many tests can be provided while clients are still at the clinic, allowing appropriate treatment to start immediately. Using outside labs means a delay of at least half a day or more in getting results.

We also have a new digital X-ray system where the data from a receiver is blue-toothed to a laptop and the images are there within 10 seconds. I can recall the days of using chemical tanks and a dark room then waiting for films to dry. Radiology used to be very time consuming and frustrating.

A year or so ago we upgraded our Ultrasound, and also some of our orthopaedic equipment.

Technology advances continue in all spheres and we regard it as critical to keep up. This is most importantly so we can offer the best treatment for our patients. In addition, if we want to keep employing some of the best new graduates (which we have been doing) we have to have up to date facilities.



Grass Seed Season

Catherine Copland, (Veterinarian - Balclutha)

We are well and truly in the peak season for problems caused by grass seeds. We have been seeing dogs and cats with grass seeds in their eyes, ears, feet, armpits or even up their nose. These cause a lot of irritation.

You may notice your pet shaking their head and scratching or flapping their ears. They might rub their eye, have it closed or there may be a discharge from the eye. Grass seeds that track under the skin usually leave a small, raised, red swelling that may or may not have a hole in it, and leak bloody fluid. Persistent sneezing with or without a snotty or bloody discharge from the nose may be due to a grass seed up there.



Grass seed after removal from a dogs nose

Once grass seeds get stuck they keep travelling if they can. It is very hard to pull them backwards due to the awns on them. Grass seeds can migrate a long way from the original entry point. They can even track into the chest and into the lung space causing a severe infection around the lungs that can be fatal.

If you see any signs that might be caused by a grass seed please get them checked out as soon as possible.



Typical grass seed point of entry

Vaccinating Pregnant Bitches

Catherine Copland, Veterinarian, Balclutha

We used to recommend a vaccine booster for bitches during pregnancy, to increase the level of antibodies they produced in their milk, which are protective against Parvovirus. This was critical when Parvo was an epidemic and the risk of vaccination was far outweighed by the risk of Parvovirus. Parvovirus is still important but the rates of infection are now much lower.

There is a small risk when giving a vaccination during pregnancy whether the vaccine is licensed for use during pregnancy or not. Occasionally animals develop a fever and become unwell after vaccination and this can affect the pregnancy.

Adult dogs require a booster vaccination against Parvovirus, Distemper and Infectious Hepatitis 1 year after their puppy vaccinations then every 3 years.

Vaccination should be done before you put a bitch in pup. If she has had a vaccination in the previous 3 years she is fully protected.

If your bitch is in pup and overdue for vaccination, you must weigh up the risks and benefits of vaccination during pregnancy. In general we would not recommend vaccination at this stage, but in a few circumstances we would – for instance if a dog with Parvovirus had been in the household.

If you are uncertain please contact the clinic to discuss the options with one of our vets.

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD)

Darius Tan, Veterinarian, Balclutha

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) is an alarming disease for cats and their owners. The symptoms owners see are frequent urination, straining to urinate, blood in the urine, and pain urinating because of inflammation in the urinary tract. Sometimes FLUTD can result in complete urinary blockage in male cats, which is a severe and potentially life-threatening complication.

There is no one clear cause. There may be infection in the urinary tract and sometimes bladder stones. Stress, overweight, smelly kitty litter and diet play a role.

The role of stress is a significant contributor to FLUTD. Changes in the household, new pets, or alterations to the cat's routine can trigger stress, triggering the condition. Ensuring a calm and enriched environment is crucial in avoiding and managing FLUTD cases. For owners with easily stressed cats, the use of pheromone diffusers, and/or feeding a diet like Hill's c/d Multicare Stress can be greatly beneficial as well.

Always have water available to avoid even mild dehydration. Litter box hygiene is important. It is thought if the litter box is dirty or smelly cats are slow to use it, and less frequent bladder emptying is a factor in FLUTD. Put a handful of kitty litter on newspaper in the tray and replace it every time it is used. It is tempting to put lots of kitty litter in the box so it doesn't need changing often. Unfortunately this doesn't work as it gets smelly, cats don't like it and won't use it. It is not pleasant for owners or their guests either.

Treatment for FLUTD depends on the underlying cause. Antibiotics are prescribed if there is a bladder infections. Dietary changes, prescription diets and drugs can help soothe the bladder lining and dissolve bladder stones or crystals. In severe cases, hospitalization may be required for catheterization and monitoring.

Cat owners should provide an interesting and stress-free environment for their pets. It is important to watch for changes in your pet's toileting habits and have them checked if you see anything amiss.

Be Sun Smart

Catherine Copland, (Veterinarian - Balclutha)



Dogs and cats can get sunburn and skin cancer! If the skin is unpigmented (pink) around noses, ears and eyes, it needs sun protection. Animal safe sun block comes as cream or powder. Special dog sun glasses and visors protect eyes from UV rays and prevent sunburnt eyelids. Be like Pip and be sun safe!

Daughter's text to Dad:

Daddy, I'm coming home to get married soon, so get your chequebook ready. LOL! As you know, I'm in Australia and he's in the US. We met on a dating site, became friends on Facebook, and had long chats on WhatsApp. He proposed to me on Skype and now we've had a 2-month relationship through Viber. Dad, I need your blessing, good wishes, and a really big wedding Lots of love, Lilly

Dad's reply:

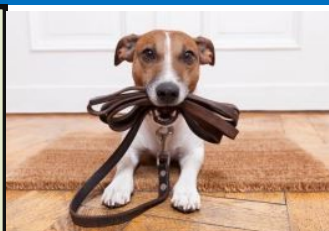
My dear Lilly, Like Wow Really? Cool Whatever.. I suggest you two get married on Twitter, have fun on Tango, register for your stuff on Amazon, and pay for it all through PayPal. And when you get fed up with this new husband, sell him on Ebay. Lots of love, Dad.



"Seen in Devonport, Auckland. Apparently he attracts a lot of ladies wherever he goes"

Training tips with Michelle

Training Tip for dogs from Michelle Powell - The key to successful dog training is patience, consistency and a willingness to adapt to your dog's individual personality and learning style.



To date we have rehomed 1,983 kittens and cats since 2005. When we get to 2000 we plan to celebrate!

THANK YOU to all those people who have been willing to take on a new furry family member, we really appreciate your support!

Sharron West



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