

# Goatvetoz Newsletter

Goat Veterinary Consultancies - goatvetoz

Summer 2019/20

## Cancer in older goats

Unfortunately older goats, just like other animals, are more prone to cancers. The most common are:

- Squamous cell carcinomas which are red & often on the eye or under the tail.
- Melanomas which are again often under the tail, on ears or on the exposed areas of the face – see photo.
- Uterine leiomyoma which can be associated with mammary tissue around the perineum either side of the vagina and below the anus.
- Abdominal mesothelioma which can have a range of clinical signs

So if you see any spot or mole that looks unusual get your goat to a vet. Similarly if you have any unusual signs associated with the reproductive system in older does then get a vet to check it out.



## Where are your veterinary medicines stored?

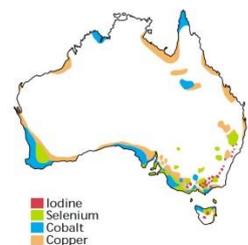
Hopefully not in a tin shed in this hot weather. Read the label instructions carefully and follow them exactly e.g. Q drench needs to be stored below 30C and not refrigerated. I have my Q drench stored in a special cool area under the house with a temperature probe that sounds an alarm if it reaches 30C. Most of my veterinary medicines are in a special refrigerator with a digital display temperature monitor.



Where are your vet medicines stored?

## COWP

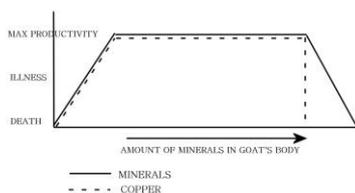
COWP stands for Copper Oxide Wire Particles and are often purchased and given in a bolus. You can also buy in bulk as loose bits of wire. Loose COWP can be given in a gelatin capsule or in treats like molasses or in a buttered slice of bread. COWPs are the best & safest method of treating a copper deficiency as they slowly release copper while trapped in the rumen folds. The clinical signs of copper deficiency include anaemia and ill-thrift. As these are signs that are common and often occur in goats with worms, liver fluke or Johne's disease, a vet diagnosis is needed, based on testing (blood or ideally liver). Following is a map of the Australian area known to be copper deficient.



Common mineral deficiencies across Australia. Source: Dickson, H (2016)

COWP can also be used to control barbers pole worms, but not other worms. Great

care must be taken as otherwise copper toxicity can develop. There are generally no warning signs of copper toxicity and affected goats will drop dead. Once a toxic level is reached all the copper stored in the liver is suddenly released into the blood stream and destroys red blood cells.



Testing liver levels is a useful precaution to know if you have a deficiency or getting close to toxic levels. A goat that dies suddenly or is slaughtered for meat should have a lobe of its liver frozen for later lab analysis. This can be expensive but so can dead goats.

## Phone a Vet

I was asked to join Phone a Vet so they could offer a goat vet advice service. It is an App and the [Phone A Vet](#) app is downloadable from [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#). The Phone A Vet app allows you to upload pictures and videos and have an up to 15 minute video call with a vet such as myself. This enables me to speak with you while looking at photos of your goats and their environment. I then gets a

fuller picture and can give the best advice. When in the app and describing the problem in the 'How can we help?' box, also enter "*request Dr Sandra Baxendell*". While the App is free to download there is a charge of \$25 for a vet advice session.

Note this is not an alternative to your local vet as I can't issue prescriptions but I can give advice about diet and husbandry or say the problem is urgent enough to go straight to your local vet.

## Problems with buck infertility

Generally bucks have few fertility problems and goat owners' main problem is keeping them away from the does they don't want to be bred. Bucks reach puberty around 4 months of age and the adhesions between their penis and prepuce break down around 3-4 months. This means that buck kids are reaching puberty around the time of weaning.

In areas below the Tropic of Cancer or Capricorn and not near the equator, then weaning is often in the non-breeding season. This helps.

If in northern Australia or near the equator or with breeds that don't have their

breeding controlled by day-length e.g. feral and some miniatures, separating buck kids before 4 months is the safest option.

Reaching puberty and being ready to be a herd sire are different things. Sperm production will be limited by their youth and the size of their testicles. Sperm quality is correlated to scrotal diameter. While very young bucks can sneakily get sisters pregnant they should not be used for planned matings until 6 months and then carefully supervised. You don't want their first matings to go badly. Use an older experienced doe that is not too tall. Mating on a slope can help as well.

## TWITTER

What was your favourite #goatvet tweet? This was mine:

Great advice about doing a physical exam of your goat. Make sure you have a thermometer.

<http://ow.ly/532m30qo1u9>

Follow me – see [twitter.com/goatvet](https://twitter.com/goatvet).

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