Newsletter

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LOUSY COWS

The life cycles of all species of lice are similar. Eggs are laid by the female and glued to hair shafts, and take 8–19 days to hatch as nymphs. The nymphs undergo three moults on the beast, and develop into adults. The entire life cycle takes 3–6 weeks.

Lice are spread entirely by direct contact between cattle. The lice and their eggs survive for only a few days if removed from cattle. Cattle lice cannot live on other species of farm animals.

Lice populations are highest in winter and lowest in summer. Cooler skin temperatures are associated with heavier lice infestations. The denser winter coat and cooler weather favours survival of lice. The number of lice tends to increase as nutrition for the cattle becomes poorer. It is usually when cold weather is coupled with poorer nutrition in winter that heavy lice infestations can develop.

Most insecticides registered for use on cattle are not very active against louse eggs. This means that after treatment, eggs can still hatch and continue the infestation. With some insecticides, a follow-up treatment 2–3 weeks later is necessary. This time interval is critical to achieve control, as it allows time for the eggs to hatch but not to mature into adults which will lay eggs themselves.

The timing and frequency of treatments depend very much on individual circumstances. In many cases treatment in late autumn or early winter will give adequate control of cattle lice. Usually a lice treatment at this time is in the form of a pour on and will also treat cattle for internal parasites in the one application.

Assuming no resistance to the chemical used has developed, eradication of lice should be quite feasible if you comply with the following steps.

1. Treat all cattle and ensure that you repeat the treatment according to the manufacturer's instructions.
2. Ensure that the dose rate is accurate. Preferably weigh all cattle, or a representative sample.
3. Treat all cattle on the property at the same time, prior to calving. Choose a time when they are not stressed or in poor condition or if groups are treated separately, ensure that there is no contact possible between treated and untreated groups.
4. Immediately after treatment, move treated groups to a paddock that has not had cattle in it for at least a week.
5. Ensure that no contact with any neighbours' cattle is possible, either through straying or through contact across fences.
6. Check that treatment has been effective. No adult live lice should be found on the animals when they are brought in again for their second treatment, and there should be no live lice at all a few days after the second treatment.
7. Consider treating in autumn/ early winter, before louse numbers build up. This will allow a longer 'test period' of cold weather to follow, so that you are better able to gauge whether eradication has been successful.

IN THIS ISSUE

BE PREPARED FOR GREEN FEED – PREVENT, DON'T REACT!

Green crops and pastures, such as lucerne, forage oats/barley, will be ready for grazing shortly. These types of feeds can be very successful in terms of profit and maximizing returns if the livestock consuming them are prepared in both health and nutrition.

Vaccinate

Prior to placing livestock on green feed, vaccinating stock with a clostridial (5in1/6in1) is extremely important. Pulpy kidney is a leading cause of death in stock that are faced with a sudden change in feed. Changes in feed allow the pulpy kidney organisms to proliferate and produce large quantities of toxins, leading to the rapid death of the animal. For the average cost of $0.23/dose, vaccinating is a very cost effective form of insurance for the health of your stock. Best practice, it is advisable that you administer your stock with the clostridial at least 10 days before the stock are due to be placed on the new feed. This gives the vaccine time to give maximum protection before the challenge arrives.

Drench

Ensuring your livestock are free of a worm burden before placing them on green feed will maximize the utilisation of the feed. Worm burdens place a large amount of stress on an animal's immune system, and their ability to convert feed to weight and/or milk if lactacting, is severely impaired. This leads to significant feed wastage, and productivity loss. However, prior to drenching, it is recommended that you do a worm test to determine the burden and if required, the type of worms present. This allows for a more specific selection of drench (if needed at all) and reduces the risk of contributing to worm drench resistance. Many types of worm test kits are available at rural stores, with varying levels of testing capabilities.

Nutrition

On the surface, green feeds and fodder crops appear to contain reasonable quantities of both energy and protein. However, there are inherent problems. If not properly understood and carefully managed, this can result in both a reduction in Feed Conversion Efficiency (FCE) and a significant wastage of feeds, as well as lead to animals showing primary signs associated with scours, bloat and grass tetany, and in severe cases, death. The main problem with these types of feed are a combination of high levels of protein/nitrogen, and low dietary carbohydrate (starch) levels. This imbalance in carbohydrate and protein, for which rumen microbes have specific requirements, results in unstable and impaired rumen fermentation.

To combat this imbalance, providing livestock with a source of starch is an effective method of combating the negative effects associated with grazing lush, green feed. Supplementing stock with high energy grains (such as barley or wheat) is an effective way to provide rumen microbes with quality starch to improve FCE, and allow your livestock to convert the feed into meat, milk, wool or progeny. It is important to note that these grains need to be managed correctly with advanced buffers to ensure the highest possible return. This is simply done by adding a specialised pellet to the grain.

If grain feeding is not an option, using starch based loose licks are a fantastic, simple and very cost effective method of delivering starch to the rumen, while reducing the incidence of scours and bloat.

By managing green feed and forage crops smartly with a specialised supplementary program, productivity is increased, and maximises your return on investment. It is easy, and very cost effective to prepare and ensure that your stock thrive on green feed!

End of FINANCIAL YEAR *Sale*

16 May –30 June 2016

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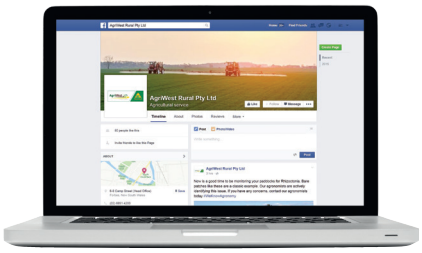

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$5,000 (incl. GST) worth of Longlife Blue® wire products^ in multiples of $5,000	$125

There's money in fencing this financial year! New tax breaks allow the immediate deduction of the full cost of fencing in the year it is purchased*. What's more, Waratah will also reward you with **CASH BACK** when you buy posts and/or Longlife Blue® wire.

Make your claim online by Thursday 7 July at www.waratahfencing.com.au/cashback

*Relates to changes to accelerated depreciation tax law for 2016 tax year. This does not constitute tax advice. Customers should seek their own advice on the tax deductibility of any purchase. ^In a single transaction between 16 May – 30 June 2016. **Not all Longlife products included. Claims must be received by 4.00pm (EST) Thursday 7 July 2016. Please refer to complete terms and conditions available on the Waratah website www.waratahfencing.com.au Phone: 13 10 80. ®Registered trademark of OneSteel Wire Pty Limited (Administrators Appointed), Ingall Street, Mayfield, NSW 2304. Printed May 2016. 152865.

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