



Veterinary Surgeons' Board



FROM THE REGISTRAR

This newsletter contains timely advice for veterinary surgeons treating rabbits to remind owners as to what steps they need to take to protect their pets from rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus, a reminder to pay your renewals before the end of the year, if you haven't already done so, and a survey on Mental Health and Wellbeing to assist researchers increase knowledge in this important area.

Talking of mental health, if you, or any staff in your practice, are finding things a bit tough and would like to talk to a professional counsellor, the Board will fund at least two totally confidential counselling sessions. See the article further down for more details.

As always, feedback, suggestions and comments are very welcome.

Dr Sue Godkin
Registrar



SPRING VIRUS REMINDER FOR PET RABBIT OWNERS

Warmer spring weather and increased reports of outbreaks of rabbit biological control viruses has prompted a reminder to rabbit owners to take steps to protect their pets.

Rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV), or 'calicivirus', has been present in the landscape for more than 20 years, and several strains are now present in Australia, including the RHDV1-K5 strain released nationally last year to help control pest rabbits.

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development research officer Susan Campbell said biological control provided a very important tool for suppressing pest rabbit numbers throughout the landscape, reducing the substantial impact pest rabbits had on both agricultural production and the environment.

"Despite outbreaks being more common in spring, owners of domestic rabbits should be mindful that RHDV or the myxoma virus is a risk at any time of the year," Dr Campbell said.

"The department is reminding owners of domestic rabbits to be aware of the rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus and know how to protect their pet rabbits from infection."

"The virus is contagious and can be spread by direct contact or by insect vectors."

"We urge owners to contact their local veterinarian for advice on vaccination which covers all RHDV-type 1 strains, and to take additional precautions such as keeping rabbits in insect-proof enclosures or inside."

The [Australian Veterinary Association](#) (AVA) website and the department's [RHDV web pages](#) provide further advice on vaccinations and other protective measures.

The AVA website also provides information and advice on RHDV2 – an alternate strain of the disease which arrived unexpectedly in Australia and for which an effective vaccine is not available in Australia.

Land managers are encouraged to seek information on integrated rabbit control via the [department](#) and the [PestSmart](#) websites.

Any further enquiries can be made to the department's Pest and Disease Information Service on padis@dpird.wa.gov.au or 08 9368 3080.

RENEWALS OF REGISTRATION AND APPROVALS FOR 2019

Just a gentle reminder that the [Board website](#) facility for paying your renewals for registration as a veterinary surgeon or approval as a veterinary nurse online for 2019 is now active. For assistance logging in click [here](#). If you have changed your email address please ensure that you log in to your account and update your contact details as all communication regarding renewals will be by email.

The absolute deadline for payment of renewal fees is midnight 31 December 2018.

If you do not pay by then your name will be removed from the Register on 1 January 2019 and you will not be able to legally work as a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse in Western Australia.

The Boards' office shuts down from 4.30pm on Friday 21 December 2018 to 8.30am Wednesday 2 January 2019. During this period you will not be able to pay by phone, but you may still pay using the online facility on the Board website, up until midnight on 31 December 2018.

WSAVA MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SURVEY

The Professional Wellness Group of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) is collecting information from veterinary professionals worldwide.

“Our aim is to assess levels of mental health and wellbeing in veterinary professionals globally, in order to update the literature, and implement positive measures to improving the veterinary profession.”

You can help with this research by participating in their survey at www.bit.ly/pwgsurvey.

Any enquiries can be directed to Nienke Endenburg (N.Endenburg@uu.nl) or Vicki Lim (hello@theriptideproject.com)



CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELLING FOR VETERINARY SURGEONS AND PRACTICE STAFF

Did you know that the Board will pay for up to two confidential counselling sessions for veterinary surgeons and other veterinary practice staff?

The Board can suggest a suitably qualified counsellor with experience in counselling people working in the veterinary profession or you can nominate a counsellor of your choice. If you or your staff wish to take up this offer then you need to contact the Board by phone 9317 2353 or by email admin@vsbwa.org.au. All requests are treated with the strictest confidence and no information about the counselling sessions is sought or given to the Board.

NEW GUIDELINES ON WEBSITE

The Board has recently added two new guidelines to the website. Guidelines on Veterinary Clinical Record Keeping and Guidelines for Responsibilities of the Managing Veterinary Surgeon are guidelines that all vets currently working in practice should have an understanding of.

All Board guidelines can be viewed [here](#).

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