



Clermont
Veterinary Surgery

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Proud members of the Australian Veterinary Association, Australian Cattle Veterinarians, Equine Veterinarians Australia, Veterinary Business Group and Australian Small Animals Veterinarians

GUILFOYLE'S GRUMBLINGS

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Welcome to the second edition of *eGrumbings* - again no teabag! Technology has many advantages but has not yet devised a method to send a teabag through the ethernet

It may well be timely to get a few tips from the pagans of ancient times. In the darkest depths of the northern winter solstice, **wreaths of evergreens** were hung to ward off the evil spirits and welcome the return to spring and brighter times.



And so a **bit of greenery** may also bring hope to the desiccated barren and droughted landscapes of the Australian countryside and "scorched earth" desolation of the **bushfires** aftermath. The curative properties of even a few square feet of lawn at the front steps can never be underestimated. Unfortunately for some, many precious gardens, which took years to establish, have had to be forsaken due to lack of available water

The onset of **drought** is insidious and catches many people unawares when strategic management plans have not been made or implemented.

Bushfires are another story. This year's widespread events have been savage in intensity and the property damage heart-breaking coming on top of the effects of drought. The "**blame game**" was up and running very quickly but does little to alleviate the losses suffered by many. Family homes disappeared in an instant along with farm infrastructure and precious fodder.

Climate Change has become a jargon on which every natural event gets the blame. **Climatic cycles** may be a more valid term. Memories can be very short. Many on the Central Highlands would prefer to forget the **1969 drought** (fifty years ago) but there have been good years in between interspersed with no so good times.

The effect of every drought is different depending on many factors including the timing of the rain events whether or not good soft pasture rain or hard run-off storms. A fluke storm can see a strategic dam filled or a few consecutive days of patchy rain can see a reasonable crop planted and successfully harvested. Change the timing of these rain events and the story could be completely different.

The vagaries of markets and the viability of any farm business particularly when producers have to supplementary feed their animals to maintain production is a constant problem. One only has to look at the **dairy industry** both in Queensland and Australia wide.

The "**green shirt**" identifying the farmer indeed shows the faith and **resilience of the agricultural and pastoral sector**. By promoting the positive implied by the green colour, optimism will show the way. Concentrating on the negative or bemoaning our plight can keep us wallowing in the muck which many times is of our own making

By its very nature, primary production has to meet the whims of our fickle and erratic climate head on. It is not an easy adversary to predict or overcome. An old grazier from South West Queensland was once quoted as saying "*If you are going to take on Mother Nature, then you better roll your sleeves up as it is going to be one hell of a fight*".

At this hot dry time of the year, it can be hard to recall the devastating **North Queensland floods** of February this year. A freak weather event saw the deluges that drowned Townsville and sent flood peaks down the Flinders and other river catchments to the Gulf. Cattle debilitated by drought perished from exposure to days of cold driving rain and boggy conditions if not from drowning when trapped by floodwaters.

One ignorant know-all Greenie was quoted as saying

“the flooding on these rivers was caused by graziers clearing the trees off their lands”. This person must have never seen natural open Downs country in his life.

Governments try to control the effects of natural events by well meaning legislation but unfortunately these far-reaching rules and regulations are quite often made by persons far removed from the coal face, many times ignorant of sustainable agricultural practices or even the natural cycle of nature. To add insult to injury, their wages are paid from taxes contributed from primary production.

Once something is enshrined in legislation, it can be very difficult to change. Bureaucrats then take over not making life any easier.

Governments, particularly when hanging onto power by slender margins, are loath to do anything that could see the loss of votes. It is a fact to be faced but the voting public is rapidly becoming further removed from the source of their food. While increasingly demanding “clean green” produce for their table, many consumers have little idea of the realities in food production

In March this year, I finished a two year term as President of the Australian Cattle Veterinarians. Two issues dominated the time, namely the ongoing Live Export/Animal Welfare debate and the deregulation of Bovine Pregnancy Diagnosis as an Act of Veterinary Science in Queensland



It was heartening to see the response by the veterinary profession and allied industries to the Nth Qld floods along with other groups who rallied to provide what relief could be provided to the affected livestock. It is not always the efficacy of large scale treatment of animals in these circumstances that counts but the fact that support for the affected owners is forthcoming in such times.

One disappointment was the intransigence of a single bureaucrat that saw the offer of \$500,000 of insecticide go into the bin. Urgent protocols had been cleared at State and Federal levels for the importation from the USA pending an issue with the applicator, a gas driven device that unfortunately looked too much like a fire-arm! How would these people like to be sitting on a mudbank in the river covered in midges and sandflies! These are the same people that scream on animal welfare issues

Talking on **animal welfare** — the **Vegan** movement

did not do their cause any favours by invading private property violating, in many cases, strict Biosecurity protocols. The Vegans seem to mimic **the Radicals** of the 60's whose sole aim seemed to be to cause disruption under the guise of an ideal.

One concern is that Vegans and those of similar ilk want to raise the status of animals to the same level as humans and, at the same time, lower humans to the same level as animals.

The Qld Government has decided to deregulate Bovine Pregnancy Testing as an act of Veterinary Science. However, the full outcome of the decision is complex and time will tell what direction it will take.

Cattle Matters

Biosecurity was a term that drove many insane when it was first used but it takes on meaning when disease outbreaks occur on a property. Mostly thought of measures to prevent diseases (plant and animal) coming onto a property, **internal Biosecurity** is also important

Recent investigations highlighted the importance of strict management protocols. Peste Virus (BVDV) is a classic example. The mixing of naïve pregnant heifers with older breeders can see up to a 20% loss or more of pregnancies. This happened at least five properties with savage economic loss.

Vibriosis, a disease once thought to be under control, reemerged with a vengeance in several properties in the district. In most cases, it was both internal and external Biosecurity breakdowns that highlighted the cases.

For both of these diseases, vaccines are available to complement management of the disease.

One matter that became apparent during one investigation was the lack of a satisfactory **Annual Bull Audit**. This involves the accounting for each bull on the property on an annual basis. Important for disease control, fertility testing and physical breeding suitability



Technologies are becoming available to track bulls on properties no matter how rugged the terrain is. This can be crucial in the case of high value bulls for insurance claims. Like all insurance policies, bull insurance needs to be reviewed regularly for expiry and also the levels of cover provided. Saves frustration and disappointment

Check the Clermont Veterinary Surgery **Facebook** page for Dr Tess's video on bull testing. Learn plenty with a giggle to boot!

Bull Buyers Beware. The clinic has seen many cases of bulls having being bought at sales in good faith, only found to be faulty. When attending sales, examine the Supplementary Data Sheets noting if **morphology** is included. Visually check the physical features of the bull noting feet and legs. *If in doubt, ring for advice*

IN THE SMALLIES CLINIC

Pig Hunters Beware: As highlighted last year, **Pig Brucellosis (*Brucella suis* infection)** is a serious disease capable of spreading to humans with potentially devastating consequences. If your sporting dog has swollen testicles or cannot sire puppies, it is important to investigate the cause. Similarly, if your female has a problem getting pregnant.

This **zoonotic** disease can be contracted either directly from handling wild pigs or from infected hunting dogs. **Sensible hygiene and immediate first aid** to cuts and scratches can help prevent the misery of this disease.

Brucellosis is a Notifiable Disease

Heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*) infection of dogs continues to make a resurgence.

Heartworm disease in dogs is a **silent killer** that is often overlooked until it's too late. This **preventable** condition starts with a mosquito bite and ends with either a long, expensive treatment or death. Symptoms may not appear for about 6 months after the infecting mosquito bite: **a soft, dry cough, lethargy, weight loss, difficult breathing, fluid build-up in the abdomen and chest, and finally collapse.** If in doubt, check it out!

It is a preventable disease with a twelve month injection or monthly tablets available to suit your regime.

Parvovirus is an ever present risk to unvaccinated dogs. An annual vaccination is a smidgin of the cost of treating a single case which cannot be guaranteed to be successful.

The clinic has developed the **Clermont Veterinary Surgery Gold Star Companion Care Club.** This is a "best practice" programme designed to keep your pet healthy and up to date with all the vaccinations and parasite treatments so they can live their happiest and longest life possible. *Give the staff a call and check it out.*

FROM THE BACKYARD STABLES

The stables never seem empty with a constant flow of cases coming through particularly when the breeding season ramps up. Got so hot an aircon unit had to be installed to keep animals and humans cool!



STAFF

The practice would not be what it is without the staff we have. The Clermont Veterinary Surgery now has 7 veterinarians, 12 nurse and support staff.

And it has been a year of achievements and milestones

Dr Caroline is now on the Queensland Veterinary Surgeons Board as a Registered Equine Specialist

Amanda clocked up 20 years of working with the clinic

Kayla, Meg and Lexie—achieved their Certificate Four Nursing Levels

Charlotte Connelly kept the boss sane

Dr Kate Miller— joined the practice; Kate has spent time with us as a student

Backyard support— nothing looks as good as it does without the background workers : **Petrina, Bonnie, Lilly, Winton**

Gardens and surrounds—**Royce**

Plus all the surprises and joys that every day brings!

Historical Note of Significance

On the 27th December, 1969 at "Paraconah Station" Eulo Qld, 4491, the marriage took place between **Alan Francis Guilfoyle** and **Carolyn Rosemarie Smith**, Father John Bergin officiated.

Merry Christmas 2019 and good fortunes for 2020 from everyone at the Clermont Veterinary Surgery

Cheers Guillie & Tess