

Warrnambool Ultrasound Workshop

2-3 November 2014

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G'day Mate, waddayaknow? ... It's dark inside a cow! Whether it is nobler to scan with linear or sector probes, to manually check possible empties, or not... these were some questions that were answered when I attended a pregnancy ultrasound workshop opportunity based at Warrnambool Veterinary Clinic, South Eastern Victoria at the weekend.

The course was presented by members, for members of the ACV and run as two, one-day events. There were 24 places and all were booked up a week in advance – I booked the last spot. Tutors were Jon Kelly (aka J.K. from Warrnambool Veterinary Clinic), Andrew Hoare (aka Hoarey from South East Vet), Matt Izzo (The Vet Group, Warrnambool) and Matt Dwyer (WVC). Chris Graham (BCF Technology for U/S scanners) was present to supply, assist with and discuss any technical issues related to relevant BCF equipment. Cost to attend was \$ 500 pp, on your own horse. Thanks to Hoarey for organizing the ethics approval.

A highlight of the day for me was using the portable screens to log onto and watch & learn about what was being seen by the U/S operator.

Sunday started off at 8H00 with meet and greet at WVC where we proceeded with sessions about theory, indications, benefits, applications of and uses for ultrasound in cattle reproduction. Presenters were J.K, Hoary and Matt Izzo.



J.K.

Hoary

Matt Izzo

Matt Dwyer

Emphasis was on early detection, accurate ageing and gender determination of pregnancy in cows, as well as recognising aborting fetuses, endometrial disease and empty reproductive tracts. Usefulness for confirmation of late pregnancy at drying off was added, with a cost / benefit analysis to consider. Gender determination can add value for clients: needs to be done in a tight gestation window. This can encourage some who may choose to use veterinary services earlier to ensure dystocia of known heifer calves are attended to, or bull embryo / IVF calves due to perceived value by the client. After a short smoko we all set off in convoy to a property east of town.



J.K. gives notes to Michael Chambers



Phill Poulton (L) and John Hosie (R) learning





The first dairy visit was to demonstrate the methodology and reinforce the live images shown to the students. Two groups gathered with tutors who demonstrated monochrome U/S viewers coupled to both linear or sector probes. Differences in the scanned image, capabilities of the technology and suitability of equipment was evident to all present. (If I could figure it out, I'm sure everybody else did so with ease.)

Lunch was on the way back at the local cricket club, after which we moved off in two groups to different properties for the afternoon practical exercise. From about 15H00 onwards we each had ample opportunity to practice and evaluate our budding cow scanning skills while swapping sector probes for linear ones and checking the records for a humbling reality of our limited accuracy. Similar to those first pregnancy palpations 25 years or 100 000 cows ago ...did I miss a zero?



My group had Hoary and Matt Izzo, while J.K. and Matt Dwyer tutored at the other dairy. The generous dairy owners were thanked by most, if not all for the great opportunity afforded to us on their working cows.



Hoarey



Jan (Dairyman)



Michael Chambers, Phil Poulton, Peter

Clean-up was close to 17H00. After a very successful, informative and well presented workshop, all that needs to happen is harness the U/S equipment and get to work. With enough practice, there would be quite a few more competent scanners in the ACV requesting accreditation for this skill. Revisiting the notes, video clips, internet links and a few more chats with colleagues will add to the provision of reliable veterinary services for both dairy and beef producers.

One thought about future developments: it is likely that soon a transmitter device will be added to the scanner backpack for Wi-Fi connection of a signal to any compatible Android or Apple phone or tablet, enabling bystanders to visualise the dark side of cattle ultrasound with ease. Similar equipment could be harnessed to do the same from a microscope ocular tube for semen assessment. Informing clients of the value of service we provide is always beneficial to their understanding of fees for service and veterinary management advice.