

Wombat Protection Society

Bulletin Number 5 – February 2007

Welcome to Bulletin Number five.

The (Draft) Interim Report from the Mange Clearing House is on site. We invite you to read this report, even if you are unlikely to deal with manged wombats. In this first report the reasons for inaction are examined and various "positions" explained and critiqued. There is an entymological study of the scabies mite and a treatment modality comparison to human models for managing scabies outbreaks. Once this draft is finalized it will be used to make recommendations for the required features for any treatment program. The second part of the report due for completion by the end of March will examine treatment options and compare these to the required features of a treatment program developed in the first report. The Society invites critique of this material and will take that critique into account before finalizing the reports. The Society also requests members and others who have information about treatment outcomes who have not already done so, get that material to us.

The Interim Report is still in a draft form and we will finalise it when we have received comments from those who read it. At this stage the conclusions from the report are;

1. We know that sarcoptic mange is caused by a mite that can be easily eradicated using a variety of acaricides. These products exist commercially, e.g.: ivermectin, advocate, porcine ; in elemental form, eg: sulphur and they exist in nature ,e.g.: tea tree oil/eucalyptus oil, pyrethrum.
2. We know that the intensity of mite infestation correlates with the severity of clinical signs seen in infested animals.
3. We know that if left, in general, sarcoptic mange progresses, mites increase incrementally and the affected wombat dies. We know this death is slow and painful and avoidable.
4. We suspect that the death of an heavily infested wombat in its burrow, if shared with another wombat, is the most likely means by which an intense load of mites will be transferred to another wombat, sufficient, irrespective of previous contact to the mite and possibility of immunity, to cause sarcoptic mange in that animal.
5. We know that mites do not live long off their host and burrows, even if infested via the death of a wombat from sarcoptic mange, will be mite free within three weeks. Leaving wombats with sarcoptic mange to die is likely to lead to more wombats dying from mange.
6. We know that treating wombats with early stages of clinical signs will lead to complete resolution of mange and the wombat will be healthy and not more likely to become reinfested, probably less so.

From what we know, we recommend;

1. We should take action to eradicate mange in wombats.

2. Wombats with clinical signs of mange should be treated with an acaricide.
3. Wombats with severe mange should be targeted for treatment and need, in addition, antibiotics to assist secondary infections preventing their deaths. Treatment of these animals is particularly important not only to prevent their suffering but to ensure no other wombat becomes infested.
4. Carers of hand reared wombats turning these animals from captive to free should avoid burrows where a wombat has died from sarcoptic mite infestation for at least three weeks.
5. Carers of wombats with severe mange should avoid allowing that animal to die and if it does should ensure no other wombat has contact with its bedding, housing or burrow for a period of at least three weeks.

The Next Step

In the next phase of this project, we will investigate the various treatment options. Taking into account various comments and concerns about wombat welfare, we believe options for treatment should be evaluated against certain criteria;

1. The degree of interference with the wombat's normal routine and lifestyle. The better treatment will not interfere, or limits the degree of interference with the normal routine and behaviour of the naturally raised free wombat.
2. The degree of likely impact on the longer term health of the animal. The better treatment has no new negative impacts on the long term well being of the wombat.
3. The degree of ease with which the treatment can be supplied to the wombat. The better treatment is simple, safe and able to be provided by a range of people.
4. The universality of treatment. The better treatment will be able to be used on wombats whatever their stage of mange development and should cause no harm to any other wombat that may come in contact with the treatment modality.
5. The unintended consequences of treatment. The better treatment should have no or as few unintended consequences to those using the treatment, other animals that may inadvertently come in contact with the treatment and the environment in general.

The next stage of our project will evaluate all known acaracides against these criteria.

Other Matters

The Society's T-shirts are being made as we speak. On the front is a small wombat and on the back a larger sized wombat with the words Wombat Protection Society of Australia. Thank-you to those who have already ordered sight unseen. For those who would like to know what they may be getting and how much it will cost, we have two samples of the front and back in picture form below.

The final decision was to use colours on the smaller wombat for those of you who can discriminate enough to see a slight difference in nose and ear colour. The first batch will be white, Australian made 100% cotton T-Shirts and the text is maroon. The next batch will be in the Society's colours, maroon T-shirts with gold text. These will be available to members only. The white T-shirts are available to all. After the release of these T-shirts we will move to a position where you can choose preferred colours. Adults' T-shirts will be \$30.00 and children's \$20.00.

The Wooden Wombats made by a NSW. artist are on sale on site and soft "cuddling" wombats are as well. These are on site now and prices depend on sizes ordered.

The latex wombat mould is also available, so those of you who would like to be making chocolate / carob / iceblock or plaster "wombats" should be happy. These will cost \$20.00.

You can either buy these products off the site or if you are enthused and want something before it is on site, contact us directly.

The Society is developing well and it is a pleasure to work with a number of enthusiastic correspondents and helpers. Linda Dennis has now become the Webmaster and is doing a great job. We thank all of you who have been distributing the mange survey forms and giving input regarding observations and contacts for this very important project. We thank Belinda Jermyn for offering to manage the shop's sales, when we sort out a shared accounting package you'll get to know her better.

We have quite a few tasks available for those of you who offered to give a gift in kind rather than paying membership. These include;

- 1. Web searches for information.** There have been two types of information we regularly need searches on, one is for a particular person we are trying to locate, for example, for their e-mail address; and the other for products or information. This month's searches included trying to track down Australian made latex wombat moulds as well as searching for Clare Davis and Barbara Triggs. We finally found Barbara, thanks to all those who helped. We are still trying for Lee Skerratt, Clive Marks and John McIlroy.
- 2. Membership Secretary.** We are now at a stage of organization where we can hand over the database to someone to monitor and keep up to date the membership list. This will need to be done by a member and a member who is willing to have a Working With Children Criminal Records check as we keep some information on the database pertaining to children who are members. This also involves sending out the Bulletins to members and sending them their birthday cards.
- 3. Non-computer member contact.** We have a number of members who do not have computers and we rely on members who do undertake to print out and mail to those members who don't material such as Bulletins. If you are a "gift in kind" member we would ask you to look after one or two mail members. This works out roughly equivalent to paying a membership fee by the time you print out and mail them their Bulletins.
- 4. Document editing.** The research area of the organization is now involved in producing quite lengthy papers and in reading very lengthy papers. If you enjoy reading and are willing to proof read material we write or to read documents and highlight relevant sections, we'd like to hear from you.
- 5. Organisation Update.** If you enjoy talking with people, we need someone or a few "someone's" to regularly contact organizations we list on the site and ensure their details are up to date. Once again, we will probably give you three or four organizations to "monitor" and get you to let us know every three months that they have been checked and their details are accurate.
- 6. Web Search on Wombat.** We also need someone or "someone's" to regularly search the web for information on wombats and to monitor anything new being put onto sites that we link to about wombats. Similarly, we also need someone with access to a media search engine to regularly scan the media for articles and information on wombats. With your help we will **save the wombat.**