

You may be aware of the recent media attention the processionary caterpillar (*Ochrogaster lunifer*) has been receiving in the local paper. We have definitely seen an increase in the number of caterpillars in the area. We have also seen a number of abortions where we believe caterpillars are a contributing factor.

Exposure to caterpillars and their shed exoskeletons may be minimised by ensuring that pregnant mares are not grazed on pastures where it is known that caterpillars are, or have been, present. Where this cannot be avoided, provision of supplementary feed to reduce grazing under and around trees may be beneficial. It is also advisable that supplementary feed be available from feeders elevated off the ground and away from trees. Replacement of trees that are the natural food source of the PC (i.e., eucalypt and acacia species) might be considered, but may not be practicable. Removal of caterpillar nests in February and March is also an option. At this stage, spraying is not an option.

We urge you as horse owners to have a look at your paddocks and if you see large numbers of the PC to contact us and take the above measures. At this stage there are no other known conditions caused by exposure to the PC.

Geelong Vet Hospital

