**Toxic Baits**

For many people summer means spending time on the farm, or taking the dog for bushwalks. Although getting out and about in nature with your dog is a great summertime activity, certain areas can contain dangers for your pet.

1080 poison is used to control possums mainly in forest areas and bush, especially along farm verges. Possums cause enormous damage to our native bush and also carry Tuberculosis which they can spread to farm animals. 1080 has been very effective, however it does have a downside the poisoned possum carcass remains toxic for up to three months and are very toxic to dogs that may scavange. Areas where 1080 has been spread are always well signposted with warnings to keep all dogs on a lead.

Signs of poisoning can develop within half an hour of ingesting the poison and include disorientation, circling, barking, then salivating and vomiting followed almost invariably with death. If you suspect your dog has eaten a carcass contact your Vet immediately for advice on how to make your dog vomit and emergency treatment.

Other deadly toxins for dogs include rat bait and rabbit bait. There are many different types of rat bait, all of which are toxic to dogs. The most common one acts by preventing the blood from clotting which leads to severe internal bleeding. Rabbit bait acts in a similar way. If your dog has eaten any bait, call the vet immediately. We will make the dog vomit and this can prevent toxicity developing. It typically takes 3-5 days before signs of poisoning are visible, so owners will often be unaware that their dog has eaten the bait.

Signs include lethargy, pale gums, bruising under the skin, blood in the faeces or urine, and breathing difficulties. The best way to prevent this is to ensure any rat bait on your property is inaccessible. We have had a number of cases where dogs have climbed onto a bench in a garden shed and knocked a box of rat poison down off a shelf. Rabbit bait is usually ingested when your dog goes wandering onto a neighbour’s property who has put down poison.