



Companion Animal Newsletter - May 2018

★ Winner of the Veterinary Nurse of the Year Award 2018! ★

We are incredibly pleased to announce that Anna Ashworth (RVN, R-SQP) is the winner of the Veterinary Nurse of the Year Award 2018! Anna was nominated by colleagues who recognised that her passion and commitment in her role as a veterinary nurse went above and beyond the call of duty.

Anne has had a very positive influence on the development of our companion animal department, and all of her colleagues and clients know she is a Veterinary Nurse second to none.

As well as her dedicated companion animal work, Anna is also the practice's Farm Vet Tech and has helped to drive forward our health planning services in the farm animal department. She has been integral in setting up the Flock Health Club for sheep farmers, is an AMTRA qualified R-SQP, MSD Lameness Advisor and continues to develop her skills and knowledge professionally through ongoing training.

Anna was shortlisted to one of three finalists from over 22,000 nominations and was invited to attend the glittering awards ceremony at Birmingham Town Hall in April. This is a prestigious award with the winner being selected by a panel of experienced veterinary professionals and leaders from the industry's governing bodies.

Anna's superb work ethic, skills and dedication blew the judging panel away; they thought her work was innovative and the fact that she is involved in educating farmers in meaningful and practicable ways about hot topics such as anthelmintic resistance and reducing antibiotic usage was incredibly important.

Well done Anna!



You are cordially invited to 'Paws for Tea' with us Friday 11th May!

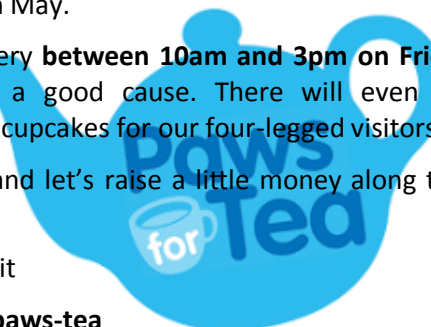
To help support the work of the Blue Cross, we are getting involved and taking part in their nationwide 'Paws for Tea' fundraiser on Friday 11th May.

Call in to the Settle surgery **between 10am and 3pm on Friday 11th May** to enjoy a cup of tea and a piece of cake and raise some money for a good cause. There will even be 'pupcakes' alongside the cupcakes for our four-legged visitors!

Come and join the fun and let's raise a little money along the way!

For more information visit

www.bluecross.org.uk/paws-tea



RABBIT VACCINATIONS

We regularly vaccinate our cats and dogs but did you know you can protect your rabbit against a number of potentially deadly diseases?

In this country we have two major viral diseases of rabbit which we can vaccinate against:

- Myxomatosis
- Viral Haemorrhagic Disease



Myxomatosis is usually a fatal disease of rabbits. It is mainly spread by biting insects such as midges, fleas and mites. An affected rabbit may develop swelling around the face and eyes which will eventually form crusty scabs. Although a small number of rabbits may survive an infection, most will die from the illness through increased predation or secondary infections causing pneumonia. It can result in a long slow death, which can cause much suffering for the individual involved. It appeared in the UK in the early 1950s and decimated the UK rabbit population at the time. The wild rabbit population recovered leaving some genetic resistance. Domestic bred rabbits don't have this protection. No treatment exists apart from prevention through vaccination and parasite control where necessary.

Viral haemorrhagic disease is another fatal disease of rabbits that can cause apparent sudden death with few obvious outward signs. It is also known as Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease or Rabbit Caliciferous. There are a number of different strains of the disease, some of which are more aggressive than others, the less aggressive forms may confer some natural immunity to wild rabbits. Of the more deadly strains

we have named: RHDV1, RHDV2 and RHDV-K5. RHDV1 was the strain that originally appeared in the UK, but, more recently, we have a new variant labelled RHDV2. It has had some devastating effects on the wild rabbit populations in places in the UK. RHDV-K5 is another variant that has been deliberately released in Australia to control wild rabbit populations. It can only be properly diagnosed by a combination of proper post-mortem, microscopic changes and identifying the virus through special tests. The virus itself is difficult to kill and can survive for prolonged periods in the environment. It may be spread via direct transmission between rabbits, but also via the infection on items e.g. your shoes, bird's feet, vegetables, grass etc. so even your house rabbit could be at risk.

There have been a number of vaccines throughout the years for both VHD and myxomatosis. In the past some vaccines have been associated with a high level of reactions e.g. lethargy, anorexia, lumps at the injection site; but newer vaccines appear safer, with fewer problems reported.

The vaccine we use for Myxomatosis is given by injection under the skin and provides protection against Myxomatosis and RHDV1. Rabbits can be vaccinated from 5 weeks of age, but immunity can take up to 3 week to develop. Vaccination is recommended on a yearly basis.

The vaccine we use for Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease is also given by injection under the skin and provides protection against RHDV1 and RHDV2. Rabbits can be vaccinated from 10 weeks of age, with immunity taking about 1 week to develop. Vaccination is recommended on a yearly basis, but in high risk areas, or pets with direct contact with wild rabbits, then it may be worth thinking about vaccinating every 6 months.

It is not advised to give both vaccines at the same time so usually we will give them at least 2 weeks apart.

Bringing your rabbit in for vaccinations also allows us to give your pet a thorough health examination so we can ensure it is in tip-top shape. If your rabbit hasn't been vaccinated or needs getting back up to date then why not consider booking them in and we can discuss your vaccination plan with you.

For more information on rabbit viral diseases why not visit:

<https://www.harcourt-brown.co.uk/articles/infectious-disease>

<https://rabbitwelfare.co.uk/rabbit-health/vaccinations/>

and showing the current spread of RHDV2:

<http://rhd2map.buntools.org.uk/index.php?&p=cases>



ADVICE ON MAKING AN INSURANCE CLAIM

Having our pets insured gives us the peace of mind that we have some financial provision in place should the unexpected happen. However, when we do need to claim it can be seen as a daunting prospect how the insurance process actually works!

We are here to help and below is some advice on making an insurance claim:

1. Check your insurance policy to make sure you are covered for veterinary fees for the condition being treated. Check your excess, this is the amount you are liable to settle yourself before your insurers contribute. This can be a fixed fee or a percentage of the fees invoiced. When there is a percentage excess then you will be notified as the claim progresses as to what has been deducted and will need to settle this yourself. Please note that all insurance company policies are different. It is very important that you read the small print and make us aware of any exclusions/restrictions that could apply. We do our very best to assist you in the office, but we are not the policy holder, and as all policies differ we need as much information as possible to help process your claim.

2. If you have decided to make a claim, ring your insurance company as soon as possible and let them know you intend to claim and to check you have the cover for the condition. Some companies will only let you claim providing you have informed them within the first few weeks of treatment. Request a claim form and claim reference. Sometimes claim forms can be downloaded from insurers websites. Once you have the claim form you will need to complete FULLY the owner section and be sure your policy number and claim reference are completed. The owner section must also have been signed by the policy holder.

2. **DO NOT DELAY** - Once you have the claim form this needs to be completed as soon as possible (do not wait until the treatment has finished), and returned to us for the vet to complete their section. If you wish to claim for alternative therapies this will need to have been veterinary recommended (e.g. physiotherapy). Obtain invoices for these services and forward them to the surgery as soon as possible. Not all policies will cover for alternative treatments or supplements so you will need to check your policy. For ongoing conditions your insurers usually require a continuation claim form to be forwarded with each invoice. Please contact your insurers to see if this is the case and if so, send us a few signed continuation claim forms with your policy and pet details completed so we can continue to forward invoices on your behalf.

4. It is our policy that your insurance company pays the practice directly. There will be an option to tick on your claim form to indicate this. Alternatively you may settle the outstanding balance yourself to us **at the time of work**, and then be reimbursed directly from your insurers. Please note that treatments/products that are not being claimed for (e.g. vaccination, food, flea/worm treatments), should be paid for **at the time**. If the practice is paid directly, as explained above, your excess will need to be paid to us as the insurance company will deduct this from their payment to us.

5. If your pet has been referred to an animal hospital for further diagnostics and treatment, then the referral centre will also need a continuation claim form and your insurance details to submit their invoicing for settlement.

6. If you have any queries at any stage of your claim, please contact your insurance company in the first instance. We are a third party in the contract and insurers are not obliged to discuss your claim with us. If, after contacting your insurers, there is anything we can assist with, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01729 823538.



BEWARE: Pine Processionary Moth Caterpillar!



With the ease of the Pet Travel Scheme (covered in our last newsletter) many of us are now able to include our pets in our continental travel plans.

If you are planning on visiting the continent with your dog this spring however, beware the Pine Processionary Moth Caterpillar! Residing in pine trees widely across continental Europe and particularly in Portugal, Spain and Southern France there are reports that the Caterpillar is causing serious problems in the springtime for dog walkers visiting pine forests.

What signs can we look out for to check if the trees are a host?

Usually the silk caterpillars nests can be seen in the trees, with a distinctive nose to tail procession of the furry caterpillars (hence their name), making their way down the trunk to the pupa site in the soil.

So why do they pose such a threat to our dogs?

The Caterpillars, whether alive or squashed, are very toxic when touched because they have thousands of tiny hairs containing a protein called thaumetopoein.

Contact with the hairs can cause itching skin rashes (pictured right) and, less commonly, sore throats, breathing difficulties and eye problems.

This can happen if people or animals touch caterpillars or their nests, or if the hairs are blown into contact by the wind.



They represent a public and animal health hazard and if you do suspect that either a human or animal has come into contact with this toxin, seek immediate medical or veterinary advice.

The pest is not known to be established in the UK. However, with the import of tree stock and climate changes the forestry commission are ever vigilant, and have protocols in place for suspected sightings to be reported.

For more information visit their website:
www.forestry.gov.uk/pineprocessionarymoth

Dalehead Veterinary Group is a trading name of Dalehead Veterinary Group Ltd, a limited company, registered in England and Wales with the number 09445397.
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Check out our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk for more information about caring for your pet, special offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!

