



Companion Animal Newsletter - March 2020

TUMMY TROUBLE

We have seen a rise in the cases of vomiting and diarrhoea, or Gastroenteritis recently in Settle and the surrounding area. Other areas across the country have also reported cases of acute and prolific vomiting including:

- Oxford
- Derbyshire
- Burnley
- Liverpool



The Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network (SAVSNET) are asking vets, nurses and owners to complete an online questionnaire to help them build more data on the suspected outbreak – the questionnaire is available at:

https://liverpool.ac.uk/savsnet/dog_vomiting_potential_outbreak

The organisation states; *'Currently, we do not know whether this is part of normal seasonal variation, or whether a specific virus or bacteria is involved. Both vaccinated and unvaccinated dogs can be affected.'*

Digestive upsets are one of the most common reasons we see patients. They can be caused by:

- Inappropriate food
- Scavenging
- A change of diet
- Stress
- Something more serious such as a bacterial infection
- Parasites
- Problems with digesting food



Dogs usually make a full recovery with routine symptomatic veterinary therapy.

If your dog is showing any symptoms such as vomiting and/or diarrhoea, we recommend that you feed your dog a bland diet which is easily digestible – such as Hill's i/d diet or boiled chicken and cooked rice. Feed this solely for 48 hours, feed small amounts of food little and often throughout the day. **Cut out any titbits** and make sure that fresh, clean water is available at all times. We can also provide you with an easy to use supplement which is a nutritional paste, made with natural ingredients, which helps to quickly restore normal digestive function.

Digestive upsets usually improve within a few days but if you are concerned that your pet is not improving, seems dull or lethargic, or is vomiting repeatedly, then you should contact us as soon as possible. Young dogs and puppies can deteriorate rapidly so seek veterinary advice at the early stages of illness. Medication to control vomiting or to treat an infection if suspected can be administered if your dog's symptoms persist.

For more information please contact the surgery and speak to one of our small animal team.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIALISATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUR DOG



We live in a beautiful part of the world, open fields, rolling hills, endless footpaths, all of which we can enjoy with our four-legged friends free of charge! For many of us the countryside is a playground but for others it is a place of work where businesses are run. Each year we stress the fact that it is important to respect and abide by the countryside code for both the welfare of farm animals and for the rounded socialisation of your pet.

Lambing time has started, and it won't be long before the landscape is scattered with ewes and their newborn lambs—a pretty picture which let's us know that spring is on the way! Most sheep are herded by trained working sheep dogs. As a result of this, they will naturally run away when they see a dog.

All dogs have the instinct to run after another moving animal, in our pet dogs this will usually be in a playful way. The excitement in this play mode is heightened when the animal keeps running, the mouthing play that most dogs show at this point can cause considerable damage to sheep. Chasing behaviour is great fun for your dog and highly addictive. When repeated, this behaviour can turn into a herding or hunting instinct so it is important to break this habit, or not allow it to occur, at an early age.

It is vital that your puppy or dog is taught how to behave around livestock if you are going to walk in the countryside. In all instances it is safest to keep your dog on a lead around livestock. Even the most well trained dog can lose their senses if they see a bolting rabbit or a pheasant and whilst they may not be directly chasing livestock, they can still cause untold damage:

- Heavily pregnant sheep stressed by being moved too fast or too far will abort.
- Ewes with young lambs that are moved by an uncontrollable dog can lose contact with their lambs. If they are not reunited within hours the lamb may be rejected by the mother, cannot feed, becomes hypothermic and will slowly pass away.
- Most dogs if not trained or socialised with livestock will chase sheep. Straying dogs, even the gentlest family pet, can develop the hunting instinct when chasing sheep and playful chasing can quickly turn into worrying!

If you know a local farmer, they might let you introduce your dog or puppy to livestock in a controlled environment . As with any training, reinforce the positive behaviour with praise and stay safe. It is a criminal offence to allow your dog to worry sheep and farmers are acutely aware of the rise in attacks on livestock. The term 'worrying' includes attacking or chasing sheep and, in some circumstances, farmers are legally entitled to shoot dogs if they are endangering their sheep.

If you would like any advise on this subject please do not hesitate to get in touch.

PET ANXIETY MONTH

Common Signs of Stress & Anxiety in Pets

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Panting | Drooling |
| Abnormal Bathroom Habits | Pacing |
| Decreased Appetite | Excessive Grooming |
| Hiding | Dilated Pupils |

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During March CEVA Animal Health, the manufacturer of Adaptil and Feliway, will be running their Pet Anxiety Month. This is a nationwide campaign run annually by the company which aims to raise awareness of pet anxiety amongst pet owners and highlight what can be done to help anxious pets.

Ms King, who is the senior products manager for Adaptil and Feliway at CEVA, states '*It is widely known that humans suffer from anxieties, but pets do too, with 82% of dogs and 89% of cats reported to be scared of something. It is therefore important that we educate pet owners on the signs of stress and the help and support that they can give to their pets.*'



For further information about pet anxiety please contact the surgery or visit:

www.petanxiety.co.uk

ALABAMA ROT

Alabama rot is a rare disease affecting dogs which causes small clots in blood vessels. The first signs of the disease are:

- Unexplained redness
- A skin sore or lesion that isn't caused by a known injury.

Later stages on the disease include:

- Tissue damage
- Skin ulcers and lesions on the dogs limbs
- Occasionally we will see lesions elsewhere, such as on the tummy or in the mouth
- Owners will possibly notice their dog become lethargic
- Inappetance
- High temperature
- and, in many cases, kidney failure.

Also known as cutaneous and renal glomerular vasculopathy, or CRGV. The cause of Alabama rot remains unknown although theories put forward have included E. coli-produced toxins, parasites and bacteria. There is a lot of work going on in the UK and elsewhere to understand this condition better. A number of groups are now looking at potential causative agents most notably Anderson Moores and the Royal Veterinary College, and progress is being made.

The disease was first recognised in the 1980s in America (hence the reason for the name). However, as with a lot of conditions, it has taken time to accurately understand the disease. Although still very rare, there has been a rise in the number of cases in the UK. So far in 2020 there have been 9 confirmed cases, these are located in:

- Kent
- Caerphilly
- West Yorkshire
- County Durham
- Staffordshire
- Devon
- Worcestershire
- Surrey



Treatment will depend on the individual pet, the symptoms they are presented with, and the results of their blood samples. An abnormal blood result displaying a low platelet count may indicate the presence of Alabama Rot. If there are skin lesions, treatment will be based on their severity along with any secondary infection.

More severe cases have kidney problems and fluid therapy would be an initial treatment alongside other treatment and supportive measures.

Recovery from Alabama rot depends on how advanced it is. In cases where the kidneys are affected, the diagnosis is quite poor but the good news is the management of this disease is getting better and some dogs with suspected Alabama rot have survived. If you have any questions please contact the surgery on 01729 823538.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAY FOR GUINEA PIGS

Guinea pigs are herbivores, which means they only eat plant material. Having continuous access to good quality hay or grass is essential to maintain guinea pigs' digestive and dental health. Continuous access to hay and grass also encourages natural foraging and grazing behaviour which is important in a guinea pigs overall health and welfare. Among many benefits hay helps prevent obesity and dental disease. A daily amount of pelleted food is recommended as it provides essential vitamins and minerals not found in hay. Fresh greens are also an important component of a guinea pig's diet, and healthy treats can be beneficial when given in moderation.



LONE RABBITS LOOKING FOR COMPANIONSHIP



Nearly half (42%) of the pet rabbits that vets see in the UK spend their life alone, despite evidence showing that they are healthier and happier when housed with a suitable companion. The veterinary profession is urging potential owners to consider taking on more than just one pet rabbit due to the importance of companionship for their physical and emotional health and welfare. According to the 2019 PDSA PAW report, rabbits are the UK's third most popular pet. However, their needs remain very misunderstood. A recent British Veterinary Association survey of vets in the UK showed that 73% had seen pet rabbits who were not having all of their welfare needs met and of the rabbits they saw, 42% were housed alone.

In a joint position, the BVA, alongside the British Veterinary Zoological Society (BVZS) and British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA), has called for greater awareness of the health and welfare benefits of housing rabbits in compatible pairs or groups. Compatible rabbit companions – that is two of the same sex (preferably neutered) or of neutered opposite sex – can benefit from better physical and mental health, behavioural opportunities and emotional health.

BVA president Daniella Dos Santos said: *'Whether they are outside or inside, pet rabbits are highly sociable animals and benefit from buddying up with a suitable companion, so it's a big concern that so many in the UK still live alone. It's important to acknowledge the significance of companionship and adequate housing space to keep rabbits happy and healthy.'*

Please contact the surgery if you would like advice on introducing a new rabbit.

Food Glorious Food!!

Choosing food for our pets has become a minefield as there are so many choices on the market! The most important thing is to ensure the diet for your pet is balanced, made up of the right quantities of ingredients and nutrients for all your pet's needs, but without nutrient excess.

To support your animal's life stage requirements, many pet foods companies have created a selection of age ranges, such as puppy or kitten, junior, adult and senior. The different types of food enable us to tailor the calorie and nutritional contents required. Some food companies have designed various kibble sizes aimed at miniature, medium and large breed dogs. Ensuring your pet is fed the correct diet is essential to keep them healthy and live life to the full.

Complete diets come in wet or dry forms; there are additional benefits to feeding a dry diet associated with dental health. If your pet has an illness, a prescribed veterinary diet may be recommended to support your pet's condition. The most common types include:

- Kidney diets: These contain lower levels of certain ingredients which reduces the toxins and waste product chemicals your pet's body needs to eliminate
- Intestinal diets are designed to help with short- and long-term digestive issues
- Special hydrolysed diets mean that specific proteins have been broken into small pieces so that they can help reduce symptoms from skin allergies.



With diets designed for fur balls in cats, diabetes and liver disease, and even breed specific diets, the choice is endless, so if you need any advice regarding your pet's diet, please speak with one of our vets or veterinary nurses.



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!

