

COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2022

LAMBING TIME AND THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

The Countryside Code advises that all dogs should be kept on a lead when walking in rural areas, regardless of their nature. This is because even the most gentle of dogs can create problems for wildlife and livestock without realising they are having a negative impact. At this time of year, ground birds are nesting and the fields are filling with newborn lambs so it is more important than ever to follow these guidelines.

KEEP YOUR DOG ON A LEAD WHILST WALKING THROUGH FIELDS CONTAINING SHEEP AND LAMBS



Most sheep are herded by trained working sheep dogs so their natural instinct as a flight animal is to run away when they see a dog. At this time of year ewes are either heavily pregnant or have just lambed.

Heavily pregnant sheep stressed by being startled, scared, and moved too fast or too far can abort their lambs.

Ewes with young lambs which are disturbed and become separated do not always reunite quickly. The lambs can become 'mis-mothered' trying to follow and feed from the incorrect ewe or losing contact with their mother. This in turn can result in the lambs not feeding enough, getting too cold, and unfortunately dying.

A dog's natural instinct as a predator is to run after another moving animal. In most pet dogs this instinct is harnessed in play; chasing balls and toys or other dogs as playmates. The excitement demonstrated in play mode becomes heightened when the animal being chased continues to run and the dog can quickly become intently focussed on this rather than heeding the calls of their owner. Many owners have been left calling into the wind as their dog heads after a rabbit they unexpectedly disturbed in the undergrowth! Whilst the 'recall' command is the most important your dog will ever learn—it could save their life—it should not be relied upon 100% around livestock and therefore putting a lead on your dog is the only safe option.

Unfortunately in recent years there has been an increase in the incidence of sheep worrying, including in our locality. As a farm veterinary practice we see the devastating effects that sheep worrying has on livestock with almost all incidents resulting in the euthanasia of the sheep involved. What is even more alarming is the number of times that these attacks are performed by family pets whose owners are deeply shocked by the results: 'He's never done that before—or even shown any interest in sheep!' So we say once again, don't take the chance—keep the lead ON.

DOG MESS, BAG IT AND BIN IT

Dog faeces from healthy dogs can spread disease to people, wildlife and livestock as well as between other dogs. There are 3 main diseases that dogs, with no symptoms, can pass on to other animals through their faeces which can cause paralysis and death. Bag your dog faeces and take it home with you or dispose of it in a bin provided (not a hedgerow)! **THANK YOU**



IMPORTANCE OF VACCINATIONS

If the past couple of years have taught us anything, it's the importance of vaccination and of maintaining immunity through a booster dose. Just as Covid-19 vaccinations have suppressed the spread of infection and provided individual protection, so it is with our pets' vaccines.

Some people believe that once their pets have had an initial vaccination course, or have received boosters for several years, they no longer require vaccinating to maintain immunity but this is not the case! Not maintaining protection for your pet as they get older leaves them vulnerable to disease at an already compromised stage in their lives.

The 2021 PAW (PDSA Animal Wellbeing) Report, states that 39% of cats and 27% of dogs in the UK have not received regular booster vaccinations to maintain immunity against these highly transmissible, potentially fatal, yet preventable diseases.

In practice most dogs, cats and rabbits need a booster vaccination once a year to maintain a level of immunity, but they do not necessarily receive the same vaccine each year. Your vet will discuss your pet's lifestyle and review the previous vaccination history before making a decision with you as to which vaccine/s need to be given.

Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease (CIRD) is a non-fatal but unpleasant disease causing a severe cough (and sometimes sneeze) in dogs. The common name for this condition 'kennel cough', is an indication of the most frequent site of infection of a susceptible individual from an asymptomatic carrier dog. However, spread of these infections can also occur wherever dogs breathe the same air, even outdoors.

CIRD can be caused by a number of different viruses and bacteria. Kennel cough vaccine protects against the most commonly encountered, and most virulent, of these pathogens.

The vaccine is normally given as nasal drops, usually at the same time as annual booster injections, and is well tolerated by most dogs. For those dogs which object to the intranasal vaccination we now have a new type of kennel cough vaccine which is given into the corner of the mouth. The oral vaccine is given at a separate visit to the surgery 2 weeks or more after the annual booster.

MEGAN'S FIRST FEW MONTHS AT DALEHEAD

I joined the small animal veterinary team back in October 2021 as a companion animal veterinary surgeon. Outside of work, I am often found out and about on the hills with my dogs for company, or climbing in the snow and ice! It's hard to believe I have been a part of the team for almost 6 months, but as the saying goes - time flies when you're having fun!

Being a born and bred Yorkshire lass, nowhere seemed a better starting point for my career than working as a veterinary surgeon at Dalehead Veterinary Group. Our shared values to provide a high quality, friendly service to our community here in the Dales has meant I very quickly felt at home.

During my first few months I have been progressing with the new RCVS Graduate Development Programme (GDP) which aims to develop graduates in the early years of their career to further develop their clinical and professional capabilities, resilience and confidence.

Guy Bolger (Director) has been supporting me through this process as my VetGDP Advisor and his structured approach to the process has helped me to reflect on my everyday clinical work and allowed me to progress my professional development within the programme.

I have had the opportunity to be involved in a wide array of exciting clinical cases, meet some fantastic characters and get a feel for how important the local community is to the practice. Every day brings new exciting challenges and surprises, never failing to keep me on my toes. I am keen to develop my surgical skills further and I look forward to seeing what the future holds for both myself and Dalehead Veterinary Group.



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!

