

Worm Egg Counts

The grazing season is in full swing now, and the warm weather recently has provided ideal conditions for the hatching of eggs on pasture. So how do we monitor the worm burden in our livestock and horses? Worm egg counts are performed in-house and can provide a same-day result. Here's some tips of how to get the most out of sampling and testing:

- **Sample size:** ideally, and depending on the size of the group, 10 samples will be provided with the aim to *pool* all samples when we receive them. This provides a more representative impression of the groups' *overall* worm burden.
- **Sample type:** sample animals from the same management group and the same age.
- **The fresher the better:** the best and most reliable samples are taken off the ground when still warm. Older samples can reveal a reduced count because of the hatching of eggs.
- **How much and in what?:** a heaped teaspoon from each animal is adequate but should be placed straight in a bag or pot. The bag must be sealed air tight to minimise the hatching of eggs.
- **Storage:** keeping the samples at around 4°C i.e. in the fridge (hygienically!) further prevents hatching.
- **Send or drop in as soon as possible.** - and provide as much information as you can.

Faecal egg count reduction tests:

To monitor the effectiveness of the drugs used, a sample post-treatment provides **useful information**. If the drug used is effective you would expect a 95% reduction in the number of worm eggs. These samples also provide a valuable tool to monitor **drug resistance**. There is a time period following treatment when the second sample should be taken:

Benzimidazole (white) - 10 to 14 days

Levamisoles (yellow) - 7 days

Avermectins and Moxidectins (clear) - 14 to 16 days.



Laminitis!

The 'nightmare' condition - the grass is growing and so are our horses and ponies meaning that we are seeing a lot of laminitis cases at the moment.

More than 80% of first time laminitis cases are caused by an underlying metabolic condition, either PPID (previously equine cushing's syndrome) or EMS (equine metabolic syndrome) or both! The problem being that unless these underlying conditions are addressed, the animal is always predisposed to developing laminitis. Preventing laminitis is tricky and requires a multi-modal approach to it's management.

- **Time of turnout** - fructans (storage sugar) is lowest in the grass between midnight and dawn so turnout late in the evening and bringing in before mid-morning reduces risk.
- **Avoid sudden diet changes** - sudden diet changes with regard to pasture or hard feed can upset the balance of microflora in the hindgut which can lead to laminitis and colic.
- **Co-graze** - sharing pasture with sheep means that the pasture can be kept down (and also helps with worms!)
- **Feeds** - avoid molassed coarse mixes or any cereal-based compound feeds.
- **Regular hoof care** - avoiding the overgrowth of hooves and keeping hooves well balanced helps to prevent unnecessary stress to the laminae within the foot.
- **Exercise** - where possible, exercise if the key to improving metabolism and keeping weight off.

There is free testing for PPID this year through the talkabout laminitis TAL voucher scheme.

Our facebook page provides interesting stories, cases and news and can be found at :
www.facebook.com/CrowgateVeterinarySurgery

Summer Newsletter 2018

Prescription Reminders

A reminder to owners whose pets require a prescription for long-term medication- please try to remember to contact us for a repeat prescription **before** the medication runs out, as we are sometimes unable to process them same-day. Depending on the specific medication your animal is on, it is usually necessary to have a **6 monthly check up**. This is not only a requirement but also enables us to ensure that there are no adverse effects on your pet and to check dosage etc.



Itchy Dogs and Cats

During the warmer months of the year, we see a lot of dogs and cats that become itchy in various places, including the ears, feet or all over. The skin in the affected areas can become very sore and even infected, causing significant distress to the animal.

How do we go about approaching the itchy dog / cat?

- **Parasites:** rule out parasites. Mites, fleas and lice can all cause significant itching. Fleas and lice are visible to the naked eye but mites are not. Some animals develop a hypersensitivity reaction to fleas and even a flea just walking over the skin can cause a significant allergic response.
- **Food:** some animals become allergic to certain substances found in pet foods. A lot of the time, it is the protein source which is the allergen (allergy-causing molecule), which is why a lot of 'hypoallergenic' diets contain hydrolysed novel proteins which the animal should never have encountered before. Often a food trial is necessary to rule out food causing the skin condition.

- **Atopic Animals:** some animals have 'atopic dermatitis'. These animals are allergic to something in the environment which causes an allergic reaction in their skin. These allergens can range from house dust mites, pollens, grasses, to weeds, fleas as well as many more. Depending upon the degree of allergy experienced there are various different treatments to combat the condition which include; shampoos, supplements, sprays, immunosuppressant medication, anti-histamines or just avoidance of the allergen. There are a huge number of diagnostic and management tools we can use to help.

Ticks

Ticks aren't just an unsightly annoyance for your pet, but they are carriers of some devastating diseases as well. These include babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, anaplasmosis but most importantly Lyme's disease. Lyme's disease is a bacteria which affects the muscle and nervous tissue in the body (and does affect humans as well!).

Found a tick? Don't try to rip it off. Leaving the tick's mouthparts in the animal can cause significant swelling and become infected. There are tick-twisters which can be used which safely remove the entire tick, but please ask us how to use them appropriately.

Preventing ticks...

There are a few products which can be used to prevent ticks and it entirely depends on the required duration of activity and the ease of administration.

Bravecto is a tablet (spot-on for cats) which protects against fleas and ticks and has a duration of 3 months protective cover. **Seresto** is a collar which is licensed for 8 months killing and repellent against ticks.

Advantix is a spot-on solution which is applied to the skin. This product has both killing and repellent activity for up to 4 weeks, but will not kill ticks already on the animal - these should be removed prior to administration.

There is no 'perfect' product and there are other products available so please speak to us about the best option for your pet.

bTB Actiphage Test—what's new?

The new Actiphage test for bovine tuberculosis can be run in just **6 hours** from blood or milk. Unlike the conventional skin test or gamma interferon test on blood, this test **detects the actual organism** which causes TB, rather than just the animals' response to exposure to the organism.

This is by no means the perfect answer for the country's TB problem but does provide a step in the right direction in creating a **more sensitive test** to eventually be used commercially. This test is currently being used on a restricted number of large, persistently infected herds in England but there is no indication as to when this test may be in use for every-day veterinary use.

The other benefit of this test is that it does **distinguish** between vaccinated and unvaccinated animals (for TB) which will aid testing if/when a vaccine becomes available and useable.

Watch this space!



Rumen Fluke

The rumen fluke has been on the rise in recent years, most likely due to the increase in wetter, warmer summers. Similar to liver fluke, these parasites use the mud snail as an intermediate host. Recent evidence suggests that they also use the water snail making their spread more rapid.

Clinical signs include: poor performance, weight loss, scour and anorexia.

Diagnosis: is based on faecal testing at the laboratory.

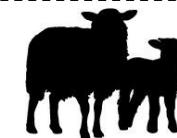
Control: control is very similar to that of liver fluke.

Avoiding wet pastures and pasture around rivers or streams helps minimise risk of transmission.

There is no licensed treatment for rumen fluke and the larvae/adults will not be killed using conventional liver flukicides. **Oxyclosanide** is the only flukicide which will treat both immature and adult stages. Keep rumen fluke in the back of your mind in those animals which have a good worming and fluke treatment history., but are still ill-thrifty, poor doers or losing weight.

Abortion in Ewes

Have you had an abortion rate of greater than 2% in your flock this year? If you have, then it's likely that either enzootic abortion or toxoplasmosis are involved. **Blood sampling** is an easy way to identify these causes of abortion and can be done through the Expertis FlockCheck service under MSD Animal Health. This scheme enables **free** testing of ewes until the **31st July**.



Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme

For all of you who are under red tractor for your farms, there have been a few changes and upgrades to their new guidelines.

- **A written health plan** - annual livestock and performance review which must be undertaken by a vet. This involves looking at records and discussing key issues on farm, making recommendations on the responsible use of antibiotics and keeping on top of disease prevention strategies (testing, vaccination etc).
- **Highest Priority Critically Important Antibiotics**—their use must be kept to a minimum and includes the use of 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins antibiotics. E.g marbocyl, baytril An ever-increasing area of change and attention, the use of protected antibiotics will be monitored closely and should ideally be avoided where possible.
- **Medicines and veterinary treatments must be administered by a demonstrably competent person** - they now recommend the training of one individual from the farm in the administration of medicines. Training courses are being run through various companies but we are looking into providing our own training course with certification following completion.

Please enquire about any of the points above.