

July Newsletter

Coughs and Sneezes Spread Diseases

With the current news of Swine Flu spreading and Government publicity to reduce the possible impact of a human flu pandemic it is a timely reminder as to how infectious disease threats change over time.

Fortunately the strains responsible for most human infections do not appear to cause disease in dogs and cats. Cases of canine influenza in the USA neither represent a significant human health risk nor (so far) appear to have been responsible for significant disease outbreaks in dogs in the UK or Europe. Despite this good news there is clearly potential for an emerging problem. Animal Health researchers in the UK remain vigilant in case the situation changes.

But cats get 'flu don't they?

One of the commonest feline infectious diseases, cat 'flu is a misleading name because the influenza virus is actually not responsible for this disease. Instead, one or more of three infectious agents may be responsible. Two viruses feline herpesvirus and feline calicivirus, which trigger the problem and can only cause disease in cats. The third is a bacterium, *Bordetella bronchiseptica* which is also the leading cause of "kennel cough" in dogs.

Routine annual booster vaccination is recommended to ensure continued broad protection against respiratory disease caused by the viral forms of cat flu.

How can I protect my dog against respiratory disease?

Respiratory disease in dogs is typically referred to as "kennel cough" is one of the commonest infectious problems seen in dogs – and not just those that visit kennels. The problem is so widespread because of its highly infectious nature making the disease hard to avoid. The disease is often most severe in puppies, older dogs and those with another illness or depressed immunity. A range of infectious agents may be responsible although *Bordetella bronchiseptica* is the most significant cause.

Whilst routine vaccination may provide protection against some of the more minor causes, protection against the most significant trigger, *Bordetella*, as well as a significant viral cause, canine parainfluenza, is available with an additional intra-nasal vaccine. In most dogs the vaccine is simple to give as drops up the nose giving 12 months protection. We recommend kennel cough vaccine not just for dogs prior to visiting kennels but also for dogs that mix or congregate with others at anytime during the year.

Equine Microchipping & Passports New Regulations from 1st July 2009

The Horse Passport Regulations 2009 add to the existing legislation which states that all horses should have a horse passport. From 1st July 2009, the regulations will also require that horse passports are linked to the animal by a uniquely-coded identification microchip.

- The new regulations apply to all horses (including ponies, donkeys and other equidae)
- Foals must be implanted with a microchip before 31st December of the year of birth or within six months of birth, whichever is later. Other adult horses not previously issued with passports should also be microchipped
- Passports must accompany equines on all movements and be available for inspection at all times
- Only Veterinary Surgeons can implant a microchip into a horse
- When a horse passes away, the owner must send the passport back to the Issuer to be recorded within 30 days.

Even when not legally required microchipping can be hugely beneficial if your horse, or dog or cat, is lost or stolen.
More info www.wales.gov.uk/animalhealth

Bovine Tuberculosis Update

Testing is continuing this summer with the situation remaining serious. Short Interval Testing or Breakdown testing can be done by either us or Animal Health. If you have an outstanding TB test, especially Short Interval Test, contact the Office to arrange a date. If you do contact Animal Health they are likely to arrange the test with their Vets (or Animal Health Officers) rather than asking us to do it.



Warning – Rabbits with Fly-strike

Remember with the warm weather and plenty of flies around you need to check Rabbits for any evidence of fly-strike.

We have "Rearguard" in stock which can provide up to 10 weeks of protection. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need any advice.