



Welcome to our Autumn newsletter. There are a few practice updates to make you all aware of. From October, we will be using a new practice management programme and trialling a new system for booking and charging for farm visits. To enable us to better plan our days, we are going to offer a discounted visit fee rate for all calls booked in advance (by 16.30pm the day before). By doing this, we can work as efficiently as possible, and Ali will be able to give you an available time slot at the time of booking.

With an expanding practice and the fact that the majority of our clients have to navigate the bypass to get to the practice, we will always endeavour to drop drugs to you or at a local secure location if requested. This will not always be possible for drugs needed the same day, but we will happily try and fit drug drops in around scheduled work/routes home. Please also note this is not possible for temperature sensitive drugs such as vaccinations, unless someone will be available to receive them.

Biosecurity: Taking a Measured Approach

Disease outbreaks on farms can have a serious economic impact on your business. Preventative control measures and good biosecurity can be used to limit the impact of disease and prevent outbreaks among your livestock. Vaccination and testing for disease are only part of the solution - if measures to control incoming disease on your farm are poor then it makes it much more difficult to keep your animals disease free. There are a range of measures that can be put in place in different areas across the farm. Here are a selection that could help to keep your animals healthy:

On farm biosecurity measures

General

- Cleaning and disinfecting protective clothing and vehicles before and after contact with animals from other farms
- Use of disposable protective clothing
- Keep stock movements to a minimum

Pig biosecurity

- Restrict unnecessary visitors to the farm
- Clean and disinfect any shared equipment before it enters and after it leaves your premises
- Prevent people with flu-like symptoms from coming into contact with pigs

Poultry biosecurity

- Use of disposable protective clothing
- Providing clean drinking water and food that is protected from contamination
- Isolating new birds
- Having a plan for bringing a flock indoors if necessary
- Cleaning and disinfecting housing at the end of each cycle



Quarantine procedures

Plan for the introduction of animals on to the farm

- Every farm should have a quarantine protocol documented as part of their health plan.
- A separate area/shed should be available away from the rest of the flock/herd. Disinfectant should be used after handling new animals to prevent spread to other stock on clothes/equipment. Any treatments and testing should be done within the quarantine period before animals have a chance to mix.

Where to buy from

- Try to only buy stock from farms with the same or better health status than your farm.
- Think carefully about which animals you buy from market – a cheap animal is often cheap for a reason!

Neighbouring farms

- What is your neighbours' disease status?
- What are the boundaries between farms?
- Can animals have nose to nose contact?
- Is there adequate fencing?
- Is there any chance of slurry from other farms contaminating your pasture?
- Do you share any water courses with neighbouring farms? Can this be avoided?

Visitors

- Is there a suitable place for visitors to the farm to park?
- Are there suitable hand and clothing washing facilities?
- Do you have appropriate disinfectant available on farm?

Ideally, there should be a basic biosecurity plan in place on every farm and livestock enterprise. If you would like to discuss your requirements or want to update your current health plan, then please contact us at the practice.

by **Rachel Bragg** and **Paul Wood**

Ascaris worms in pigs

We all know pigs are adaptable and you may have profited from this by rearing a couple to put in the freezer. Pig manure is also useful vegetable fertiliser. However it is important to wash your vegetables as pig worms, specifically *Ascaris suum*, can be transmitted to people from contaminated crops. *Ascaris suum* worms have a complex life cycle involving a migratory stage through the liver causing damage termed "milk spot liver". Adult worms develop up to 40cm long in the small intestine, producing vast numbers of infective eggs that are passed in pig faeces. Eggs are resistant to many disinfectants and can survive in the environment for several years. Disease in pigs results in poor weight gain and production losses. Since development of very hygienic indoor pig rearing systems in the 1950s and

the introduction of broad-spectrum anthelmintics, ascarid infections are rare in UK commercial pig units. Ascarid infection in humans can result in weight loss due to blockage of the small intestine by large numbers of worms. Human ascariasis, like in pigs, can be very uncomfortable due to severe abdominal pain caused by intestinal blockage by worms. In the UK, a reduction in pig manure used as a commercial fertiliser has resulted in human ascarid infections becoming very rare.

However, in developing countries 10% of people are infected with ascarids and ascariasis causes ~60,000 deaths per year, primarily in children.



Ascariasis in people caused by *Ascaris*

lumbricoides, which also infects pigs. In many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, pigs are reared in smallholder systems that facilitate transmission of ascarid species to and between humans. Human ascariasis often goes untreated and uncontrolled in many sub-Saharan African communities, primarily due to absence of reliable diagnostics that can be used in remote rural settings. We investigated a case of ascarid worm infection in a group of pigs and we are undertaking a project to help our understanding of its origins, spread and best practice for control. We hope to learn more about the genetics of ascarid worms to ultimately develop a simple test to diagnose ascarid infections in the environment that will have benefits to the international community.

By **Rob Kelly**

As in previous years, we will have a stand at Agriscot on Wednesday 15th November at Ingliston.

Please come and say hello if you are attending the show.