

St David's Game Bird Newsletter



Winter 2008



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“We can't have another summer as bad as the last one, can we?”

Since the removal of Emtryl from the market and the

increased effort made by many to improve rearing and laying practices we have had a few good summers and the last two very wet and cold summers. I had reassured my wife in 2007 that it was a freak rearing summer; a quite extraordinary year and 2008 could only be better. As it turned out, summer 2007 came good at the end of July and many issues resolved themselves. This was not the case last summer.

We experienced many difficulties ranging from the practical issues of management of birds on rearing sites to difficulties with delivery and the issues with late harvest.

In general, pheasants reared relatively well with early chicks proving difficult to get too hot. We saw very few issues with scour and starve outs were reported rarely.

Partridges proved to be another matter with increased numbers of diagnoses of coccidiosis and in many cases eventually leading to hexamita. It was almost impossible to keep the houses dry with

ongoing continual rain and high humidity and many systems were tested to their limit.

Shoot release systems were also put under pressure as birds wandered into standing corn and those pens with few rides and insufficient feeders and drinkers suffered with wasting and ill thrift. Trail feeding was also difficult as it was too wet so any deficiencies in numbers or siting of feeders became evident.

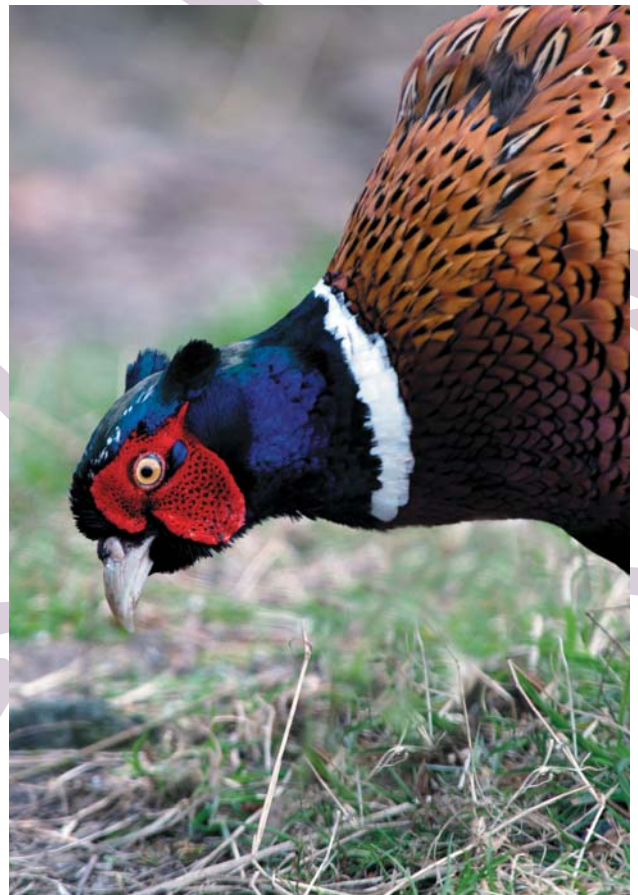
Partridge release pens that had plenty of cover and shelter came into their own as birds that were kept in longer than expected could return home to the pens and find food and water. Pens that had been adequate for many years failed due to the climatic pressures put on them with several keepers considering readdressing their system or cutting back on numbers in the pens.

Ironically, with all the water around and muddy puddles it became evident that systems purely on nipple drinkers suffered and with the inclusion of bell drinkers birds' water consumption increased and they

responded better to treatment. Where we struggled with water medication it was obvious on shoots that in feed routes gave quicker responses.

With lots of surface water came the worms and we saw many cases of worm burdens even late into the season. Regular worming with many pens being treated every two weeks yielded results.

Don't worry Dear, it won't be like this next summer!



St David's Game Bird Services

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Denagard

Two years ago I was grateful to have had the opportunity to carry out one of my experiments on a house of five week old pheasants in rear with hexamita. I was told the Game farmer did not mind if the treatment did not work as they were excess to requirements and he was eager to trial Denagard (Tiamutin.) Denagard has an indication in the treatment of mycoplasma in chickens however the product has been used for some time in the treatment of blackhead in turkeys and layers and I had heard that some of the game vets in France had been using it with some success in the treatment of hexamita in pheasants. I treated the batch for five days with a high dose and was delighted with the response.

This year we used Denagard as our front line treatment and when used in conjunction with CTC we noticed the products had an additive effect. Early

work also shows a reduction in the amount of Baycox used as in combination strategies we could reduce the number of treatments applied and show a cost saving.

I extended its use to the in feed approach with limited success in treatment regimes although as a preventive strategy on shoots its success was outstanding.

It appears that most shoots that used it in this way had no hexamita diagnosed in released partridges compared to those that did not use it.

Unfortunately the product appeared to be rather expensive in an economic climate with already high feed prices but having seen the effects of hexamita on partridge shoots the cost can be justified.

I will include a more detailed analysis of the use of Denagard in the next Gamebird newsletter.

Avian Flu

DEFRA has changed the way it identifies wild birds that may be carrying avian flu, as part of its routine surveillance for the H5N1 virus.

Under the changes, wild bird ecologists and wardens will make year round patrols in designated reserves. They will screen and assess both live and dead wild birds, in particular gulls, ducks, geese, swans and waders, for avian flu testing.

Birds shot as part of normal wild fowling activities will now not be sampled.

DEFRA added that the likelihood of a wild bird found dead being infected with avian flu remains very small. Dead wild birds are screened because they are a useful source for sampling and not because their death is likely to be due to the virus.

All Game Farms and Shoots registered with the Practice are on our database on a mapping program. All our other poultry customers are also on the program that can be viewed "from above."

If we are aware of a suspect A.I. case in your area we now have a system of notification so that any movements can be stopped while investigation is carried out and information supplied to you.



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A new Practice – Edinburgh

St David's Poultry Team has set up a new Practice within the campus of the Royal Dick Veterinary College in Edinburgh. This is being led by Barry Thorp who has also joined the Practice.

We are very excited by the recent development that will involve veterinary students gaining experience within the unit and having 'hands on' experience

with chicken and game bird post mortem work. This brings knowledge of the game bird Industry to a veterinary College and we are keen to develop a skills and research base to further our knowledge of game bird disease causes and control.

The Practice was officially opened in October 2008 with the Dean of the Faculty and head of the Pathology Department.



Toast of the town: Alan Beynon, Elaine Watson, Elsbeth Milne and Barry Thorp raise their glasses at the opening of the new practice in Scotland.

Quality counts!

I recently attended a meeting at the Critchel shoot in Blandford where representatives from all areas of the game industry sat down to discuss the downturn in the economy and the effect it may have on shooting. The forum was represented by feed manufacturer, pharmaceutical company, shoot owner, gamekeeper, game rearer, game dealer, veterinarian and those involved in selling days shooting.

The common theme without exception was that those services that provided a good quality commodity or service would be able to survive better than those with poor reputation or level of service, although price would also be a factor.

I was interested that although price of poult was significant, reputation and level of support to the gamekeeper was a strong factor. The feeling was that although a lot of areas can be reviewed many costs in the business are fixed and are not easy to reduce, but that disease risk could be a significant factor in business viability in 2009.



A new vet – Kim de Vries

I was delighted when Kim accepted to join the Poultry business last month. With the amount of game

work expanding last year as we took on new shoots and with the weather considerations we were becoming concerned that we were becoming overstretched.

Kim comes with several years of specialised Game experience and will add

to the team as well as extending her knowledge into the chicken and turkey Industries.

She qualified from Ghent University, Belgium in 2001 with great distinction. After working in a farm practice in Holland for 8 months Kim decided to take the plunge and cross the channel to work in a farm practice in Salisbury, Wiltshire. After 4-5 years the farm work became physically too challenging and she moved towards game bird work. Kim has really enjoyed working with game birds for the last 2 years and she is looking forward to continuing in this area of work as well as expanding her knowledge within the poultry practice.



Photo courtesy of Don Brunt. www.doublebarrelpicturecompany.co.uk

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Poultry Office & Dispensary opening times for Christmas and New Year

Christmas Eve	Open 8.30am – 12.30pm
Christmas Day	Closed
Boxing Day	Closed
Saturday 27th	Closed
Sunday 28th	Closed
Monday 29th	Open 8.30am – 5.00pm
Tuesday 30th	Open 8.30am – 5.00pm
New Years Eve	Open 8.30am – 12.30pm
New Years Day	Closed
Friday 2nd January	Open 8.30am – 5.00pm

An out of hours emergency service will run for all the Bank Holidays during the festive period by the Poultry Team Vets, we can be contacted at any time on our normal number 01392 872932 during this period.

Last day for vaccine ordering

Thursday 18th December before 12.00pm, normal service resumes Monday 5th January 2009! These dates are dictated by the vaccine manufacturers as they are closed during this period and although we carry a small amount of vaccine in stock we strongly advise you order in advance of this date.

Last day for deliveries by courier

TNT will collect from us on Tuesday 23rd to deliver on Christmas Eve. No deliveries or collections Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Collections and deliveries resume Monday 29th Dec and Tuesday 30th. Collections on New Years Eve will be delivered on January 2nd. No service on New Years Day. Collections on 2nd January will be delivered on January 5th.

The last Royal Mail first class post day is Thursday 20th December.



Chris Grubb

Chris Grubb – Product Support Manager

Chris Grubb recently retired from BOCM Pauls and his last assignment was in charge of Marsdens Game feed in the South West of England. He will be helping us with any new relevant products relating to the game industry and setting up some trials for new products in the field.



Letitia Price

A new member of staff – Letitia

Letitia has joined us whilst Fiona is on maternity leave and is settling into her new role. You may well speak to her on the phone as she deals with day to day enquiries along with Kayleigh.

Finally a note from all at the Practice to wish you a Happy Christmas and an enjoyable shooting season.

Best wishes for Christmas and New Year from all at St David's Game Bird Services!

