Layer Newsletter
Summer 2016

“The national practice working locally on a farm near you”

www.stdavids-poultryteam.co.uk
**Disease Update**

Multi-age laying sites are a challenge to manage at the best of times and one recent case has thrown up Mycoplasma Synoviae (MS); birds were symptomatic for this disease, and no other primary disease factors were uncovered.

Layers were not peaking to target, alongside increased early mortality after transfer from the rearing house, also being reared by the same company. MS was found in both the layers and pullets. We are working with the manufacturers of a new treatment. This product has recently been granted regulatory approval for zero egg withdrawal in layers, giving us an option for treatment in future cases of Mycoplasma. Obviously, we do not want Mycoplasma entering the layer sites as production can be decimated along with shell quality and raised mortality. However, entry can be especially difficult to prevent and if present, especially in the pullets, it must be managed through a careful programme of surveillance testing and targeted therapy. MS can be especially in the pullets, it must be managed through a careful programme of surveillance testing and targeted therapy. MS can be immunosuppressive and can affect response to vaccines.

Every few months we tend to see a case of Pasteurellosis (Fowl Cholera). A recent case was related to close proximity of sheep, rather than pigs or rodents. Other livestock can hold reservoirs of disease and are therefore associated with the spread of this highly infectious bacterium. Pasteurella can cause acute septicaemia along with sudden drops in production and often high mortality. It can be difficult to get a confirmed diagnosis due to the bacteria being challenging to grow from swabs and also, other pathogens commonly overgrow the pasteurella!

Confirmation of disease is very important in order to manage it going forwards and veterinary intervention is therefore necessary to control an outbreak, as this disease can live in the soil and reappear in subsequent flocks. Often birds appear initially depressed, with loss of appetite, respiratory signs and diarrhoea with post mortems sometimes revealing very little. However, airsacculitis, pneumonia, hepatitis and purulent arthritis, in isolation or combination, should be thoroughly investigated to rule this bacterial disease out.

Treatment of current disease (albeit difficult) with disinfection and implementing site biosecurity with a robust vaccination programme is essential to combat this devastating disease. On this particular site, we have opted to vaccinate the incoming flock against Pasteurella, as well as improving biosecurity between sheep and birds.

**Enteritis in Layers - An Alternative Approach**

One of the most frustrating conditions for vets in free range layers is enteritis. In many cases, there is no obvious underlying cause such as coccidiosis, worms or dirty water. Often, these pullets struggle to gain weight and production can suffer.

The conventional treatment was a course of antibiotics, which tended to produce good results. However, once the birds came off the medication, the diarrhoea returned and the problem resumed. Many of these flocks would experience this pattern of on-off treatment that continued until 40 weeks or more. With greater focus on antimicrobial resistance and more scrutiny from the BEIC, a different approach was required.

We have had good success with a product called Intesti-Flora for these cases. Intesti-Flora is a unique blend of copper, proprionic acid, formic acid, acetic acid and sorbic acid. This product should be given for at least five days. The copper acts against harmful bacteria, whilst the proprionic and sorbic acids discourage harmful bacteria, increase villus length (finger like protrusions of the gut lining designed to increase the gut’s surface areas for absorption) and encourages beneficial bacteria. The acids are highly buffered and will not damage the drinker lines.

The benefit of Intesti-Flora over antibiotic therapy is that the product does not harm the beneficial bacteria. When antibiotics are used, they destroy the beneficial bacteria as well as the harmful bacteria, so that when the birds come off antibiotics the harmful bacteria has an equal chance as the beneficial bacteria of recolonising the gut, meaning that the diarrhoea can return.

As with all products, the drinker lines should be routinely sanitised at least once per week with a hydrogen peroxide based sanitiser to prevent the build-up of biofilm.

We will be attending the following events:

- **Poultry Industry Post-Brexit Priorities**
  8th September, Warwickshire

- **Midlands Free Range Discussion Group**
  22nd September, Shrewsbury

- **Severn Valley Poultry Discussion Group**
  19th October, Ross-on-Wye

- **EPIC**
  6th-7th November, South Wales

- **BFREPA Conference**
  23rd November, Solihull
At last we have the long awaited replacement insecticide for Stingray, called Cimetrol Super. This is readily available at the dispensary in a 500ml container, which makes 50 litres of solution to be sprayed onto equipment and housing. Cimetrol destroys red mite eggs and all stages of the red mite life cycle. This unique product contains a type 1 pyrethroid, type 11 pyrethroid, metabolic synergist and insect growth regulator. Formulated to control metabolic and genetic resistance, it is a top of the range mite treatment and great for using in rotation alongside other insecticides.

For more information, or if you wish to discuss a red mite control programme for your specific site issues, contact Alison Colville-Hyde, Field Services Manager, by email alisonch@stdavids-vets.co.uk or phone 07769710855.

Worms and Sample Kits

St David's Laboratory offer an efficient and reliable service for worm egg and coccidial testing at our Head Office.

Our worm egg counts tell you the species of worm eggs found, along with the numbers; this enables the vet to prescribe the best treatment for your flock. Different worm species damage birds in various ways, so it is important to establish which ones are in your flock as there can be a link to other diseases. Our new, improved sampling kit includes materials to sample up to five flocks and pre-paid return postage. Each kit is £4.50 plus VAT and also gives 25% off the laboratory fee for each sample submitted. Results are reported to you within 3 days of receipt along with recommendations.

For more information on these new kits, contact Hayley Lapthorne in our Laboratory on 01392 872883 or to place an order for the sample kits, please phone Dispensary on 01392 872930.

Field Service Tips: New Red Mite Treatment

At last we have the long awaited replacement insecticide for Stingray, called Cimetrol Super. This is readily available at the dispensary in a 500ml container, which makes 50 litres of solution to be sprayed onto equipment and housing. Cimetrol destroys red mite eggs and all stages of the red mite life cycle.

New Poultry Pharm 50 Week Plus

When layers reach the 50 week mark, they are generally starting to reach the early downward slope with regards to egg and shell quality, deteriorating gradually as they continue to age.

Alongside nutritionists, our vets have developed Poultry Pharm 50 Week Plus to use on flocks of this age in the water system. 50 Week Plus contains calcium, which supports shell strength, and vitamin D. It also aids the absorption of calcium from the diet, along with balancing phosphorus, to top up the bird’s requirement. Along with zinc and manganese, which play an important part in egg shell formation, 50 Week Plus reduces seconds by improving shell strength particularly as the bird ages. This is used at the rate of 1 litre per 1000 litres for 2 days per week as a preventative, and use at the same rate for 3 days per week during periods of notable poor shell quality.

Available in 5 litre containers at £28.75 plus VAT (£5.75 to make 1000 litre solution), this is a convenient way to get the most out of your birds at times when shell quality is costing you money.

ONLINE SHOP COMING SOON

POULTRY PHARM nutraceuticals
Welcome to the Team

Ben South
B Vet Med MRCVS

Firstly, we would like to welcome Ben South who joined St David’s Poultry Team in June, and will be covering England and Wales. Ben graduated from the University of Exeter in 2009 with a degree in Conservation Biology and Evolution Ecology. Interests in poultry and game bird medicine soon became his primary focus after studying Veterinary Medicine at the Royal Veterinary College, London. After graduating, Ben spent a year in a farm animal practice working with dairy and beef clients across Dorset.

Matthew Balfour
BVM&S MRCVS

Matthew Balfour, a recent graduate from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, has also joined the team and will be covering Scotland. Matthew has had an interest in poultry since childhood through keeping backyard chickens, ducks and quail. After admission to R(D) SVS, he became interested in the clinical side of poultry work, initially after an EMS placement with St David’s, and later through a research project into feather pecking in free range layers.

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