

Welcome to the Team

Ben South BVetMed MRCVS



Ben South

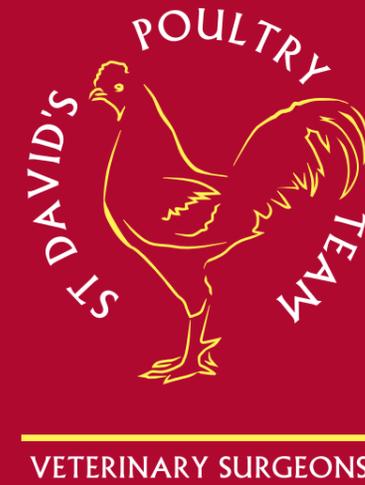
Firstly, we would like to welcome Ben South who joined St David's Poultry Team in June. Ben graduated from the University of Exeter in 2009 with a degree in Conservation Biology and Evolution Ecology. Interests in poultry and game bird medicine soon became his primary focus after studying Veterinary 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

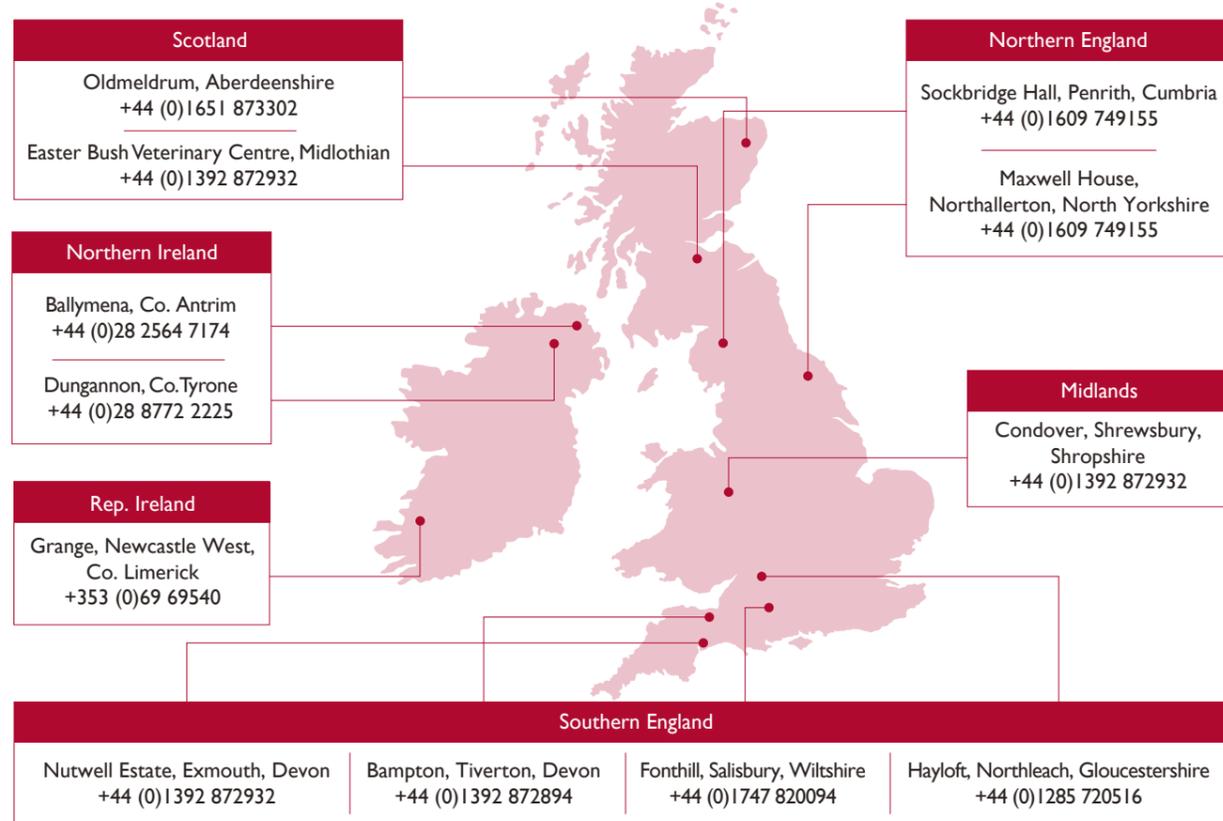


Matthew Balfour

Matthew Balfour, a recent graduate from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, has also joined the team and will be based in 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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New Poultry Pharm Heat Stress Plus

Prepare in advance for next summer... As you are more than aware of the devastating consequences should your birds overheat, heat stress striking your broilers is a great fear for many broiler growers.

Whilst both farmers and integrators do all they can to prevent heat stress in their birds (through; assessing summer stocking levels, having summer ventilation plans in place and consideration of catching times), a sudden hot spell of weather combined with high levels of humidity can quickly cause issues for broilers.



As temperatures rise, birds tend to sit down and put their wings out away from their bodies and pant, losing heat through the circulatory and respiratory systems. If temperatures rise to a critical limit of 4°C above the bird's core body temperature of 41°C, the bird will die. Aside of the contingency plans you have in place regarding ventilation strategy and cooling the birds in an emergency, you can also use an oral preparation to minimise physiological damage. This preparation is also good before catching to set birds up for the journey to the slaughterhouse. Our new product, Poultry Pharm Heat Stress Plus, contains electrolytes, energy, antioxidants and specialist ingredients. Vitamin C supports the bird's ability to thermo-regulate and electrolytes maintain salt balance and prevent dehydration. Betaine helps to maintain hydration and gut health. As birds do not move much during high temperatures, energy has been included to sustain them and, antioxidants to work on immune function. This supports the integrity of the gut, keeping digestion and nutrient absorption on track through predicted and emergency situations of high temperatures.

Poultry Pharm Heat Stress Plus is available in our dispensary and costs £5.23 per 1000 litres of diluted product. It is sold in 5 litre containers at £26.16 plus VAT.

Reducing Reject Levels

We all know that rejects lower your returns. If you would like any advice to ultimately focus on reducing your reject levels, give us a call so one of our vets can discuss your specific concerns.

In the near future, we intend to hold a course on reducing rejects in broilers. The course is ideal for growers and broiler managers. There will be a presentation in conjunction with a post mortem session. This has proved to be a very popular session in the past, so we have decided to run it again. All delegates will receive training certificates for attending and refreshments will be provided.

To register your interest, please email Victoria Sheppard, Office Manager, on Victoria@stdavids-poultryteam.co.uk

Pre-empting potential broiler issues

Through the reduction in antimicrobials, best management practice is key to keep broilers on track.

Pre-empting potential issues alongside the use of supportive nutraceuticals is a great benefit but at the same time, this needs to be economically viable.

The focus on the broiler gut continues, as this is the powerhouse to good FCR and weight at kill, and promotes a strong immune response giving resistance to field challenges from diseases such as Gumboro, Infectious Bronchitis and Marek's. Using Intesti-flora in the first week has shown heavier results in 7 day weights; improved gut health which we have seen on early post-mortems and a reduced wet litter incidence, which is often found around the 15 day mark.

Intesti-flora contains organic acids which encourage acid loving beneficial bacteria (contained in Aviguard too) to take hold whilst discouraging the alkaline loving harmful bacteria such as Clostridia and E. coli from colonising the gut. Intesti-flora also contains copper, which is bactericidal and needed for metabolic processes. Use at a rate of 500ml to 1 litre per 1000 litres of water for 5 days. A 10 litre container will therefore treat up to 20,000 litres of water.

If you would like to try using Intesti-flora please contact your vet so we can advise or alternatively order through our dispensary on 01392 872930.



Richard Jackson

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After experiencing some issues in my previous crop of broilers, I called Richard Jackson. Richard suggested maximising the early proliferation of gut flora to substantiate growth and development. He said the bird will be more robust to cope with the challenges it meets. Richard recommended using Intesti-flora and within half a day the chicks were more active and so I was impressed with the response, the results spoke for themselves.”

David Trigg
Freedom Food, broiler grower, Somerset.



Aviguard - Why should you use it?

Aviguard is now widely used in the broiler industry at start, as the reduction in the use of antimicrobials continues. Following a recent talk the practice organised at Padbrooke Park from the manufacturers of Aviguard, we have summarised the product and answered some of the questions growers have asked us.

What is Aviguard?

Visually, it is a freeze-dried, white, foul-smelling powder. It contains a unique mix of 200 plus benign beneficial gut bacteria, derived from healthy, pathogen-free adult chickens. Available in pack options of 2000, 5000 or 25,000. It has a long shelf life but needs to be stored in the fridge. Aviguard can be used in all species of chicks but also in adult birds; layers, boilers, turkeys and game birds. It is scientifically proven to colonise the gut and reduce pathogens establishing. Should you like to read more detail on this, there are plenty of papers on this subject available online.

How does it work?

It is referred to as a competitive exclusion product as it colonises within the gut wall therefore excluding harmful pathogenic bacteria (e.g., Clostridium perfringens, E coli, Salmonella) from becoming established. Aviguard speeds up the gut flora development of incubator hatched chicks. In a natural situation, the mother hen's faeces contain bacteria and the chicks ingest this, giving protection from harmful bacteria naturally. The bacteria within Aviguard quickly becomes established, colonising the whole of the intestine, this happens within hours. These bacteria additionally boost the immune system providing increased resistance to disease. Aviguard can also be used following antibiotic use to re-establish the chicken's gut flora which will have been partially removed by the use of antibiotics.

5 modes of action:

- 1. Physical**
Attaches to the gut wall preventing the establishment of potential disease causing bacteria.
- 2. Biological**
Produces a low oxygen environment which harmful bacteria do not like.
- 3. Chemical**
Reduces the pH, making the environment more acidic which inhibits intestinal pathogens.
- 4. Biochemical**
Many natural gut bacteria produce antibacterial products, while others produce substances which inhibit bacterial reproduction.
- 5. Nutritional**
Normal bacteria compete against harmful bacteria for nutrients.



Application

The most successful way to apply Aviguard is via a spray over the chicks in the hatchery or on the farm before tipping. The blue dye is there for two reasons; to show they have been sprayed and to encourage preening behaviour from chick to chick as this is how it is ingested. Chicks are inquisitive and peck at anything so the blue dye triggers this behaviour.

The level of blue does not determine how much Aviguard is sprayed on as Aviguard is a clear liquid. The blue dye is added by the operative in the hatchery, rather than part of the pack. You may have noticed a smell on the chicks when they arrive too; this is a good thing as Aviguard really smells quite foul! It does not mean the chicks are brewing an infection. Some chicks may appear bluer than others and this, to a degree, is due to different absorptive properties of the chicks down.

Due to the delay between Aviguard spray and the chick drinking on farm, there is sufficient time for Aviguard to colonise within the chick. Regarding safe levels of water sanitiser at placement, we can say that chlorine at 2ppm and hydrogen peroxide at 50ppm have shown to be non-detrimental. If you are an Aqua-Clean user, this equates to 100ml of Aqua-Clean in 10 litres of water through a 1% dose pump. Using hydrogen peroxide dip sticks at the end of the drinker line, you should get a reading of 50ppm. Check your dose pump is calibrated and working as you expect, otherwise you may have a higher reading due to a leaking seal. If you know your water lines, water is bacteriologically clean and you are flushing lines as advised, you may wish to start using water sanitisers 24 hours after placement or later in the crop, according to your management plan.

Field Services

Broiler field services are a popular option when a vet is not specifically necessary.

Services provided include brooding reviews, blood and water sampling, water and spray vaccination training and auditing, terminal clean advice and other services depending on your needs.

Please contact Alison Colville-Hyde to discuss your requirements, email Alisonch@stdavids-vets.co.uk or phone 07769710855.



Alison Colville-Hyde

