

Vet's Viewpoint – Louping Ill

Louping Ill is caused by a virus that gets into the nervous system after a few days and affects the brain. It is primarily a disease of sheep, but can also affect cattle, horses, goats, dogs, red grouse and humans. It is transmitted by the sheep tick, Ixodes Ricinus, which become infected by feeding on infected sheep and amplifying the virus before infecting other animals.

Ticks can remain infected throughout their lives - up to 3 years. They have several stages of growth and can survive over winter. Sheep can remain as reservoir hosts and so provide sources of infection.

The virus can also be picked up through skin wounds and aerosol exposure in the lab.

It is thought that the disease is more serious in sheep and cattle that are also infected with the tick-borne-fever agent, Anaplasma Phagocytophila, which may affect the body's immune response.

There is no specific treatment and symptoms are varied, from fever and incoordination, to paralysis, convulsions and death.

Louping Ill in humans is much milder with flu like symptoms in most cases, but convalescence can be prolonged.

Sheep and cattle can be protected by vaccination, but there is no data for its use in dogs. So products that repel ticks on dogs may be the most useful way of trying to prevent tick attachment and subsequent infection. There are collars, tablets and spot-on treatments available, but veterinary advice should be sought on the most appropriate formulation.

This disease seems only to be a problem on specific areas of the moor and so whether another reservoir host is important in these areas is unknown, as small mammals such as mice, voles, rats and rabbits can be infected.

Congratulations

At the end of June one of our mixed practice vets, Becca, married her partner Will. Will is a small animal vet based at a practice in Exeter. I'm sure you will join us in wishing them every happiness for their future together.

£5 Cat Neutering

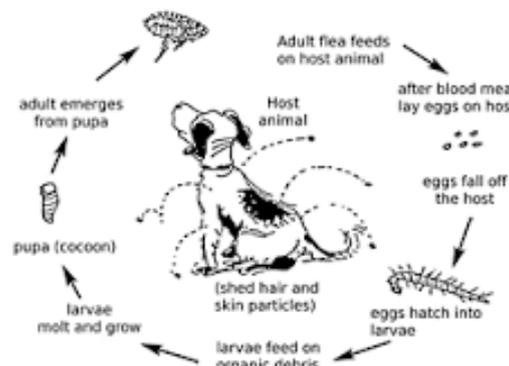
If you live in the PL15, PL16, PL27, PL29, PL30, PL31, PL32, PL33, PL34, PL35, EX22 or EX23 postcode areas you may be entitled to have your cat neutered for £5. This special offer is very kindly being sponsored by the Launceston and District branch of Cats Protection. It is not time specific but is only available while the allocated fund lasts. For further details and to see if you qualify, please contact Mary Chudleigh:

By phone on 01566 773814, or by email at chudleighmeh@btconnect.com

Five Flea Facts!

1. Fleas bite your pet and suck their blood for food.
2. Fleas can suck in 15 times their own bodyweight in blood every day.
3. Fleas lay 20-30 eggs per day and up to 5000 eggs in a lifetime.
4. Fleas can jump over 150 times their own height.
5. For every 5 fleas on your pet, 95 are in the house so you have to protect your home as well as your pet.

Please ask at reception for the best products available for your pet and home. Don't forget our products are different and more effective if the guidelines are followed than the products you can buy in a supermarket or pet shop.



Nurses News – Hamsters

Hamsters are mammals belonging to the rodent family. There are several different breeds and sizes of hamster, the most common ones being kept as pets in the UK are the Syrian, the Russian Dwarf Campbell and the Roborovski.

Hamsters get their name from the German word 'Hamstern', which means to hoard. They were named this because they have extendable pouches in their cheeks which they use to store the food that they gather. These pouches do not contain saliva meaning any food stored is kept fresh until they can empty them at the end of their foraging session. The Syrian hamster can store up to half its body weight in its pouches!

Hamsters have round bodies and short legs and unlike rats they have a very short tail, except for the Chinese hamster, which can have a tail up to 2cm long! Their bodies are covered in thick, soft hair. Their teeth never stop growing so they have a very strong gnawing instinct. They will usually gnaw at hard, rough materials or foods to wear their teeth down. Most hamsters will live for around 2-3 years - 1 human year is equivalent to 25 hamster years!

Hamsters like to explore. They use their whiskers to help them explore their environment as their eyesight isn't very good. Their whiskers vibrate backwards and forwards, known as 'whisking', and they can whisk up to 30 times per second. They have a very well developed sense of smell to help them detect predators. They also use ultrasonic sound waves as a form of communication in some situations, such as looking for a mate or for one of their pups.

In the wild, hamsters live in the desert, originating from Syria. As they are nocturnal, they sleep during the day and are awake during the night. Due to the extreme heat of the desert during the day, the hamsters would prefer to move around and forage for food during the cooler evenings - they aren't just being noisy and annoying by keeping you awake at night!

Did you know that hamsters are also very intelligent? They can be trained to perform simple tricks or come when food is presented

to them. Another fact that you may not know is that hamsters can catch and transmit human colds, so be very careful and always wash your hands before and after handling your hamster, especially if there is a cold virus going around.

Newsletters

If you enjoy reading through our monthly newsletters, you can find all the 2015 back copies of both small and farm animal newsletters on our website:

www.castleveterinarygroup.co.uk

You will find them under the news section on the toolbar. No peeking at the last month's quiz answers first though!

Fun Corner

Can you identify the languages from their spelling of August? I've been kind and given you the first letter and the vowels of each answer to help you!

Augusti – S-e-i--
augusts – La--ia-
Augustus – Du---
augusztus – Hu--a-ia-
Awissu – Ma--e-e
Awst – We---
elokuu – Fi--i--
gusht – A--a-ia-
kolovoz – C-oa-ia-
srpen – C-e--

The answers to July's quiz were all items that you would find at Launceston Show. How many of them did you spot?

Marquee
Show Jumping
Flags
Ice Creams
Heavy Horses
Young Farmers
Tractors
Judges
Balloons
Grand Parade
Womens Institute
Trade Stands
