



Upcoming CPD Courses in September – please click on the title to link to the website.

- Dairy Reproduction with Jo Oultram via Zoom - 2nd September
- Advanced Sheep Parasitology via Zoom - 16th September
- Practical Dentistry for the Small Animal Clinician - 19th September
- Sign up to receive CPD updates here

Here is our latest newsletter from the WVSC.
We hope you find it an interesting read.

Disease Alert(s):

1. We would like to start by reminding colleagues of the increased likelihood of **plant poisoning** at this time of year. We would encourage everyone to increase public awareness of the risks to farm animals with garden waste. **Just because it is green, it doesn't mean livestock can eat it!**

2. We have an increase in incidence of **parasitic gastro-enteritis** in recent weeks. The group 1 benzimidazole class of anthelmintic is still being relied upon by many farmers when resistance is believed to be widespread. Farmers should be encouraged to speak to livestock vets about the use of faecal worm egg tests and testing for anthelmintic resistance.

Plant poisoning was suspected in a four-month-old lamb found dead in a field with no prior symptoms. The farmer had found hedge clippings thrown into the field, from an adjoining garden. At postmortem, waxy evergreen leaves suspected of being either Rhododendron or Pieris plants (Figure 1) were found in the rumen. Both are toxic to



Figure 1. Toxic leaves found in the rumen of a lamb

sheep, and can cause vomiting, or regurgitation, and death. Gardeners should be made aware of the risk of plant poisoning to farm animals and dispose of hedge clippings responsibly.

Mannheimia haemolytica was the cause of mastitis in a five-year-old ewe submitted for PME. Ten ewes had been found dead from a flock of 2000 in recent weeks. At postmortem examination the udder tissue was firm and yellow in colour. *Mannheimia haemolytica* was cultured from a swab of the udder.

Mannheimia haemolytica is a common cause of mastitis in ewes and outbreaks are often seen where there is little grass and lambs bruise the udders while trying to suckle. Supplementary feeding of lambs can help reduce the incidence along with early weaning. AHDB have produced a useful leaflet for farmers titled *Understanding Mastitis in Sheep* ([click here for link](#)).

Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae was detected by PCR in three cases of atypical pneumonia in sheep presented for postmortem in June. In the first case two three-month-old lambs were found dead over a few days. In the second case a two-year-old ewe from 12 ewes that were not doing very well was euthanased for investigation. In the third case three three-month-old lambs had died from a group of 15 poor doers. In all three cases there was typical cranioventral consolidation of the lungs, and diffuse areas of consolidation dorsally (Figure 2).

This pneumonia is also referred to as enzootic pneumonia and is often seen in sheep under 12-month-old that are housed or grazing.



Figure 2. Cranioventral consolidation of the lungs

Porcine proliferative enteropathy (PPE) caused by *Lawsonia intracellularis* was confirmed in an eight-week-old weaned piglet. Ten piglets in the herd had developed diarrhoea and ill thrift. Gross postmortem examination revealed necrosis and diphtheresis in the distal ileum. The large intestinal mucosa had a nodular surface with a layer of fibrino-necrotic debris (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Mucosal necrosis of the distal ileum

Histology (provided by Finn Pathologists) confirmed a multifocal to coalescing, chronic, hyperplastic, necrotising enterocolitis. Bacteria were detected with typical morphology of *Lawsonia intracellularis* and confirmed by Warthin-Starry staining (Figures 4&5).



Figure 4. Proliferative and necrotising change in mucosa.

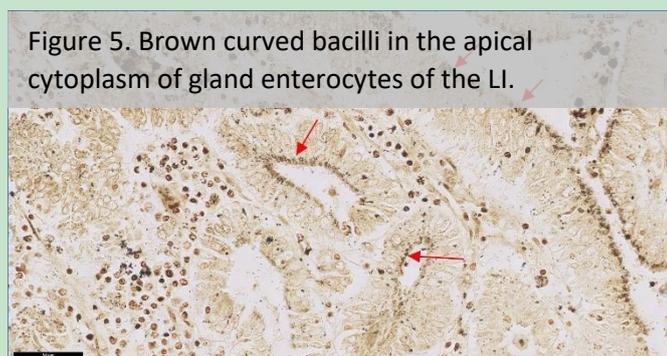


Figure 5. Brown curved bacilli in the apical cytoplasm of gland enterocytes of the LI.

Treatment of PPE requires selection of an antibiotic that penetrates the cells of the mucosa as *Lawsonia* is an intracellular organism. Prevention and control require vaccination, good husbandry and cleaning and disinfection of the environment.

Rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus 2 (RHD2) was confirmed in dead wild rabbits found on the Ynyslas Dunes. Natural Resources Wales contacted WVSC for assistance to investigate the cause of death. WVSC

carried out several postmortem examinations and RHD2 was confirmed by electron microscopy and PCR.

The rabbits are essential part of the ecosystem of the dunes by controlling the marram coastal grassland.

There is now concern for the rabbit population as RHD is a highly contagious disease. The virus can be transmitted by fomites particularly on the bottom of shoes by those walking in and around the area. Although rabbits are usually found dead, clinical signs seen can include dullness, inappetence, respiratory signs, neurological signs and ataxia.

We advise all rabbit owners to contact their vets to ensure their rabbits are vaccinated.

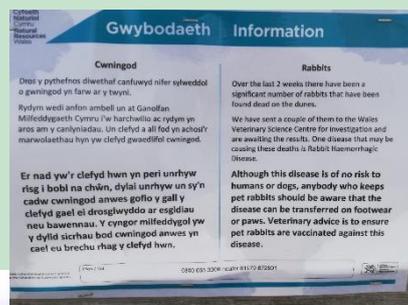


Figure 6. Ynys Las sand dunes (& information poster)

Coccidiosis was confirmed in a five-week-old pheasant submitted for PME last month. 20 pheasants had died. The pheasant submitted was in poor body condition. Profuse coccidial oocysts were seen after conducting a wet preparation of the caecal content. There are many different species of *Eimeria* affecting game species. Coccidiostats can be incorporated into growing feed.

Welsh4Vets - Are you a vet / vet nurse who wants to learn or practice communicating in Welsh?

If you are interested in joining this online group as a participant, or as a Welsh speaking facilitator then please email enquiries@wvsc.wales and mark your email "Welsh4Vets" in the subject line.

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Please check the eligibility for **free carcase collection** via this website:

ahvla.defra.gov.uk/postcode/pme.asp

The suitability of submissions for a postmortem exam. must always be discussed with the WVSC duty vet.