



Welcome to our May 2023 edition.

Farm cats and dogs

There are several points in the news about our farm companions at the moment:

- *Brucella canis* is a disease which not only affects dogs and other canids but it also has a significant zoonotic potential. It is an emerging infectious disease in Europe and is of increased concern in the UK due to the large numbers of imported “rescue” dogs (over 170,000 from Jan 2019 to Dec 2021). Reports of *B. canis* in dogs have increased from two cases in 2017 to 55 in 2022. There has also been a case in a human in the UK associated with transmission from a dog. If you are considering importing a dog (rescue or otherwise) from Europe, please discuss with your vet.
- New legislation has been approved that means that all cats must be microchipped before they reach the age of 20 weeks and their details must be stored and kept up to date in a pet microchipping database. All owners must have their cat microchipped by 10 June 2024 – anyone found with a cat with no microchip after that date will have 21 days to rectify this or face a fine of up to £500
- The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill has been delayed again in Parliament – this bill includes increased powers for police to seize dogs suspected of livestock worrying or if they are suspected of being an ongoing risk to livestock. It will also give the police increased power to take samples from livestock and dogs to aid in prosecution of livestock worrying cases (most cases of livestock worrying don’t result in a prosecution due to lack of evidence).

Use of meloxicam post-farrowing

At the Spring Meeting of the Pig Veterinary Society, Peadar Lawlor from Teagasc presented a paper on the administration of post-farrowing (after placenta delivery) pain relief to sows and its

implications for growth rates in piglets. In this study, the sows were split into a group that received a NSAID (meloxicam) post-farrowing and whose piglets were either split-suckled or not split-suckled, and a group that did not receive a NSAID post-farrowing and whose piglets were either split-suckled or not split-suckled.

Meloxicam was administered within 2 hours after the birth of the last piglet. And the results of this study showed that the meloxicam administration resulted in an average increase in uptake of colostrum by 18g/piglet, a heavier weaning weight (350g average) and increased bodyweight at slaughter (in this case 3.7kg) regardless of whether split suckling was applied or not. The authors also saw a decrease in overall antibiotic use to weaning of 50%. They calculated that the return on investment for meloxicam usage post-farrowing was 43:1.

In all cases, the mass administration of pain relief at or around farrowing should be on the advice of your vet as the timing may vary depending on your own individual farm circumstances.

Applications open for Animal Health and Welfare Grants

[Applications for the Animal Health and Welfare Equipment and Technology grant are now open.](#) The grants will support improvements in livestock health and welfare, offering between £1,000 and £25,000 towards the cost of items from the [list in the guidance.](#)

Farmers have the opportunity to bring new equipment onto their farm that has been shown to have a positive impact on health and welfare.

The application portal is open from 23 March until 15 June.

The pig in history

Historically the role of the pig has always been a walking dustbin, and a superb converter of waste into edible fat and protein and in a form that can be stored through the long winters. Its only recently that we have switched to feed stuffs that are in direct competition with food for humans rather than utilising our own by products.

Much of this change has been forced upon us by disease notably the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001 which was traced back to a swill feeder in Northumberland. The incentive to push for more swill feeding is greatly reduced now that ASF has emerged as significant threat due to its very good survival in meat.

However, it is interesting to look back on the long view of the pigs place in the farm yard.

Markham in the 17th century wrote that the pig was...“ the husbandmans best scavenger and the housewives most wholesome sink.... For his food is by that which would else rot in the yard and make it beastly”

As we move into 18th and 19th C distillery waste was an important source-previously it was discharged into the Thames but large enterprises sprung up round the breweries of Battersea and Vauxhall finishing 9000 pigs /year.

Its interesting that even in 1887 Germany was the major market for the Danish pig. Denmark had large quantities of milk waste available on which to rear pigs.



Staff Update

Ciara has returned from maternity leave after having a baby girl last June. She's very much looking forward to dusting off the wellies and catching up with clients, old and new, as she gets back into the swing of things over the next few weeks.



APHA surveillance zone

APHA are seeking to identify all premises in the 10km surveillance zones that keep poultry or captive birds so that enhanced surveillance activities can be carried out within 30 days of a premises infected with avian influenza being confirmed. If you live less than 10km of an infected premises and if you keep poultry or other birds (regardless of flock size), please contact APHA immediately to register your birds. Email your contact details to surveillance@apha.gov.uk or phone them on 03300416589. More information on avian influenza (bird flu) can be found on www.gov.uk/birdflu.