

Focus on... Avenue Veterinary Centre

with Richard Huddart, a veterinary surgeon at the Avenue Veterinary Centre in Grantham and Bottesford.

I have been a veterinary surgeon at the Avenue Veterinary Centre in Grantham and Bottesford for almost 40 years. In this article, I will look at an increasingly common problem among pets and humans in the UK, and also discuss the topical issue of farm animal welfare.



Earlier this year, after a short dog walk in Sherwood Forest, I noticed what appeared to be a small scab just above my ankle. Rather stupidly, I scratched the scab off and a closer look at it

revealed – tiny legs! I checked it under the microscope the following week – definitely a small tick. No ill effects noted I'm happy to say!

Lyme disease has been a problem in Britain for many years. Transmitted through tick bites, it has gained notoriety recently through high profile celebrity cases. It causes severe flu-like symptoms, aching joints and fever in people, though dogs mainly present with a debilitating arthritis in multiple joints. If you are unwell and have been exposed to ticks, it's worth mentioning this to your doctor. The classic sign of a target-like ring around the tick bite is not always noticed! A recent survey in the South- West of England found active ticks on a third of dogs and cats, most of them unnoticed by their owners.



As the climate warms, and more and more pets travel to and from warmer countries, veterinary surgeons are becoming used to dealing with conditions hitherto not seen in the UK. Many of these diseases are passed from animal to animal (or to humans) through the saliva of



biting insects. Leishmaniosis is one which is passed on via the sandfly. This fly is named after its sandy colour, not its habitat, and is not prevalent in the UK – yet! However, we often have to deal with the consequences of this horrible and complex disorder in pets which have been imported or returned from warm countries.

Talk to your vet about the best ways of keeping your pet free of ticks, fleas and other parasites. There may be special requirements if you are travelling abroad, and protection is needed all year round.



Welfare of Livestock

Welfare of livestock on farms has been in the news lately, and I thought it might be a good time to speak up for the great British farming industry. It is undoubtedly true that the general public has become increasingly dissociated from the land, the source of our food. Visits to farms by schoolchildren are hugely valuable, helping them to understand where their food and milk comes from. The veterinary profession has always been at the forefront of promoting and maintaining the welfare of farm livestock (though many of us have had to diversify somewhat into the realms of pet animals with increasing specialisation).

As a result, British livestock has some of the highest welfare standards in the world, in keeping with and alongside our traditional love of animals. Farmers conform to a variety of schemes to ensure minimal disease, minimal use of medication, and maximum comfort to creatures which are obviously bred and reared for our food requirements. Behavioural problems in densely stocked animals such as pigs or chickens have been widely studied precisely in order to increase the welfare (and consequent productivity) of these animals. Where possible, we should source our milk and

meat products from such farms and butchers which maintain these high traditional UK standards, including the insistence on pre-slaughter stunning at the abattoir. But that subject alone could fill this magazine so it will have to wait!



On site 24 hour emergency service available for our regular clients.

Join Our Pet Health Club... NOW AVAILABLE!

We are committed to the proper health treatment of the animals under our care, and can now offer a Practice Healthcare Plan to help clients to spread their veterinary costs over each year. In addition to providing a convenient way to ease the finances, the Healthcare Plan offers significant savings on the total cost of vaccinations, worm and flea treatment as well as discounts on many other fees. Combined with our Puppy and Kitten Packages, out of hours emergency care at our own premises (the only local practice to offer this), we provide a complete service for the pets of Grantham.



If you would like to make an appointment, contact the Avenue Veterinary Centre on

01476 563371
or
564490

Avenue Veterinary Centre,
A trading name of AVC 35 Limited
35 Avenue Road, Grantham,
Lincolnshire, NG31 6TJ
www.avcvets.co.uk
www.facebook.com/avcvets