

NEWSLETTER August 2011

Welcome to the latest issue of our newsletter designed to keep you up to date with whats happening in the practice.

www.tworiversvets.co.uk

BIGGAR SURGERY

157 High Street
Biggar
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01899 220073

Office hours

Mon/Wed/Fri 8.30 - 6.30
Tues/Thurs 8.30 - 5.30
Saturday 9.00 - 12.00

Open consulting times

Mon - Saturday 9 - 9.30
Mon/Wed/Fri 5.30 - 6.30
& other times welcome
by appointment

PEEBLES SURGERY

15 Old Town
Peebles
EH45 8JF
01721 722879

Office hours

Mon/Wed/Fri 8.45 - 5.30
Tues/Thurs 8.45 - 6.30
Saturday 10.00 - 12.30

Consulting times

Mon - Fri 9.30 - 10.30
Mon/Wed/Fri 4.00 - 5.00
Tues/Thurs 4.00 - 6.00
Sat 11.00 - 12.00
all by appointment only

**24 HOUR
EMERGENCY SERVICE
on either phone number**

BE LUNGWORM AWARE!

The lungworm *Angiostrongylus vasorum* is a parasite that infects dogs. The adult of this particular lungworm lives in the heart and major blood vessels supplying the lungs, where it can cause a host of problems. Left untreated, the infection can be fatal.

The lungworm parasite is carried by slugs and snails. The problem arises when dogs purposefully or accidentally eat these common garden pests when rummaging through undergrowth, eating grass, drinking from puddles or outdoor water bowls, or pick them up from their toys.



Dogs of all ages and breeds can become infected with lungworm. However, younger dogs seem to be more prone to picking up the parasite. Dogs known to eat slugs and snails should also be considered high risk. Foxes can also become infected with the lungworm, and have been implicated in the spread of the parasite across the country.



Lungworm infections can result in a number of different signs which may easily be confused with other illnesses. If your dog is displaying signs including breathing problems, poor blood clotting, general sickness or changes in behaviour please contact us at the surgery.

It is important to recognise that lungworm is not prevented or treated by the conventional use of worming tablets given every three months.

Thankfully, treatment of lungworm infection in dogs is widely available and easy to administer. Once diagnosed and treated, most dogs make a full recovery. The key to successful treatment is taking action early.

If you are concerned your dog has picked up, or is at risk from picking up a lungworm infection, please ask for more information at either surgery. We can prescribe a specific spot-on solution to treat this parasite, which is applied to the back of the neck. Applied monthly this product can also prevent the establishment of infection with *Angiostrongylus vasorum*.



Feeding Your Rabbit



Did you know that in the wild 70% of a rabbit's time above ground is spent foraging for high fibre food such as grass, hay, plants, herbs and bark? Good quality hay and/or grass should make up the majority of your rabbits diet and should be available at all times. We know rabbits as 'fibrevores' because fibre is absolutely essential for their dental and digestive health. Rabbits need two kinds of fibre in their diet, digestible and indigestible. The first gives them essential nutrients and the second keeps their digestive system moving effectively. Failing to provide adequate portions of the right kind of fibre can lead to illness, which can sometimes be fatal.

Avoid muesli-style foods

Muesli-style foods can be very bad for rabbits. As they are fussy eaters with a very sweet tooth, some rabbits will pick out the tastier elements of muesli-style foods (those that are higher in sugar and starch) and leave the rest. This inevitably leads to an imbalanced diet, lacking in calcium, phosphorus and vitamin D. Also, if lots of additional hay and grass are not provided, it can result in a lack of dietary fibre.



The Excel Feeding Plan = The Complete Diet for Fibrevores



Step 1 – Excel Herbage and Forage

Burgess Excel quality hay and grass foods are high in fibre and should form most of a rabbit's diet. These foods are especially good for dental health as the chewing action required to eat them helps your rabbit to wear down their teeth. Rabbits teeth are constantly growing and overgrown teeth are painful and can cause all sorts of problems including abscesses in the jaw.

Step 2 – Excel Tasty Nuggets

These contain 100% natural, wholesome ingredients, are naturally high in 'Beneficial Fibre' for digestive health and have added vitamins, minerals and prebiotics.



Step 3 – Excel Nature Sticks

These healthy, high-fibre snacks are ideal for rabbits as they can prevent boredom (if hidden in different places, so your rabbit has to forage for them) and can encourage bonding and interaction between you and your pet.



Step 4 – Fresh greens and water

Rabbits should be fed fresh greens to give additional nutrients and to provide variety. Keep quantities small as some greens can be too rich if fed in large volumes, causing diarrhoea. Not all fruit and vegetables are good for rabbits. Kale, spinach, and savoy cabbage are examples of good greens to feed. Root vegetables like carrots or fruit are very high in sugar and starch, so should only be fed in very small amounts as an occasional treat. A plentiful supply of fresh, clean water must always be available.

If you would like further advice on your rabbits feeding regime or to purchase Excel rabbit products please ask at either surgery.



RAGWORT ALERT!

Attention horse owners, its time to check your fields for ragwort. This dangerous weed is common in fields and by the roadside and can be identified easily at this time of year by its pretty yellow flowers.



Most horses do not eat ragwort (unless dried in hay) but it is very toxic if ingested. The plant gradually causes liver damage over a period of time, and by the time horses or ponies show symptoms they already have advanced liver disease for which there is no cure.

The best way to deal with ragwort is by pulling it up by the roots and burning it. Use gloves and a weed fork to loosen the roots. Dont leave the withering plants lying around as this is when some horses find it quite palatable. Unfortunately ragwort is a resistant plant and 'ragwort pulling' is an annual task for most horse owners!

Fields, wasteland or roadsides covered in ragwort can be reported to the local council.

Surgery times at Two Rivers Vets

We plan to change all open surgeries to appointment-only surgeries in Biggar from November, as we have already done in the Peebles surgery. We do have appointment times available daily in Biggar already, so please ring the surgery to book in!