

# Sandhill Veterinary Services

Veterinary Care for Game Birds, Commercial Poultry and Pigeons



**JUNE 2017**

## SUBMISSION REVIEW

A 'submission' is a single bird or distinct batch of birds of the same age or type. These figures do not include faeces samples submitted for coccidial oocysts counts and worm egg counts.

Total Game Birds Examined	853	Total Number of Submissions	218
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### PHEASANTS

### PARTRIDGES

Age	Number of submissions	Age	Number of submissions
1 – 7do	45	1 – 7do	5
8 – 14do	17	8 – 14do	4
2 – 4wo	28	2 – 4wo	18
4 – 7wo	39	4 – 7wo	42
7wo +	5	7wo +	15
Adults	0	Adults	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>84</b>

### PHEASANTS:

**0-7 day old Pheasant Chicks:** The majority of chicks seen up to four days old were starve outs or had yolk sac infections whilst the majority of those of six and seven days old had enteritis. However in all age groups there were examples of birds with generalized bacterial infections - E.coli was the primary bacterium isolated but Salmonella typhimurium was isolated from one batch of seven day old chicks.



*Four day-old chick with Yolk Sac Infection*

**8-14 day old Pheasant Chicks:** Enteritis was the most common finding in birds seen in this age group but we also saw cases of increase in mortality due to a generalized bacterial infections. One case of Mycoplasmosis was seen in ten-day old chicks and one case in fourteen-day old chicks with some of these chicks already having pus in the sinuses. A case of clinical intestinal coccidiosis was seen in ten-day old chicks – these chicks were the first birds through the housing this season which suggested a high level of coccidial oocyst contamination left over from the previous year. We advise that all chick housing is disinfected with Bioocyst ® to prevent early high levels of challenge in young chicks.

**2-4 week old Pheasant Chicks:** A wide variety of conditions were seen in this age group. Bacterial enteritis was the most common finding followed by Coccidiosis and Mycoplasmosis which has been a problem on several sites this year. There has been no noticeable common links between the cases of Mycoplasmosis seen – some have been in home-bred chicks whilst others have been bought-in chicks from a variety of suppliers. In most cases only single houses or one side of a large house have been affected. Treatment success has been varied and in some cases affected batches have been culled. A number of samples have been submitted to the University of Liverpool for culture and positive cultures have then been sent on to Mycoplasma Experience for 'sensitivity' testing. This is a lengthy process and we are still waiting for most of the final results. Three unrelated cases of post-biting stress were seen resulting in the birds going off food and developing enteritis. The additional stress of bad weather conditions may also have been a contributory factor. Generalized bacterial infections were seen in two submissions and from one of these Salmonella enteritidis was isolated. This is an unusual Salmonella to isolate from pheasants and it is likely that the source of infection was not the hatchery but some other source the birds encountered in the rearing house.



*Chicks showing typical caecal lesions associated with Salmonella infection*

A single case of Aspergillosis was seen in twenty-one day old chicks. These birds were being reared on untreated rape straw and this is believed to be the source of the infection.

**4-7 week old Pheasant Poults:** The very variable weather conditions were in many cases blamed for a significant amount of disease in birds over four weeks old with over half the pheasant chicks in this age group having clinical coccidiosis. This often started with a reduction in feed intake. The effectiveness of treatments with both Baycox and Coccibal have been variable and although medication intake levels in individual birds are not possible to determine, it is possible that some resistance to these drugs is occurring. If this is the case it will have serious implications for game rearing as there are no alternatives. The importance of birds consuming sufficient feed containing Avatec® on a daily needs to be emphasised.

Bacterial enteritis was also commonly seen in this age group of birds with Spironucleosis (Hexamita) becoming more common towards the end of the month.

Two cases of Sinusitis / Conjunctivitis suggestive of Mycoplasmosis were seen in birds in this age group.

**7+ week old Pheasant Poults:** Enteritis was the primary condition seen in older pheasant poults and this was often related to problems just after the birds had been released. One case of vent pecking was seen in released birds.

## **PARTRIDGES:**

**0-7 day old Partridge Chicks:** Poor chick quality resulting in yolk sac infections and starve-outs were the most common conditions seen in partridge chicks. All these problems were of hatchery origin.

**8-14 day old Partridge Chicks:** Most of the conditions seen in partridges of this age related to poor chick quality with small birds developing enteritis possibly due to the stress of competing with larger birds. One case of Aspergillosis which killed some eleven-day old chicks was believed to have originated from contaminated bedding.

**2-4 week old Partridges:** Enteritis and Dysbacteriosis were the most common findings in birds of this age but two batches of twenty eight day old birds had coccidiosis – these were the youngest partridges seen with coccidiosis during the month. There were two cases of partridges smothering overnight and this was believed to have occurred because of the birds being startled most likely by them sensing a predator outside the house.

**4-7 week old Partridges:** Coccidiosis affecting both the intestines and caecae was by far the most common finding in partridges aged between four and seven weeks. In three cases of enteritis, Intestinal Spironucleosis was also present.

Blackhead type lesions (protozoal hepatitis) and necrotic enteritis was seen in 3 submissions in birds aged between forty-two and forty-nine days old with the causal organism being suggested as *Tetratrichomonas gallinarum* by AHPA Lasswade.



**Partridge liver showing sign of protozoal hepatitis**

A single case of Mycoplasmosis was seen in a batch of 35 do partridges. This was the only case of Mycoplasmosis seen in partridges in June.

**7+ week old Partridges:** Enteritis with Spironucleosis (Hexamita) were the most common finding in partridges over seven weeks old. Coccidiosis was seen in partridges of this age but at lower levels than in previous years. Many partridges are now being routinely tested for coccidial oocyst levels and treated when levels rise ahead of clinical infection. This may account for the reduction in clinical cases. Two cases were seen in which Blackhead type lesions were present.