

# Sandhill Veterinary Services

Veterinary Care for Game Birds, Commercial Poultry and Pigeons



**MAY 2015**

## 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	402	Total Number of Submissions	82 Incl 2 x duck
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### PHEASANTS

### PARTRIDGES

Age	Number of submissions	Age	Number of submissions
1 – 7do	26	1 – 7do	9
8 – 14do	9	8 – 14do	6
2 – 4wo	3	2 – 5wo	10
4 – 7wo	2	5 – 7wo	1
7wo +	0	7wo +	0
Adults	14	Adults	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>26</b>

### PHEASANTS:

**Adult Pheasants:** The number of submissions in May remained high with the majority of submissions being related to respiratory infections. The birds presented with typical lesions of Mycoplasmosis but further testing showed a variety of organisms present including Mycoplasma, Ornithobacterium rhinotracheale (ORT) infection and various types of Pasteurella-like bacteria. Towards the end of the month a number of birds were seen with egg peritonitis – a generalised bacterial infection which in poultry is believed to be stress related. No outbreaks of disease causing visceral gout (due to Coronavirus infection) have been seen this season.

**0-7 day old Pheasant Chicks:** There is a reported significant shortage of chicks this season due both to lower than usual egg production from birds in the UK and due to the ban on egg imports from the USA due to Avian Influenza outbreaks in North America. As a result we have seen a number of deliveries of poor quality chicks which have included small birds, cases of yolk sac infection and non-starter birds. In the majority of cases the bacterium isolated from infected yolk sacs has been E.coli but the sensitivity of the bacterium to commonly used antibiotics has varied greatly depending upon the origin of the birds. In addition we have seen two cases of Salmonellosis in 4-5 day-old chicks. The chicks were on unrelated farms but had originated from the same flock of origin at the same breeder farm. Mortality in both batches of chicks has been in the 60% region.



A healthy batch!

**8-14 day old Pheasant Chicks:** Enteritis was the most common finding in birds seen in this age group. In two cases this had resulted in vent pecking by the chicks. The lesions in one sample of birds suggested possible Rotavirus involvement but this gave a negative result when tested.



Lesions of bacterial enteritis and Rotavirus look identical – they can only be distinguished by laboratory testing.

**2-7 week old Pheasant Chicks:** Clinical coccidiosis was seen in birds from 23do and this was the most common finding in birds in this age group. As in 2014 clinical cases in pheasants were seen before any clinical cases were detected in partridge chicks. Bacterial enteritis was also seen in birds in this age group the first case of Spironucleosis (Hexamita) was seen on 29<sup>th</sup> May.

## PARTRIDGES:

**0-14 day old Partridge Chicks:** Poor quality partridge chicks were not as commonly seen as poor quality pheasant chicks but a number of deliveries came to clients with more than expected numbers of very small non-viable chicks included. These chicks did not appear to be suffering from any bacterial infections and the surviving chicks have thrived without medication. We have seen one outbreak of Ascites (water belly) in young partridges but we have not been able to determine the cause. A low number of cases of Ascites had been seen in numerous rearing houses suggesting that the problem was not related to the heater / ventilation in any one house but as the chicks came from two separate hatcher sources it is not possible to identify the hatchery as the source of the problem. A similar case was seen in 2014 involving different clients / hatcheries and again in that case the origin of the problem (hatchery, transport or farm) was not identified.



Broiler chick showing signs of Ascites

**2-5 week old Partridge Chicks:** The first coccidial oocysts were identified in 21 day old partridges but clinically significant coccidiosis was not seen in birds under 30 days old.

The most common clinical condition seen in birds of this age was bacterial enteritis but we also saw a number of cases of lung congestion due to smothering – suspected to have been caused by predators or human interference around the partridge sheds at night.

**DUCKS:** Two batches of young ducklings were seen at the practice – one showed signs of Yolk Sac Infection and the other was a case of starve-out. Starve-out is usually the result of the birds being stressed within the first 24 hours of life. The nature of the stress and its source – hatchery, transport or farm, cannot be determined from the post-mortem examination. Affected birds appear normal when placed but do not eat. They survive until the nutrition available from the yolk sac is used and then die of starvation.