

Sandhill Veterinary Services

Game Bird, Poultry and Pigeon care

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MAY 2012

WELCOME to our early summer game bird newsletter with a range of articles concentrating on game bird chick rearing.

SUMMER STAFF

We are pleased that Becky Bartlett will be joining the team over the summer months.

Until recently Becky has been working for the Forensic Science Service at Wetherby. We look forward to her contribution to our laboratory work.

Opening Times:

**Monday-Friday
8.30am - 5.00pm**

**Saturday
9.00am - 12.00noon**

**All other times by
appointment only**

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Game Bird Newsletter

CHICK REARING

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST SEVEN DAYS OF LIFE

Research suggests that the first week of a broiler's life is critical to its future development and problems in rear at this stage will affect both the bird's performance and its ability to deal with stressful conditions. Therefore additional attention to detail in the first seven days of life is essential. There is no reason to suspect that it is any different when rearing game birds and the following points have been identified as playing a major role in the chick's health.

- Ventilation is very important to remove carbon dioxide and ammonia and also any carbon monoxide from heating systems. This will help prevent early lung damage. However there must be no drafts or pockets of hot or cold air.
- Birds are most feed efficient in the first week of life. In their first 24 hours broilers take in 20-25% of their own weight in feed and a further 40-50% in water. Access to food and drinkers is therefore critical. Feeding papers increase the availability of food to small chicks and encourages them to feed as it has an enticing noise. Placement of feed papers near drinkers will also encourage them to drink.
- Well raised chicks should be 4-5 times their starting weight by day seven with less than 1% mortality.
- From day 0-5 birds are essentially cold blooded so need a temperature of 40 – 41°C. Floor temperature is critical as birds lose heat through their feet. Ideal litter temperature should be a minimum of 32°C. The activity of the chicks will tell you if the temperature in the house is correct
- Maintain a water temperature at 10-14°C (never below 5°C or above 30°C.)
- The morning after placement 95% of birds' crops should be full
Whatever the thermometers say, rely on the birds activity to tell you if rearing conditions are correct.



MACFARLANE PHEASANT SEMINAR

I attended the 8th International Pheasant Management Seminar held by MacFarlane Pheasants Inc at Janesville, Wisconsin, USA between 4th and 10th March.



The seminar covered a wide variety of topics from bird husbandry, through feeding and assessing egg quality to emergency planning and managing farm finances together with useful visits to the farms.

Lots of useful information was acquired (e.g. the sexing of pheasant chicks – see overleaf) which will be of benefit to Sandhill clients together with contacts within the industry in the UK, USA and Canada.

EGG BREAKOUT CLINICS

The overall financial success of a breeding flock can often depend on the hatchability of the eggs produced. Many eggs that are candled as being clear are assumed to have been infertile whilst in reality this may not be the case. This is important as the management needed to deal with true infertility as opposed to very early embryonic death is quite different and without knowledge of the true cause action cannot be taken to correct the problem.

Similarly with later mortality, examination of eggs that have failed to hatch can suggest the cause of the problem which may range from egg storage conditions, through contaminated eggs to problems in the settings of the incubator or hatcher.



No one expects a 100% hatch but where levels fall significantly below that expected for no obvious reason then it may be beneficial to submit eggs to the practice for examination. This is a service we have always offered at the practice. Following the MacFarlane Seminar when Dr. Keith Bramwell of the University of Arkansas supervised an Egg Break-out Clinic and also gave a paper on egg storage we now have additional information that we greatly enhance the quality of the service we are able to offer our clients.

We advise that you speak to us at the practice before submitting eggs so that the sample we receive is one that will give the greatest clinical information.

MEDICINE NEWS

Avatec Prescriptions: As from the 2012 season prescriptions for Avatec are no longer required. However if a prescription drug (such as Flubenvet or Aureomycin) is being added to a diet along with Avatec then the fact that Avatec is also present needs to be included on the prescription. We are advised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) that we should at present issue two separate prescriptions in circumstances where feed with prescription drug is included with one batch containing and one batch not containing Avatec.

Amprolium: Very soon licensed Amprolium products will be available in the UK so the Amprolium 12% that we have been using under a Special Import Certificate will no longer be available. The licensed products are stronger (20%) than the present product and the dose will be 0.6ml per litre of drinking water.

SEXING PHEASANT CHICKS

One of the practical sessions at the MacFarlane Seminar showed how to sex pheasant chicks by examination of the head. Female chicks tend to have a more rounded head and the male has a more flattened head outline. In addition the early stages of the facial wattle may be seen above the eye in the male. Using these parameters, experienced operatives can be 90% accurate in sexing common pheasant chicks.



Female

Male

© Photo courtesy of Rita Alves, M.R.C.V.S., Dalton Game Consultancy, Wiltshire

JANSSEN GAME BIRD TONIC HD

An improved formula Janssen Game Bird Tonic has now been introduced and is available from the practice.



Price: £ 26.94 per litre

PRICE LIST 2012

Services:

Post-mortem	28.00
Bacterial culture	6.50
Coccidial oocyst / worm egg count	6.50
Trichostrongylus worm count (Grouse)	12.00
Culture hygiene swab	5.50
Culture water sample	6.50
Medicated foodstuff prescription	8.50

Vitamins and Tonics:

Janssen Game Bird Tonic 1litre	28.22
Optishell Algal Booster	52.68
Vitamax Liquid Multivitamin 1litre	11.67
Vetrellyte 1.5kg	22.20

Disinfectants:

Antec Virkon-S 5kg	40.78
Bi-oo-cyst 5litre	40.96
Biochlor Tabs 200	8.79
Orffa pH 10litre	22.00
Poultry Shield 1litre	10.19

All prices quoted are exclusive of VAT

All prices quoted are subject to alteration without notice.

Carriage will be charged where applicable.

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