

Animal Health News

Issue 21 June 2009

Farmers warned about lead poisoning of livestock

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) are warning farmers to take action to ensure against lead poisoning of their cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry. They warn that lead poisoning from sources such as car and electric fence batteries, contaminated soil, old and flaky paint and bonfire ash, where products containing lead may have been accidentally burnt can have a serious economic effect on your stock.

The FSA report that there were 127 deaths of cattle and sheep as a result of exposure to lead in 2008, and that a further 2,500 animals were restricted from the food chain as a result of exposure to lead. In addition exposure to lead can also cause fertility problems, stunted growth and birth defects. The FSA report that incidents of lead poisoning rise in spring when animals are turned out. They provide the following guidance to avoid lead exposure:

- Ensure animals don't have access to discarded vehicle batteries and remain vigilant to fly tipping.
- Ensure animals access to bare soil is kept to a minimum, by fencing off bare areas of soil.
- Ensure animals don't have access to bonfire ash, which can contain concentrated levels of lead.
- Provide a trough water supply instead of relying on run off water.

For further information visit the FSA website, www.food.gov.uk and search for "Lead Poisoning".

Microchipping of foals

All foals born after the 1st July 2009 will be required to be microchipped. The microchipping must be carried out by a veterinary surgeon. New legislation, the Horse Passports Regulations 2009 will come into force and will replace the Horse Passports Regulations 2004. Microchipping of foals is likely to be the only major change to the legislation and the requirements in terms of horse passports will not change. To be clear the new regulations will require:

- Foals born after 30th June 2009 will have to have a passport and be microchipped by 31 December in the year in which they are born or 6 months after birth, whichever is the latest.
- Animals born before 1 July 2009 which, at that date, do not have a passport under the existing rules will have to have a passport and be microchipped by 31 December 2009.

As further advice becomes available we will make this available via our website: www.northyorks.gov.uk/animalhealth

Farm Crisis Network

Farm Crisis Network provides support to farming people during periods of anxiety, stress and problems. Farm Crisis Network may be contacted on 0845 3879990, available from 7.00am to 11.00pm.

Livestock shows and isolation premises

As we approach show season, we thought it may be useful to provide a reminder on isolation premises and what information you are required to provide in what circumstances:

Moving to a show

Where you are using an approved isolation facility, to avoid triggering a 6-day standstill, the individual identification mark for each sheep/goat needs to be provided on the animal movement licence (AML). Where you are moving to a show **and back to your premises**, with no isolation units involved, you do not have to provide the individual identification marks for sheep on the AML, however it would trigger a 6 day standstill.

Movements into and out of isolation units for breeding purposes

Movements to or from an isolation unit for breeding purposes must be accompanied by an AML which contains details of the individual mark of each sheep or goat. In addition the licences must be sent to your local authority with a declaration form duly completed indicating that the animals have been in isolation. Declaration forms are available (*see weblink below*) or by contacting the Animal Health and Welfare Helpline on 0845 3301221.

Transporting casualty animals

Following the introduction of Food Chain Information documents for pigs, we felt it may be useful to provide an update on the transporting of casualty animals. The law requires that animals are only transported where they are fit to do so, and that they will continue to be fit for the duration of the journey; an animal which is injured, infirm, ill or fatigued would not be fit to transport. If you are unsure whether the animal is fit to be transported or not, you should seek veterinary opinion. Slightly ill or slightly injured animals can be transported, but only if the transport causes them no additional suffering or pain. If you consider that the animal's condition is deemed to be slight and therefore it may be transported for slaughter, it should be the nearest available slaughterhouse and it is a good idea to speak to the slaughterhouse and let them know you wish to deliver the animal there. Such animals must be accompanied to the slaughterhouse by a declaration, completed by the owner or person in charge of the animal. This declaration identifies the animal and any veterinary medicinal products or other treatments administered to it within the last six months, including dates of administration and withdrawal periods. The diseases status of the holding must also be declared. Consideration should also be given to how the animal will be transported; penned singly, thoroughly bedded up etc. A declaration form can be obtained from the following link: www.northyorks.gov.uk/farmrecords

www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/id-move/sheep-goats/pdf/generallicence080207.pdf

North Yorkshire County Council Trading Standards and Planning Services

Unit 4/5
Thornfield Business Park
Northallerton
DL6 2XQ
Fax: 01609 774527

Contact us in the following ways...

By telephone: Please note the telephone number for Local Authority Animal Health and Welfare Services in North Yorkshire is: **0845 330 1221**

By email: tsanimal.health@northyorks.gov.uk

or you can access all North Yorkshire County Council information online at: www.northyorks.gov.uk

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please ask us.

