



Gamebird Newsletter 2015

As the shooting season closes we can take the opportunity to look back at the rearing season last year and its relative success or failures and how this impacted on poult sales and the success of the shooting season as a whole. A period of analysis and planning is vital for all businesses as we seek to improve the productivity and sustainability of our enterprises going forward.

Regulatory, financial and productivity pressures have stimulated these audits and planning across many aspects of livestock production serviced by the practice and in many instances, health planning and examination of practices have resulted in improved performances and in many instances reduced drug usage.

The game bird sector, as you are aware is not immune from these pressures with the development of a national antibiotic usage monitoring and at this early stage figures are being collected to estimate quantities of antibiotic per kg/tonne of bird produced.

However as we have seen in other sectors this is likely to be the first step on an increasingly regulatory pathway.

As with any livestock enterprise multiple factors impact on the profitability, productivity and success of an enterprise. Last year at the Practice meeting we discussed aspects of commercial poultry industry that are applicable and transferable to the Gamebird industry. Looking in particular at the importance of biosecurity and hygiene practices on rearing farms. With good strict practices involving designated personnel, disinfection routines and good practice, disease can be kept out or restricted to small groups of birds paying large dividends on reduced mortality and drug usage. The appreciation of potential risk of direct or indirect introduction of disease onto a farm is crucial to reducing that risk. The direct route involves birds/eggs. Here knowing your source, discussing problems/issues pre-delivery will allow more informed management decisions. The indirect route is often overlooked but inadequate hygiene, shared equipment, personnel and vehicles can all pose a significant threat. The exposure to disease is one aspect however the level of “stress” in the birds determines its impact on a unit in many instances. A sometimes over used term “stress” encompasses a multitude of factors which can affect birds making them more susceptible to disease,

including nutritional, climate (chilling/heat stress) water quality, vermin, management techniques and stocking density. If these can all be optimised then the birds susceptibility to disease will be reduced and treatments more likely to be effective.

Treatment Protocols

An important aspect of treatment success besides those described above is the quality of compliance with recommendations. It goes without saying that an accurate diagnosis is vital, then the correct administration of drugs in both dose and duration are critical. It is unfortunately not uncommon for “treatment failure” to be attributed to inaccurate dosage duration, incompatible drugs for an assumed but incorrect diagnosis.

We would welcome the opportunities to discuss health planning including many of the aspects discussed above to both improve productivity and success of your business.

Mycoplasma “Bulgy Eye”

This was a particular problem on some units last year and whilst considering the points raised above it may be worth considering strategic medication of chicks at day old with products such as Avilosin to try and reduce the infectious challenge as Mycoplasma can be vertically transmitted through the egg. Whilst Mycoplasma plays an important role in “Bulgy Eye” it is often multi-factorial with viruses and other bacteria also involved, however early medication may prevent establishment of disease on a unit and reduce horizontal spread, and hence the need for medication later in rear.

Veterinary Services – Shipton Oliffe

We endeavour to provide a quality, rapid diagnostic service and pharmaceutical supply, to help in this respect we now have a collection and drop off point in Shipton Oliffe where by prior arrangement we will have the facility for the collection of drugs and the submission of birds for post mortem. It will be essential to co –ordinate its use through the practice on the contact details below, besides this it is always helpful to phone the practice in advance of any submissions or drug requirements to allow the provision of an efficient service for all parties.

We wish you luck for a healthy and successful season.

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