



Newsletter

July 2015

Backyard Chickens

Have you considered keeping chickens in your back garden? May be you have some already?

Keeping chickens can be very rewarding but there are a few things you need to consider.

Housing - even if you are in the town, your chickens are vulnerable to predators. Foxes, dogs and even the odd cat may have a go. If you are rural, you should definitely invest in a high fence around the run and bury the bottom by approximately a foot, if you wish to stop predators burrowing in.



The hen house also needs a perch for roosting at night. If you are not likely to be around for closing them in at night, you can buy an automatic door closer.

Keep it clean - the hen house should be cleaned out at least once a week.

Keep the feeders under cover, so that passing birds can't contaminate the food and the food doesn't get damp and mouldy. Water benefits from having shade over it on hot days too. Chickens drink water to keep cool, so its nice to keep the hopper cool too. Water should be fresh daily. Some people add cider vinegar to the water as it is thought to maintain an acid gut, helping to keep bugs at bay. Never add it to a zinc feeder or the acid can react with the metal and become toxic.



Regularly worm your chickens - If you have a small garden you will struggle to keep the ground parasite free. Worm them every 3 months.

Red mites sit in cracks in the wood of hen coops and comes out at night to feed on the hens. Treat the coop and the hens for best effect. Mites can lay dormant for 8 months without feeding. Signs are a grey ash like residue under perches. Hens with pale combs, due to anaemia from these blood sucking mites.

Feeding - most people will give layer's pellets as their main food source. This is a great balanced diet if you are keeping your hens for egg production. It is supplemented with calcium for good shell formation. If you don't have much grass you may need to supplement with greens once a week. Grits are also required to help your hens food to be broken down for digestion, always have a bowl available.

Always keep the feed area clean, debris around the run will attract vermin and you will soon feel that you are keeping rats as well as chickens if you are not careful. Good source of info <http://www.accidentalsmallholder.net/>

Pet Insurance - It is really sad when your pet has an accident or a serious illness to find yourself making choices for their care based on cost. Referral, for repair of a complicated fracture, can often be several thousand pounds. Diabetes, a very treatable condition, can suddenly increase your pets monthly costs. Regular blood tests, special diets, insulin and needles can put pressure on a low income. Whilst monthly insurance premiums are not always an easy thing to fund, they pay off when faced with the unexpected. Always look for a company that offers lifetime cover and has no restrictions (such as not being able to use your own vet out of hours, or insisting on their choice of referral vet). Good companies will renew the budget every year, so that on-going tests continue to be affordable and will allow you to use your own vet. We can't recommend but can advise.



OPENING HOURS

MON - FRIDAY

8.30AM - 5.00PM

SATURDAY

9.00AM - 12.00PM

24 HR

EMERGENCY COVER

PLEASE USE THE USUAL NUMBER

01599 363318

Did You Know?

Newspapers recently claimed one popular dog snack to be worse than an adult male eating a Big Mac, equating to 25% of a Labrador's daily needs. So if you were giving one to a cavalier, he should probably miss most of his tea! We recommend treats of raw carrot or broccoli.

Dreamies Cat treats according to Direct Line Insurance are worse than an iced doughnut for an adult. Low calorie treats for a cat would be a little boiled fresh chicken.

Over 50% of Britain's pets are overweight.

If you like to give treats, measure your pet's allowance for the day. When its gone, its gone, no more treats.

Are you on means tested benefits and want to get your dog neutered?



We work with the Dogs Trust to offer reduced cost neutering, just £30. There are all sorts of advantages to neutering

- ◆ **Less likely to roam looking for a mate and having accidents on roads.**
- ◆ **Less likely to get involved in a fight with other stray dogs.**
- ◆ **Less likely to get certain types of cancer; mammary masses, testicular.**
- ◆ **Less mess in the house every time a bitch is in season.**
- ◆ **Less costs if you don't have to come to the vets to treat injuries or illnesses such as pyometra (infected wombs seen in older bitches).**

The Dogs Trust are also running a great campaign to encourage children to be involved in cleaning up after their pet. "9 million dogs produces 1,000 tonnes of waste.."

The message is not just for children but adults too. Regular dog walking haunts can become a very unpleasant and messy area if we don't all take responsibility to clean up after our own pets.

We should also ensure that our pets are regularly wormed to protect our children from the harmful affects of worms such as toxocara, which can cause blindness.

Teaching your children good hygiene values of picking up after their pet and washing their hands regularly is great. Most children learn by example, so never leave the house without bags in your pocket, bag and bin your dog's waste and be seen to wash your hands as soon as a tap is available. Try carrying hand wash gel in your pocket, for those times you are out for longer. It is not as good as rinsing under a tap with soap but will help as an interim measure.

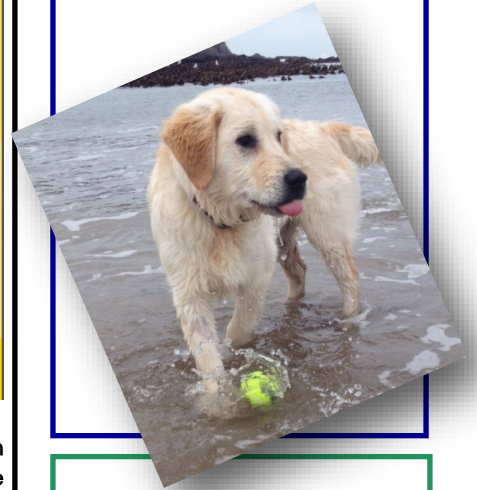


Is your pet an epileptic on Libromide?

Have you noticed that they have fits after being on the beach, when they hadn't had a problem for ages?

It is possible to reduce the amount of the drug in the system, if they eat or drink something salty. So it is possible that your pet's meds were doing a good job but they just managed to take in a little too much sea water.

Always talk to a vet if your pet has a seizure to ensure there is nothing else going on.



Keep your medicines away from pets.

We had a little puppy in this month because the owner suspected he may have eaten some of his medicines that had dropped on the floor. Of course puppies are like toddlers, into everything, so even if they had been on a bedside table they would be found.

After having some treatment to make him sick and a night on a drip, he went home bright as a button.



Seamus with vet Ruth and nurse Jean

Why we need to see your pet for repeat prescriptions?

Many pets are on long-term medication for conditions such as heart problems or arthritis. They may seem very well and doing everything normally and you wonder why they need to be seen. Apart from the fact there are strict laws that vets have to follow when prescribing medicines, they also have your pet's best interests in mind.

Medications can have an affect on other organs that can be hard to detect in the early stages but would show up on a routine urine or blood test for example.

It may be that there are newer drugs that would be safer and may be more effective for your pet's condition. Sometimes its just chatting with your vet that shows up a very treatable problem totally unrelated to the current condition too.

Working in partnership with your vet is the best way to keep your pet healthy.

Milbemax Dog and Cat wormers are currently on offer - Buy three get one free.

The Big Tick Survey - going well. More than one in four animals, examined when they came to the vets, had ticks. If your pet has ticks, ask for a nurse appointment so that you can help with Bristol University's on-going research.



Rat Bait Poisoning

Last month we had a couple of cases of rat bait poisoning.

The trouble with rat bait is that it affects blood clotting. The symptoms may not appear for a couple of days but will result in the dog or cat bleeding internally. You may also see blood in the urine or faeces, nose bleeds or purple blotches under the skin. If left until this stage it can be very hard to save your pet, so act quickly if you think they have eaten bait OR poisoned rats or mice.

Not all rodenticides work in the same way, so always bring the container with you to the vets.

Slug Bait Poisoning

Metdehyde is the most common poison causing death in pets in Britain.

Make sure that your slug bait is in a hard container well out of reach of your pets. Some dogs in particular are just plain stupid and will eat anything!

If you need to protect your plants put the slug bait under a decorative slate or stone, that is lifted above the earth slightly. It will still attract the slugs but be hidden from the pets.

Not all slug baits are Metaldehyde.

Contact us immediately if eaten.