Spring is most definitely in the air after a relatively mild winter for the region. We have seen an increase in requests for pet passports so it seems that some of our clients are already looking ahead to the summer! If you are considering travelling with your pet, please book an appointment to discuss your pet's individual requirements for your journey and destination. Some general travel advice is included in this newsletter.

The mild winter may have a knock on effect on parasite control. We commonly see higher levels of flea and tick problems after a mild winter so do keep up to date with your parasite prevention.

We have nearly caught up with our vaccine upgrade schedule for dogs which includes two new strains of leptospirosis (Nobivac L4). All dogs who have received their puppy or annual booster will have been upgraded to the new vaccine from June 2014 onwards. Winter 2013/2014 did see a regional increase in the cases of leptospirosis of which some tested positive for one of the new strains. The previous leptospirosis vaccine does not provide protection against the new strains of the disease which we are now seeing in this country. If your dog’s vaccinations have lapsed please discuss a vaccination plan with our vets (leptospirosis vaccine only provides protection for 12 months).

We have introduced a new feedback system for the practice called ‘The Friends and Family Test’. The system is online and asks just three questions, which provide us feedback on what we are doing well and where we might improve.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

James Allsop
BVSc GPCert(FelP) MRCVS
Clinical Lead of the Small Animal Practice

---

Dates for your diary

May

4th - North Somerset Show Once again we will be attending this show alongside the Langford Equine Practice and the Langford Farm Animal Practice. Pop along to the stand and say hello, enjoy some refreshments and enter our free prize draw!

8th - Bake Off Join us in raising money for International Animal Rescue (Lisa Milella’s chosen charity). Lisa used to perform specialist dentistry for us but had to resign 12 months ago when she was diagnosed with MND.

9 - 17th - Rabbit Awareness Week During this time we will be offering discounts and health checks for rabbits. Check our ‘Special Offers’ on page three for full details.

June

5th - Healthy Pet Club Members Evening Join us for a social evening at the Practice held exclusively for owners who are part of our Healthy Pet Club. Starting at 7pm, you can expect cheese and wine, a practice tour, a fun quiz and good company. Members will be contacted with further details, or to confirm your attendance now contact us on 01934 852 422 or sap@langfordvets.co.uk

If there is a topic you would like further information on as part of a client education evening, please submit your idea to sap@langfordvets.co.uk.

Ask a Vet...

Got a question for one of our vets?

If you have a question about your pet then send it in to sap@langfordvets.co.uk and the best question will be featured here in the next issue.
PET NEWS:

Travelling pets

If you are taking your pet abroad this summer, additional precautions need to be taken with regards to parasite control. Each country provides different risks therefore in many European countries it is necessary to take greater precautions against ticks and biting flies due to the diseases that can be transmitted.

There is increasing concern about the risk of rabies entering the UK but all animals travelling from Europe to the UK should have been vaccinated against rabies and are therefore at low risk.

PRACTICE NEWS:

Wedding Bells

We would like to wish all the best to two of our nurses, Sam Rudge and Fallon Campbell, who are both getting married later this year.

Friends and Family Test

If we have seen you recently you may have been asked to complete our new customer feedback survey. If not, we have added an independent and anonymous survey to gain feedback from our clients and their experiences to help us improve our service offering in the future. In March, based on this client feedback, 100% of clients asked said they would recommend the Small Animal Practice to friends and family! Thank you.

One of our team will supply you with the details to complete the survey, which is very concise. Alternatively you can complete it at www.myfft.co.uk/13104. Thank you in advance for taking the time to provide feedback and to help us shape the Practice in the future.

Your Questions Answered

Q At what age can I neuter my cat?

A Cats Protection conducted a good study a few years ago which demonstrated that there was no significant increase in risk from neutering cats (male and female) from 12 weeks of age or older. Traditionally advice has tended to neuter at around six months of age but for many years practices have been neutering earlier as the risk of pregnancy by waiting until six months is reasonably high if the cat goes out or is housed with an entire cat of the opposite sex.

The Small Animal Practice currently recommends neutering cats from 14 weeks of age. This earlier age eliminates the risk of pregnancy but also allows a full vaccine schedule to be completed before neutering.

Some cat rescue establishments are neutering cats less than 12 weeks of age but this is where the focus is on stray cat population control rather than owned pet cats.

*Rabbit Promotion*

During Rabbit Awareness Week (9-17 May) we will be offering FREE health checks in our Vet Nurse Clinic (including nail clipping), a 10% discount off vaccinations and a goody bag for each rabbit seen.

Book your appointment now with our reception team or by calling us on 01934 852 422.

Healthy Pet Club

We want to make preventative healthcare easy and affordable, to help you give your pets the best care possible.

Healthy Pet Club is not insurance. It covers the regular treatments your pet needs throughout life including:

- Annual health check and booster vaccination
- Six month health check
- Year-round flea, tick prevention and worming treatment
- Discounts on other selected services and products.

To find out more information, visit www.langfordvets.co.uk/healthypetclub
**PET NEWS:**

**Tips on Rabbit Health Husbandry**

- Rabbits are more likely to struggle in hot weather than cold.
- Make sure your rabbit always has shade, whether in the hutch, run or free roaming.
- A bottle of water, a house brick or tile that has been frozen provides a rabbit with something cool to lie against.
- Offer water from a bowl as well as a bottle as the rabbit is likely to drink more and remain hydrated.
- Fly strike is a big problem in rabbits starting as early as spring, right through to warm autumn days. Check your rabbit's bottom is free from faecal or urine staining twice daily.
- Make sure your rabbit is vaccinated against Myxomatosis and Viral Haemorrhagic Disease.
- Hanging a net curtain over the hutch can help prevent flies and mosquitoes getting in. Good air flow must also be maintained.
- Good quality hay should be the biggest part of any rabbit’s diet.

During Rabbit Awareness Week (9th – 17th May) we are offering free health checks in our Vet Nurse Clinic, including nail clipping, a 10% discount off vaccinations and a goody bag for each rabbit seen. Call 01934 852422 to book your appointment now.

---

**Pet Hero: Cooper**

Cooper is a sweet little pug who lives with her human family and her brother. Her owners had always planned on getting her spayed but before they realised it she was eight months old and starting to look a little fat. We recommend neutering dogs at approximately six months of age if there is no intention to breed. Cooper was brought into the practice where we found out that she must have been over friendly with her brother and was now pregnant. Due to the advanced stage of pregnancy her owners decided it was best to allow the pregnancy to finish. The practice team gave her owners lots of helpful advice about what to do to look after Cooper, and also when to be concerned if things were not going well. Sam Rudge (our trainee nurse) kept in contact with Cooper's owners throughout the latter stages of pregnancy, for updates and to pass on reassuring advice.

As luck would have it the labour started when Cooper's adult owners where out and she was being looked after by their teenage daughter. She phoned the practice and we were able to help her look after Cooper at home. Cooper had the first pup at home and successfully delivered by herself. Cooper's owner returned home but we were getting concerned that the labour was not progressing and she had not delivered another pup yet. We decided that it was best that we get her to the clinic for a check over. Cooper managed to pass another pup which was born dead and then passed two other healthy pups but started to have difficulty with the last pup. We examined her again and carried out an ultrasound which indicated that this last pup was particularly large. Cooper was also starting to get tired.

We started to prepare theatre ready to perform a caesarean section surgery to deliver the last pup but felt that it was safe to give a hormone injection to see if she could pass the pup by herself. Fortunately the injection worked and with a little assistance from James Allsop the vet, who had to help ease the pup out, the last pup was delivered to give a total of four healthy pups and a healthy mum. This case illustrates the teamwork between the owner and the whole veterinary team that is essential to a good outcome. All four pups are thriving and Cooper has been a great mum.

Whilst breeding from your dog can be very rewarding, we recommend considering all of the implications prior to mating e.g. genetic variation (don’t breed close relatives), planning for difficulties (have a good relationship with your vet) and re-homing the puppies (the current economic climate has reduced the number of families looking to take on a puppy).