

Colne Valley News



Welcome!

With Kate now on maternity leave, Neal O'Connor has joined our team of veterinary surgeons. Neal qualified from Bristol University in 2000 and worked in mixed practice for two years before concentrating on small animals. He has worked in various veterinary practices in Essex and Suffolk, as well as running an emergency and critical care centre in Perth, Western Australia from 2012-2014. Neal's main interests are internal medicine, soft tissue surgery and clinical pathology. In his spare time, he enjoys playing football, keeping fit and spending time with his two sons.

Summer pet care

The week of unseasonably warm weather in April was a reminder of what might be coming for the summer. The coats sported by some dogs in the cold winter weather can be washed and put away until cooler autumnal times return. Remember not to leave your pet in the car, even for a short time.

Fleas are a problem all-year-round but if you are an owner who only treats your dogs and cats in the warmer months then now is the time to resume that treatment. Fleas are always best pre-empted as they are much harder to eliminate once established in the home environment. Ask us for advice about the best parasite control strategy for your pets. There is a wide range of products available with different routes of application.

Rabbit Awareness Week 2nd - 10th June

The aim of this year's Rabbit Awareness Week is to emphasise the need to 'Move away from muesli', and 'Hop to hay'. Feeding a muesli type diet increases the risks of selective feeding, with the more palatable parts high in sugar and starch being eaten in preference to the more beneficial ingredients. Feeding a pelleted food means that a balanced diet is eaten every time a nugget is eaten.

It is, however, increasingly recognised that the compounded food should be a small part of the total diet, particularly to avoid obesity. The general recommendation is to feed 85% unlimited hay, 10% leafy greens and veg, and just 5% pelleted feed. Just as obesity is a significant problem in dogs and cats, so it is in bunnies and is best avoided in the first place as dieting a bunny is quite challenging.

Bunny welfare should, naturally, be a consideration all year round. Hopefully, the days of keeping bunnies as solitary individuals in hutches at the bottom of the garden are long past. Bunnies should be able to move about freely, dig and forage, and they need bunny buddies, avoiding an expanding population through neutering which offers other health benefits as well.

With bunnies living longer, we are seeing an increasing incidence of arthritis. The radiograph below shows the stifles (knees) of a bunny which the owner had noticed had become less active. These arthritic joints would be causing quite a high degree of discomfort so pain relief and maintaining the ideal bodyweight were priorities.

Remember that we offer annual vaccinations against myxomatosis and both forms of Viral/Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease, together with a check-up and health advice. If we should have warmer weather (blowing a gale and pouring with rain as I write - Ed), then take precautions against fly strike - such as careful hutch hygiene, checking your bunnies' rears at least daily, application of a specific fly deterrent - and seek urgent veterinary attention if maggots are seen or you have any other concerns.

Visit www.rabbitwelfare.co.uk for more information about looking after your bunnies, such as the ideal hutch and run set up.

