

Susan F Moreland MRCVS

GCCF Veterinary Officer

15th May 2019

RECENT OUTBREAK OF TUBERCULOSIS IN CATS: LINK TO RAW FOOD.

During the last year over 10 cases of bovine TB (ie Tuberculosis due to *Mycobacterium Bovis*) have been confirmed in cats and a number of new cases are currently being investigated. The first unusual feature linking these cases is that they all occurred in indoor cats, mainly in pedigree pets. TB in cats due to *M. bovis* usually occurs in free ranging cats in areas where *M bovis* is endemic in the wild rodent population and/or in cats with access to raw milk from TB infected cattle. The second feature common to all these cases was that they had been fed frozen raw venison.

Affected cats show a variety of symptoms. Reduced appetite, weight loss and lethargy are common. Other signs often relate to involvement of the gastrointestinal tract(vomiting and/or diarrhoea, swollen abdomen and enlarged mesenteric lymph nodes) or respiratory system (cough, rapid or laboured breathing). The disease may run an acute or chronic course. Some cases present with similar signs to FIP and have been misdiagnosed as such.

If you have been feeding frozen raw venison especially if any of your cats become unwell please seek veterinary advice immediately. Tell your vet that your cat has eaten frozen raw venison and that this food has been linked to recent cases of bovine TB in cats. It is very important you do this as TB is an extremely rare disease in indoor cats and your vet may not consider it as a possible diagnosis. If your vet suspects TB and requires more information about diagnosis and treatment of this disease they should contact Danielle Gunn-Moore FRCVS, Professor of Feline Medicine at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (University of Edinburgh) Hospital for Small Animals. Professor Gunn-Moore is an expert on Feline TB and is leading the research into this outbreak.

Unfortunately it has not yet been possible to isolate *M bovis* from venison products suspected to have been the cause of these cases. It is suggested that you make an Internet search against "venison cat food recall" and then check whether you have any venison cat food in your fridge or freezer and if so act accordingly.

Further information about the current outbreak can be found in a press release from The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (University of Edinburgh) Hospital for Small Animals on 13th May 2019 via the following link:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/vet/services/small-animals/information-about-cat-tb>

If you have any questions or concerns after reading this notice please contact me by email:

tobysdenbengals@hotmail.co.uk