WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT 38/16

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

INCIDENT NUMBER 38/16

PART OF STUDY FSGD-208

REGIONAL NUMBER W/16/23

OTHER REFERENCES 28/B0234/08/16

SENDER VLA Carmarthen

LOCATION Derwenlas
Montgomeryshire

GRID REFERENCE SN7299

INCIDENT DATE 27 August 2016

SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT diazinon
veterinary use

DATE OF REPORT 20 September 2016

REPORTING OFFICER [redacted]

SIGNED : .....[redacted].....

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

1	lamb carcase (bait?)
10	raven

COPIED TO [redacted]

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Samples received			Date received	Sample identifier
98594	raven		8/9/16	28-B234/08/16 : R1 NM/1-NM/7
98594	raven	tissues	8/9/16	28-B234/08/16 : R1 NM/1-NM/7
98595	raven		8/9/16	28-B234/08/16 : R2 NM/1-NM/7
98595	raven	tissues	8/9/16	28-B234/08/16 : R2 NM/1-NM/7
98596	raven		8/9/16	28-B234/08/16 : R3 NM/1-NM/7
98596	raven	tissues	8/9/16	28-B234/08/16 : R3 NM/1-NM/7
98601	lamb carcase (bait?)		13/9/16	APHA: 28-B0234-08-16

Summary of field data

A call was made to the Welsh Government to report an incident involving at least ten dead and dying ravens on top of a mountain and the presence of a sheep carcase. The informant had been out walking and noted that ravens were feeding on a dead sheep, some of them were alive and some were already dead. There were more ravens flying overhead and there was also a red kite in the area. An RSPCA officer visited the location and found six raven carcases and the remains of a sheep carcase. They collected the birds and delivered them to APHA for post mortem. Whilst at the incident location they met with the farmer, who hadn't seen the dead birds. They explained how they had last dipped their sheep on the 6th August and they didn't have any issues with the ravens at this time of year. There were six raven carcases found and a leg of lamb and these were taken to the APHA for examination.

Summary of post mortem report

Six ravens and a leg from a lamb were submitted. The ravens were in two bags, bag one contained three ravens with a moderate number of small maggots and bag two contained three ravens with a moderate to high number of small maggots. The birds from bag one were examined for a post mortem, those in bag two were palpated only and the keel bone felt prominent. All three ravens were of unknown sex and their weight was not recorded. Raven one and three was in poor condition and raven two in moderate condition. The stomachs in all the birds were empty and there was a small amount of fat in bird one and three and a moderate amount of fat in bird two. All maggots found on the birds were the same size which indicates that the birds had died around the same time. Tissues from three birds and the leg of the lamb (suspected bait) were sent to Fera for testing. The remaining bird carcasses were stored at the APHA.

Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

98594	gizzard contents	diazinon	confirmed	7.2	mg/kg
98595	gizzard contents	diazinon	confirmed	12	mg/kg
98596	gizzard contents	diazinon	confirmed	22	mg/kg
98601		diazinon	confirmed	12000	µg

Conclusion

It was suspected that these ravens had been poisoned. Laboratory analysis for a range of organophosphate pesticides has been undertaken on the submitted samples. These tests have detected and confirmed a residue of diazinon in the gizzard samples from all the birds and in a surface wash of the lamb remains. In two ravens the gizzards were empty and so gizzard lining only was tested, in the other raven, 98595, there was some fibrous content available for testing. The lamb remains consisted of a hoof and leg with some wool attached and predation suspected on the upper part of the leg as bone only was visible. The flesh was intact around the lower part of the leg. It appears that several ravens have been poisoned following exposure to the veterinary use of diazinon on sheep. Routine testing for anticoagulant rodenticides will be completed on the ravens and a revised report issued if a residue is found.

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