

WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

137/21



Original thinking... applied

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

INCIDENT NUMBER 137/21
PART OF STUDY FSGD-213
REGIONAL NUMBER W/21/20
OTHER REFERENCES 28-M0040-08-21
SENDER APHA Carmarthen VIC
LOCATION Talgarth
Powys
GRID REFERENCE SO1632
INCIDENT DATE 7 August 2021
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT background residue
DATE OF REPORT 1 April 2022

REPORTING OFFICER

SIGNED :

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

1 fox

COPIED TO

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Samples received		Date received	Sample identifier
100533	fox	18/8/21	28/M40/08/21
100533	fox tissues	18/8/21	28/M40/08/21

Summary of field data

A distressed fox was found by a member of the public. The fox was shaking and it could barely stand and so the RSPCA were informed. However, nobody came out to the site and the fox was found dead the following day, beside some recycling bins. There is no obvious sign of injury to the animal and the finder was concerned that it may have been poisoned. The case was reported to Welsh Government and arrangements were made to transfer the carcass to the APHA. The surrounding land is farmland, with mostly sheep farming and the nearest game interest is about five miles away.

Summary of post mortem report

A fox in two clear plastic bags secured with cable ties with a label on the second bag - W21/20. This was all contained within a sealed black plastic bag labelled with the APHA Carmarthen address and W21/20, TopSpeed number 11741. There were multiple maggots in the bags. The fox was a female of weight 4.5kg and emaciated body condition, with moderate autolysis. The fur was peeling off the skin around the tail and back legs and ventral abdomen. There were multiple maggots all over the carcass. There was no subcutaneous fat. The liver was homogenous dark red and congested. The upper right lateral incisor was absent. The stomach contained fur and small bones and a small mammalian foot with long claws. Small intestinal contents were firm containing fur and there were firm faeces in the rectum containing fur. There were reddened areas in both lungs. The spleen was enlarged and dark red. The ovaries were small and inactive. The brain was almost liquid (autolysis). All other organ systems examined were unremarkable.

Analysis : metaldehyde & carb (LC) analysis suite

100533	stomach contents	no metaldehyde & carb (LC) detected	detection limit	0.003	mg/kg
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Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

100533	stomach contents	no organophosphate detected	detection limit	0.3	mg/kg
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Analysis : rodenticide & chloralose analysis suite

100533	liver	difenacoum	confirmed	0.0016	mg/kg
100533	liver	bromadiolone	confirmed	0.024	mg/kg
100533	liver	brodifacoum	confirmed	0.044	mg/kg

Analysis : strychnine

100533	stomach contents	no strychnine detected	detection limit	0.02	mg/kg
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Conclusion

It was suspected that this fox had been poisoned. Laboratory analysis for some likely pesticides has been undertaken on the submitted samples from the fox. These tests have detected and confirmed residues of brodifacoum, bromadiolone and difenacoum in the liver of this fox. However, the amounts found are consistent with background exposure levels only, rather than the cause of death of this fox. This fox was emaciated, but it had eaten recently and so the cause of death remains uncertain.

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