



## Threats to pets - and TEST-A-PET

The world is getting smaller. Not literally of course, but we live at a time when people and animals, can move vast distances quickly and easily. And there is global warming. Together, these two coincident phenomena mean that diseases of both man and animals have acquired an unprecedented ability to spread. The incursion of bluetongue virus into northern Europe and the UK is but the latest example. Whether it will establish in the UK as a transmitted disease will to some extent depend on the effects of climate change or the capacity of indigenous midge vectors to transmit the virus. There is intriguing research from the Institute of Animal Health that the development of midge larvae at warmer temperatures renders them more capable of transmitting BTV as adult midges. BTV, of course affects sheep and cattle, but there are analogous issues in pets. The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) permits the

rapid movement of dogs and cats into the UK from many countries where there are serious endemic parasitic and vector-borne diseases which are exotic to the UK. Whilst the PETS was confined originally to the US, it now embraces all of N. America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Russia as well as all the EU and many dependant territories in tropical and sub-tropical areas. In many of these countries canine diseases like heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*), leishmaniosis (*Leishmania infantum*), canine babesiosis (*Babesia canis*) and ehrlichiosis (*Ehrlichia canis*) are endemic but none of these are endemic in the UK (yet!) and our dog population is fully susceptible. There is a risk that without adequate diagnosis, treatment or prophylaxis, and without effective surveillance, some or all of these serious canine pathogens (some of which are also transmissible to



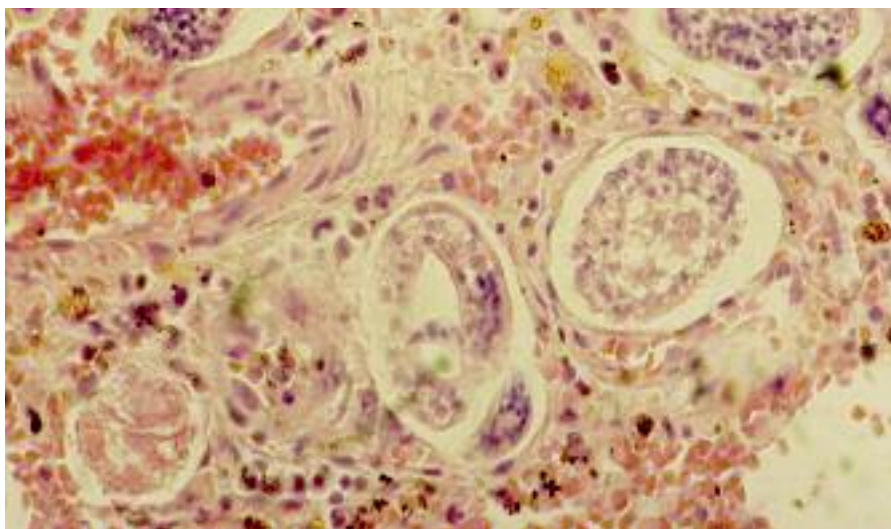
humans) will become established in the UK. Other parasitic pathogens, like *Angiostrongylus vasorum*, which is featured in our in-focus article, are already here and expanding their range.

At TEST-A-PET we have particular expertise and experience with these pathogens and our diagnostic service and advice can help in the fight to maintain the health and welfare of our UK pet population. You will find useful information and advice and links to other relevant sites like the DEFRA pet exotic disease recording site, DACTARI on our new website [www.testapet.com](http://www.testapet.com).

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Above: **The lungworm *Angiostrongylus vasorum* is highly pathogenic and expanding its range in the UK. Dogs acquire infection from slugs and snails (see in-focus article on page three).**

Left: **Section of lung from a fatal case of angiostrongylosis in a dog. Larvated eggs and L1 larvae cause severe pneumonitis.**



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