

WARNING: TICK-BORNE DISEASE WHICH IS DEADLY TO DOGS

Some of you may have read or heard about a recent outbreak of babesiosis – a disease caused by the *Babesia canis* parasite which is borne by ticks discovered in fields in Essex. The disease can be fatal to dogs and even if they survive their health can be compromised. The dog strain of the disease is not thought to present a risk to human health or to affect cats. The parasite (which can be carried by several different types of tick) is not yet common in England. It is normally found in wooded areas in Western Europe but its spread across the UK is now considered to be inevitable. Since 2012 the EU required the controls under the EU Pet Travel Scheme to be relaxed and dogs coming into the country are no longer required to have been treated for ticks; this includes the increasing number of dogs being rescued from abroad.

Symptoms to look out for vary but include lethargy, weakness, pale gums, jaundice, red/brown urine and fever.

Prevention:

- **Check your dog for ticks after walks.** If you find a tick remove it completely using a tick-remover or fine-pointed tweezers.
- **Use topical or tablet form of prevention** on your dog to reduce the risks. There are pros and cons to each method so it is best to discuss this with your vet.
- **Contact your vet immediately** if you suspect your dog is displaying any of the symptoms mentioned above.
- **Make sure you treat your dog for ticks** if you do take it abroad,.