



To The Editor, Vet Times.

Published November 5 2018

Dear Editor

Your correspondents McGill and others (Vet Times, Sept 17, & October 15, 2018), with their self serving allegation that foxhounds spread TB across the countryside, demonstrate in my view a profound ignorance of the pathogenesis of TB in hounds and other mammals.

TB is essentially a respiratory disease of all mammals that spreads horizontally by protracted and close contact exposure. This is clearly not the case with foxhounds moving across the countryside and is presumably behind DEFRA's statement that "There is no evidence to suggest that dogs play a significant role in the persistence of TB in England or that hunting with dogs contributes to the spread of disease in cattle".

The 2017 outbreak in kennelled hounds however revealed another possible route of infection for TB, namely ingestion of infected meat but in this case hounds were clearly the unfortunate recipients of the disease not the primary transmitters although they became secondary transmitters within the confines of the kennels. The only other present day example of the oral/respiratory route of infection is for cattle from badgers in the terminal stages of disease, the so called super excretors that excrete vast numbers of tubercle bacilli into the environment in urine, which again is clearly not the case with healthy foxhounds moving across the countryside.

Yours sincerely

Lewis H.Thomas, PhD, FRCPath, MRCVS, secretary VAWM

Smiths Cottage
Chieveley
Newbury, Berks
RG20 8UA