

# Blowfly strike prevalence in domestic rabbits

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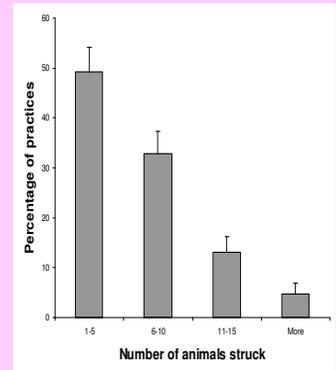
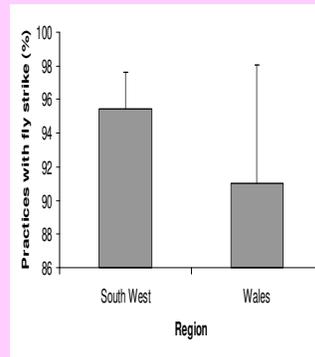
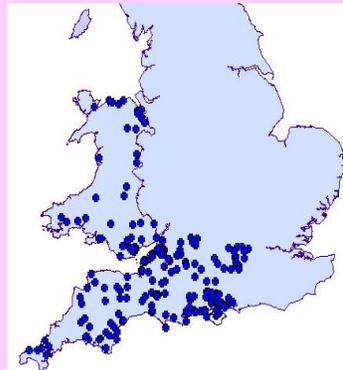
**Background:** the infestation of domestic rabbits by blowfly larvae (strike) is recognized by practicing veterinary surgeons as a widespread and common problem in the United Kingdom (Beynon, and Cooper, 1991). However, despite the severity of the disease and ubiquity of pet domestic rabbits in many areas of Europe, to date there has been little attempt to quantify the prevalence, intensity or cost of rabbit myiasis.

**Aim:** to quantify the prevalence and consequences of blowfly strike in domestic rabbits.

**Method:** a retrospective questionnaire survey of small animal and mixed veterinary practices in South West England and Wales was carried out to obtain data for strike prevalence between May and September 2005.



Rabbit with blowfly strike.



## 1. Questionnaire

474 questionnaires were sent out; the response rate was 46.2%.

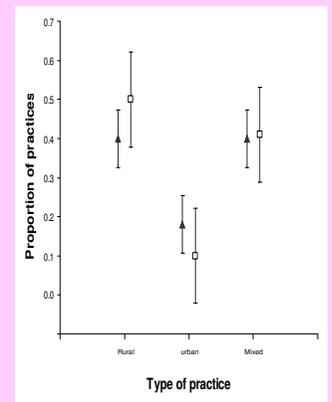
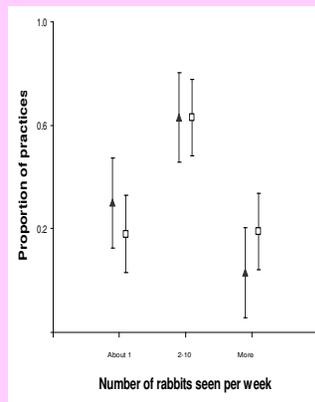
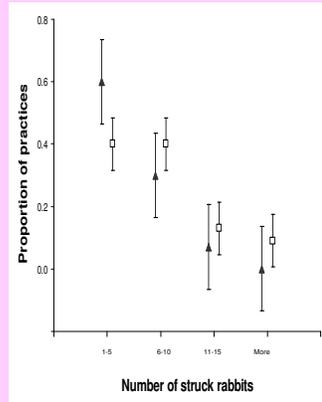
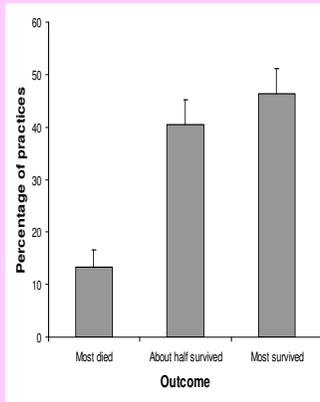
## 2. Distribution of respondents

## 3. Prevalence

The percentage of practices that reported having treated at least one rabbit strike

## 4. Number of rabbits struck

The number of struck rabbits seen per practice



## 5. Outcome

The outcome for struck rabbits

6. Proportion of practices where most infested rabbits died (.) or survived (.) in relation to the number of struck rabbits seen in the study period. Practices that saw fewer struck rabbits had a higher death rate ( $W=1309$ ,  $P=0.02$ )

7. Proportion of practices where most infested rabbits died (.) or survived (.) in relation to the number of rabbits seen per week in the study period. Practices that saw fewer struck rabbits had a higher death rate ( $W=1321$ ,  $P=0.02$ )

8. Proportion of practices where most infested rabbits died (.) or survived (.) in relation to the type of practice. There was no effects of whether the practice was rural, urban or mixed.

**Conclusion:** This study confirms that strike in rabbits is an extremely widespread problem. It was notable that practices where most infested animals died saw fewer rabbits and fewer struck rabbits. This suggests that training and experience in the appropriate care of infested rabbits may be critical in ensuring a favourable outcome.

**Acknowledgements :** Thanks are due to participating veterinary practitioners and to E. Van Praag for the rabbit picture.

**References:** Beynon, P.H.; Cooper, J.E. 1991. Rabbits. In Manual of Exotic Pets 2nd edition. pp69-81. BSAVA.