
APPENDIX 6: KNOWN OUTDOOR DISEASES: LYME, WEILS, *E Coli* AND OTHER ZOOZOSES

Working in the natural environment in the UK exposes staff and customers to a wide variety of known outdoor diseases. Appropriate precautions and control measures should ensure that the risk of becoming ill is reduced to at least that of any other recreational visitor to the countryside.

Known outdoor diseases should have appropriate risk assessments and be included within COSHH statements (OCOP B6).

High standards of personal hygiene, the protection of cuts and abrasions from contact with infection sources and the management of eating and drinking are in the most effective control measures for the majority of these diseases, additional information and control measures are indicated below.

Further Information can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/zoonoses.htm>

Outdoor Disease		Guidelines	Further information
Lyme disease	<p>Lyme disease is a potentially serious bacterial infection transmitted via tick bites. Ticks are common in forested areas, heathland, moorland and suburban parks.</p> <p>The risk of contracting Lyme Disease depends upon many factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence of <i>Borrelia burgdorferi</i> in an area. • Presence of suitable habitat for the ticks. • Presence of other hosts e.g. deer, sheep, pheasants. • Time of year. • Risk of exposure to tick. • Length of time the tick has to feed after becoming attached. <p>Persons at Risk; FSC Employee, Students, Non-FSC Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the time spent in the higher risk habitats during late spring/summer or in the autumn. • Careful choice of teaching sites to move away from locations animals congregate. • Taking appropriate precautions (e.g. clothing or insect repellent) when in higher risk areas or when doing higher risk activities in late spring/summer or the autumn. • Checking for ticks after carrying out fieldwork in areas that pose a risk during late spring/summer or the autumn. • Prompt removal of any ticks found using appropriate tick removal advice. • Informing all participants of the Risks before, during and after the activity. • An explanatory letter for accompanying groups is should be distributed where the risk of tick borne diseases exists. 	<p>http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Lyme-disease/Pages/Introduction.aspx</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tick-bite-risks-and-prevention-of-lyme-disease</p>
Leptospirosis	<p>Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection found worldwide. Weil's disease is one form most commonly acquired from water contaminated with rat urine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid water contact with the eyes or mouth and all small cuts should be covered with waterproof dressings. • No-one should work in polluted water with more substantial wounds. 	<p>http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Leptospirosis/Pages/Introduction.aspx</p>

	<p>For some fieldwork, sampling of water which is of poor quality is essential to the investigation being undertaken. On lowland slow flowing freshwater streams the risk of Weil’s disease (Leptospirosis) means that the same precautions as for poor water quality should be taken (even if the water quality itself is good).</p> <p>Persons at Risk; FSC Employee, Students, Non-FSC Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where water quality is poor (or suspect) students and staff should wear protective gloves. • Facilities to wash hands with soap or similar after fieldwork and prior to eating or socialising are essential. • An explanatory letter for accompanying groups is should be distributed where the risk of Weil’s exists. <i>(Note: this letter could also be used if the groups have been handling small mammals or working in other areas where contact with small mammals is likely.</i> 	
<p>E.coli O157</p>	<p>E. coli O157 is a bacterium that lives in the gut of animals. It can be transmitted via contact with infected animals or their faeces, and can cause illness ranging from diarrhoea to kidney failure in humans. In some cases the illness can be fatal.</p> <p>Faeces or faecal material may be present in soil, on grass, farm machinery, fences, buildings, water courses, footwear and clothing as well as on the hides and in the saliva of livestock.</p> <p>Persons at Risk; FSC Employee, Students, Non-FSC Staff. The most vulnerable individuals are the under 5’s and over</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration should be given to selecting farms that have been accredited through LOtC or are registered through The Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme (CEVAS). • Read and understand the advice in the industry Code of Practice, and confirm that the control measures provided at the site match the recommendations in the industry Code of Practice. • The best barrier to infection is to avoid contact with faeces or faecal material in the environment. This should be clearly explained and supervised. 	<p>http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/escherichia-coli-o157/Pages/Introduction.aspx</p> <p>http://www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/farmsafe/ecoli.htm</p>

	<p>75's, the main group at risk of infection are the under 10's accompanied by their parents or carers.</p> <p>The Industry Code of Practice is to help ensure visitor health and safety by providing sensible, practical and proportionate guidance on preventing or controlling ill health at visitor attractions. http://www.visitmyfarm.org/component/k2/item/339-industry-code-of-practice</p> <p>Where Learning Locations own or manage grazing land that is used for recreation it is advisable to exclude livestock for three weeks prior to organising recreational events (HSE guidance).</p> <p>Learning Location grounds and their use for recreational activities should be risk assessed in this context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure supervising staff understand the need to make sure that the children wash, their hands thoroughly, using running water after contacting animals and before eating and after removing footwear. Sanitising gel is not a substitute for adequate washing of hands though it may be a useful addition. In remote locations sanitising gel is better than nothing. • Brief students that they must not eat, drink or chew anything (including sweets) outside the areas in which you permit them to do so • Explain to pupils why they must wash their hands thoroughly after contact with the animals, and before eating or drinking anything • Ensure appropriate clothing that can be removed and washed after use at 60°C. Clothing worn on farm visits should be separated from other clean clothing. • Wear appropriate footwear. • Cover cuts, grazes etc on children's hands are covered with a waterproof dressing. • An explanatory letter for accompanying groups is should be distributed where farm visits take place. 	
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<p>Pregnant Women during the lambing season</p> <p>Potential infections include chlamydiosis (enzootic abortion of ewes - EAE), toxoplasmosis, listeriosis and Q Fever</p>	<p>Some infections can be passed from sheep and other animals (including cows and goats) to humans. If a pregnant woman becomes infected, it could harm her and her unborn baby's health.</p> <p>These infections are uncommon in sheep and very rare in humans. The number of human pregnancies affected by contact with sheep is extremely small.</p> <p>Although the risks are low, pregnant women should still avoid close contact with sheep during the lambing season which runs from January to April, although the risk is present at other times of the year.</p> <p>Persons at Risk; Pregnant FSC Employee, Pregnant Non-FSC Staff</p>	<p>To avoid the possible risk of infection, pregnant women are advised that they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not help deliver lambs (or calves or kids) • do not milk ewes • avoid contact with aborted (miscarried) or newborn lambs, and with the afterbirth, birthing fluids or contaminated materials, such as bedding • ensure your partner and family washes thoroughly after contact with ewes that are lambing • clothing worn during lambing should be washed separately from other washing • Seek medical advice if you have a high temperature or flu-like symptoms or you think you may have got an infection from a farm environment 	<p>http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/934.aspx?CategoryID=54&SubCategoryID=13</p>
<p>Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) caterpillars</p>	<p>OPM caterpillars have thousands of tiny hairs which contain an irritating, substance called thaumetopoein. Contact with the hairs can cause itching skin rashes and, less commonly, sore throats, breathing difficulties and eye problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not approach nests or caterpillars or let children touch or approach them. • See a pharmacist for relief from skin or eye irritations after possible OPM contact or seek medical advice for a serious allergic reaction. 	<p>http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/bites-and-stings/Pages/insects-bugs-that-bite-sting.aspx</p> <p>http://www.forestry.gov.uk/oakprocessionarymoth#health</p>

	<p>In affected areas precautions should be taken from April to July</p> <p>Persons at Risk; FSC Employee, Students, Non-FSC Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSC tutors should familiarise themselves with the signs of OPM presence. • Movement of material e.g. for shelter building should be minimised in affected areas. • Appropriate PPE should be worn if working close to oak trees in affected areas. • Nests and sightings should be reported. 	<p>http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/OPM-Leaflet-public-info-final_05-14.pdf/\$file/OPM-Leaflet-public-info-final_05-14.pdf</p> <p>http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fr_advice_note_oak_processionary_moth.pdf/\$FILE/fr_advice_note_oak_processionary_moth.pdf</p>
<p>Harvest Mites: <i>Trombicula Autumnalis</i></p>	<p>Trombicula autumnalis are surface mites found worldwide. They can cause parasitic skin infestation (trombiculidiasis) in any animal, including humans.</p> <p>Bites occur August to October when the mites are in the larval stage. Bites are always in areas covered by clothes, with a preference for hidden folds, or where clothing causes a constriction. Bites cause irritating heat lumps that last from four to fourteen days which become even itchier after a warm bath or exercise.</p> <p>Persons at Risk; FSC Employee, Students, Non-FSC Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider minimising time spent in the higher risk habitats. • Taking appropriate precautions (e.g. clothing or insect repellent) when in higher risk areas or when doing higher risk activities. • Informing all participants of the Risks before, during and after the activity. • If bitten, a hot bath and scrubbing may be effective in removing mites. Calamine lotion can be used to reduce irritation. Antihistamine creams / tablets can be used, if appropriate. 	<p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trombicula_autumnalis</p>



Dear Sir/Madam

Re: The risk of infection with one of the waterborne diseases as a result of attending a field course

This letter is part of the precautions to alert you to the very faint possibility of infection by waterborne diseases whilst attending a field course. You may find it useful to copy this letter to parents or guardians of children taking part in a visit.

The FSC take great care to ensure that the risk of infection is managed through effective control measures. This ensures that the likelihood of becoming ill is very remote.

The National Curriculum and many of the Examination Boards mention topics such as the effects of pollution on freshwater communities, farming practices, etc. Attending a field course provides an ideal opportunity to study such topics at first hand. Such fieldwork, however, can expose people to the risk of a bacterial infection known as Leptospirosis. This infection is also known as Weil's Disease or Sewerman's Disease when associated with rats.

The risk of contracting such infections is **very low**. There are approximately 50 cases of Leptospirosis reported per year within the United Kingdom (less than 1 per million). If any student undertakes work or visits a site where there could be a possibility of infection they will be advised of the precautions they should take to minimise the likelihood of infection further. This letter is part of those precautions. If course participants develop any of the following symptoms within four weeks of their return from the field course they are advised to consult their family doctor, mentioning the possibility of Leptospirosis. Typical symptoms include:

- a feeling of having a 'flu-like' illness
- above normal temperature and/or a feeling of chill
- pains in joints and muscles - calf and back muscle pains being particularly noticeable

Treatment by antibiotics in the early stages is completely effective.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Bolland', written over a faint circular stamp.

Mark Bolland, Director of Infrastructure

FSC HEAD OFFICE

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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: The risk of infection with *E coli* as a result of visiting farms and farmland during a field trip

This letter is part of the precautions to alert you to the very faint possibility of infection by *E coli* whilst attending a field course. You may find it useful to copy this letter to parents or guardians of children taking part in a visit.

The FSC take great care to ensure that the risk of infection is managed through effective control measures. This ensures that the likelihood of becoming ill is **very remote**.

The educational value of students gaining understanding and experience of farming in the UK is well recognised by the National Curriculum and examination boards. Attending a field course provides an ideal opportunity to study such topics at first hand. Such fieldwork, like any trip to the countryside, can expose people to the risk of a bacterial infection known as *E coli* O157.

The risk of infection has been considered to be low, (acceptable and tolerable) by the Health and Safety Executive, however children under 5 and the elderly are most at risk from the more severe consequences of the disease.

E coli can be present in the guts of farm animals, pets, wild birds and wild animals. It should be considered to be present in all cows, sheep, goats and deer. It can remain present in the faeces (dung) of animals for a long time.

The best way of reducing the likelihood of contracting the disease is to avoid contact with animal faeces or surfaces contaminated with faecal material. Avoiding touching livestock or allowing them to lick you is also advisable.

Thorough hand-washing with water and soap is strongly advised and it is important to stress to your students the importance of this before they eat or drink, and after removing footwear. We encourage visiting staff to assist with the supervision of hand washing for younger students. Sanitising hand gels are considered a useful addition, but are not a substitute for thorough hand washing.

We also recommend that students bring a plastic bag to keep clothes that need washing separate from other clothes, until they can be taken home and washed.

Yours faithfully

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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: The risk of infection from tick borne diseases as a result of attending a field course

This letter is part of the precautions to alert you to the very faint possibility of infection from tick borne diseases whilst attending a field course. You may find it useful to copy this letter to parents or guardians of children taking part in a visit.

As part of the field course, the group will almost certainly be visiting moorland or woodland field work sites. They will thereby increase the risk of coming into contact with diseases carried by our native wildlife – in particular various diseases transmitted by ticks.

The better known of these tick born diseases, Lyme Disease and Q Fever, are known to occur. Although mainly transmitted by the sheep tick (*Ixodes ricinus*), these diseases are especially associated with deer and the habitats they live in.

It must be said, however, that the risk of infection as a result of fieldwork is very slight. Although students are sometimes bitten by ticks, provided they report this and appropriate action is taken, then any risk can be immediately minimised. We operate strict protocols with all groups to ensure this happens. Any ticks removed by Learning Location staff and are given to teacher/student (in case they should be required by your GP).

If course participants develop any of the following symptoms within four weeks of their return from the field course they are advised to consult their family doctor, mentioning the possibility of Lyme Disease/Q Fever and that moorland/woodland fieldwork has been carried out. Typical symptoms include:

- a persistent rash around the site of the tick bite
- a feeling of having an influenza-like illness (n.b. later symptoms are varied in nature and severity)

Treatment by antibiotics is completely effective in the early stages of the disease.

Yours faithfully

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