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Harvest Mites



From late August into October harvest mites can make dogs & cats feel far from 100%.

Harvest mites (*Trombicula autumnalis*) cause seasonal skin challenges for dogs during late summer and autumn. The first active stage in the life cycle of the harvest mite is the six-legged larva – and this is the tiny pest that causes big problems for our pets.

Harvest mite larvae are active during the day, especially when it's dry and sunny. They congregate in large groups on small clods of earth, long grass, matted vegetation, and even on low bushes and plants. When

harvest mites come into contact with any warm blooded animal, they'll swarm on and congregate around your dog's front legs (on their chest and in their 'armpits'), on tummies and necks, and around the genitals causing intense irritation see and excessive licking at the feet which can then progress to sores and infected skin.

Harvest mites are free living mites that is they do not have to live on our pets to survive, however once on a pet will feed by releasing digestive enzymes that cause skin irritation.

It's not easy to spot a harvest mite infestation, because they are so small. Keep your eyes peeled for tiny reddish or orange larvae, they are around 0.2mm long.

If you spot your dog scratching, spread the hairs and look carefully at the skin – if there's reddish or orange coloured 'dust' attached to the hairs or the skin, your pet probably has harvest mites.

Treatment is difficult for a number of reasons – most flea and tick products, although not licenced for treatment of harvest mites, will kill them. The challenge is getting a concentration of product at the extremities to allow a long enough exposure to kill them.

The second reason is repeated infestation – the your dog or cat goes back to the same field or grass verge they will pick up more mites

Speak to one of the vets if you suspect your pet has harvest mites