

The Seaforth Howler

Editorial

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

OK, we are always running late I know, but it is still autumn.....just.

We would like to welcome Nurse Jenny Short to our staff. Jenny is from Adelaide originally but has recently returned from a long stay in Preston, in the north of England.

Our congratulations to Janelle, our Saturday Vet, on her first pregnancy! Janelle is expecting in October and we wish her well.

In this edition I explain the principle and value of the 7 Plus health check. Shannon tells you all you wanted to know regarding our care of wildlife.

Two years on Jane remembers her Rolfe and raves about her Rosie.

Terry elucidates the current thinking on Feline Infectious Peritonitis.

And finally Rachel tells the truth about what really goes on at a nurses conference! All is revealed.

Worming. Boring? Difficult? well not anymore as Hendrika introduces you to all new Drontal Chewies for Dogs!

As for me I'd better get started on the Winter edition of the Howler right now if I'm ever going to be on time.....

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Vet 7 Plus Health Checks

By Dr Robert Miller (Veterinarian)

Just like humans, as our cats and dogs age it is important they see their "GP" more often. We all know that as people approach their 60's, visits to the doctor seem to creep up on them and by your 70's you never seem to be away. This allows us to keep healthy in our senior years. Detecting a disease process earlier means more timely and effective intervention. Well for cats and dogs the magic age for all this is 7 years old.

Below 7 years of age most pets typically have a routine visit once a year for vaccination and a full check., (in addition to the occasional visits for accidents or illness during the year). Remembering the old adage that 1-year in human years is equivalent to 7 years of aging in cats and dogs, (which is roughly correct), you can begin to understand the need for cats and dogs have **two routine** visits a year to their vet.

One of these routine visits coincides with yearly vaccination. The second routine visit is what we call the 7-Plus Health Check. (7+). Using our computer we can organise a reminder for the 7+ to occur about 6 months on from the vaccine.

What happens at a 7+?

- History is taken with special attention to telltale signs of impending disease
- Full clinical examination of all body systems is performed
- If indicated, a urine sample is obtained and analysed
- If indicated a blood sample is taken.

What are we looking for?

7 Plus!

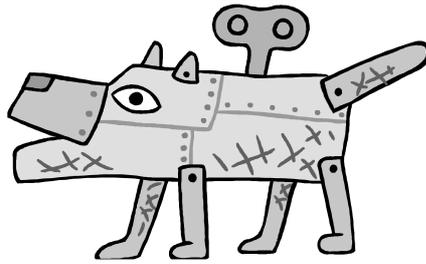
Gossip Column

- **Janelle is having a baby later this year!**
- **Sam is having a... holiday, just as exciting as she never does!**



We check for any abnormalities but in particular we are looking for:

- Unusual lumps both on the body and more subtly, internally.
- Changes in drinking and urinary patterns that can alert us to a whole range of diseases of old age.
- Sudden significant changes in body weight or condition.
- Heart murmurs and arrhythmias.
- Lameness and osteoarthritis.
- Poor dental condition as these days it is believed periodontal disease can lead to accelerated heart and kidney disease.



We'll fix'em up like new!

So if you receive a 7+ reminder this winter please do not hesitate to respond and make an appointment.

Wildlife Care at SVH

By Shannon Walden (Veterinary Nurse)

In any busy week at Seaforth veterinary hospital numerous species of injured wildlife pass through our doors. We treat them as a community service, FREE of charge. You are probably wondering what happens to those beautiful animals that you bring in to us. The general approach is: We record the details of where the animal was found, how you found it and what the animal was doing when you approached it. This information is passed on to the vet and later to the carers who take over the job of looking after them once the vet has done his job.

The vet checks the patient and assess if it is possible to treat. Unfortunately not all injured wildlife are going to be able to be released back into the wild. Badly injured animals may need to be euthanased.

If treatment is possible we will admit the animal into our wildlife hospital where our experienced staff can administer medication, correct diets, environmental needs with lots of tender love and care.

The vets reassess all of our animals until they are able to go to our dedicated WIRES carers where they can complete their recuperation. It is at this stage they can be released back into the wild. (This is the best bit!)

This is why we ask for you for all those detail when you dropped them off with us. We need to be able to release them back into the same place where they were found to minimise territorial aggression by others of its species.

On a monthly bases we receive into our care approximately 40 animals. Most are possums (ring tail and brush tail), lorikeets, lizards (blue tongues) tawny frog mouths and lots more species. Many of them do make it back into the wild.

So if you find an injured animal don't leave it, bring it in to us and we will do as much as we can for it.

Please note that all veterinary surgeries accept wildlife, please take them to the surgery closest to where they are

found. This shares the work load within the veterinary community and offers these animals their best chance of survival.

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)

*By Dr Terry Collins (Veterinary surgeon)**

FIP is a fatal immune-mediated disease of wild and domesticated cats caused by mutant strains of Feline coronavirus (FCoV). The disease was first described in the U.S. in 1963. The first reported appearance in Australia was in 1974.

FIP is reported to occur more frequently in cats from catteries, boarding facilities and multicat households. The incidence of FIP in purebred catteries increases in proportion to the number of animals kept in that facility. 93% of cats within catteries are infected with FCoV.

Transmission: The most common method of FCoV transmission is via virus-infected faeces although in the first few hours to days of infection it can be shed in the saliva and respiratory droplets. Kittens are usually infected from their mother at the age of 6-8 weeks when their maternal antibodies wane. Healthy cats that are consistently infected with FCoV are thought to play an important role in recycling FCoV in multicat environments. FCoV is a fairly fragile virus that is destroyed by most household disinfectants and detergents. It can however survive up to 7 weeks in dry conditions eg. dried faeces, carpet etc.

There is considerable debate over how a persistently FCoV infected cat develops FIP. One theory is that a mutation of the virus occurs within an individual cat. To date the mutant forms of the virus have *not* been found in the secretion s or faeces from cats with FIP. Therefore transmission of mutated FCoV from one cat to the next is considered unlikely under natural conditions.

Clinical presentation: This is variable and often complex reflecting variations in the virus itself, the nature of the cat's immune response and the influences of environmental stress. Affected cats are clinically very unwell with often more than one body system involved. Some will develop thoracic or abdominal effusions (fluid accumulation) in addition to fever, inappetence, weight loss and anaemia.

Diagnosis: This is a complicated and controversial issue due to the similarity between FIP and many other feline diseases. Many of the tests available are not-specific being unable to differentiate between the harmless and mutant forms of the virus.

The only *conclusive* test for FIP is the detection of characteristic microscopic changes in cells by immunohistochemistry of affected tissues from the sick cat.

Treatment: No therapies have been proven to effectively treat FIP. Many immunosuppressive drug combinations have been tried with limited success.

In summary FIP is a relatively rare disease occurring mostly in multi-cat households with breeding catteries containing large numbers of cats being the most susceptible.



News from the Nurses Conference 2006

By Rachel Jackson (Veterinary Nurse)

In April this year the Veterinary Nurse's Council of Australia held their annual conference in Sydney. Nearly forty vets and nurses, all specialists in their fields of interest, delivered papers specifically tailored for the nursing profession. As part of our continuing education program three of our nurses attended, one day each. Topics covered included tips on behavioural enrichment, techniques of pain and wound management, and nursing emergency procedures. It was most difficult to choose which lectures to attend but we have since pooled our notes and all benefited enormously, sharing new knowledge with a re-fired enthusiasm for our role as nurses. Our ideal is to always make your animals as comfortable as possible, ensuring that they recover in the fastest possible time.

We are now better equipped to answer your questions about behavioural problems your dogs or cats may be exhibiting when they are left alone throughout the day. Your dogs may be barking and annoying the neighbours, and both dogs and cats scratching, chewing and destroying your furniture. We have learnt about methods of social and sensual enrichment, and the importance of training and stimulation, all tips we can now offer to you.

Pain and wound management are two of the most important aspects of nursing sick animals, enabling us to optimise the conditions for wound healing. A nurse must be able to recognise when an animal is in pain and ensure that pain relief is administered appropriately and effectively. It is up to the nurses, working behind the scenes in the hospital with more time to observe the animal, to monitor the animal's condition and alert the vet if the pain relief is not proving adequate. Many different analgesics are available and may perhaps be tried to better effect, but only if the animal's responses are carefully gauged.

Wound management techniques that the nurses are involved in include the assessment of wounds according to the degree of contamination, preparation by the administration of antibiotics and aseptic lavage to ensure that no further contamination of the wound occurs during treatment, and finally appropriate wound dressings. These lectures provided an invaluable opportunity to learn about the positive attributes and potential problems of the different procedures favoured by clinics across Australia, and to share tales with other nurses, learning from each other's varied experiences.

Emergencies demand immediate action by people well schooled in their roles, able to maintain calm in the most dire of situations. The lectures that we attended, the knowledge that we gained, along with the regular learning sessions we hold here at Seaforth, all function together to help us do our best in these most urgent moments. These sessions allow us to feel more confident in our abilities and allow you, our clients, to feel confident that your pets will receive the best possible care.

Finally, after an extremely busy three days the conference ended with a delicious dinner. Jenny, our fourth and newest nurse who had not been able to attend the lectures, joined us

for this fabulous opportunity to meet nurses from across the country in a relaxed and happy environment. We were spoilt and we enjoyed it. It was a fine end to an enthralling and thought provoking function.



Nurses in Fancy Dress

Life After Rolfe

By Jane Molchanoff (Head Receptionist)

You may remember my sad article a year or two back where I reminisced on the life and love of Rolfe, my miniature schnauzer. Thanks to everyone who, having read the article or seen my long face at Reception, sympathized with me on his passing. It was very much appreciated, and showed me just how many pet owners there are who also consider their animal an extra special part of their family.

A new chapter has since begun in the Molchanoff book of life, one that includes a right little character – Rosie. As Rolfe and his uncle Buster were both substitute children for the real thing, Rosie has become my third child (she thinks!) It was a little over a year after Rolfe died before I felt able to look for another small furry being to fill the hole left on our family. Of course we had Anna, our full-of beans Burmese, but for me, nothing will ever beat the unconditional love of a dog. As I write this story, Rosie has jumped up on my lap in an attempt to draw my attention away with those adoring eyes...more effective I'm sure if her eyebrows were trimmed!

Rosie was born on 30th April 2004 so has just celebrated her 2nd birthday. A beautiful black and silver mini schnauzer, she came from Morriset, near Newcastle. As a family, we travelled up and down the F3 every weekend for the first seven weeks of her life so that she could get to know us all, especially the children – otherwise alien beings in her small world. Despite worrying that she had such loving paws to fill, none of us now could imagine “life without Rosie”.

She has proved to be a great playmate for Anna. Mad races around the house ensue every night just as the kids settle down for bed. Countless shower curtains are replaced as Anna ambushes the unsuspecting Rosie and chases her down the hall and across both couches (and whoever happens to be sitting on

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them at the time!) Rosie's attempts to surprise Anna are never so subtle, but always executed with maximum enthusiasm. Hours are spent in the backyard seeing who can outsmart who – invariably the wily cat wins every time! Guests are treated to a free floor show at every visit.

Even with the relentlessly busy life that work and two young children brings, Rosie is always with us. Watching Alex at tennis, picking Josie up from dancing, bushwalks at the weekend, even to a friend's house for dinner – she's one of the crowd. Great friends with the kids and all their friends, she's still my baby when it comes to setting down for the night. My feet are once again warm in bed and will hopefully remain so for many years to come.



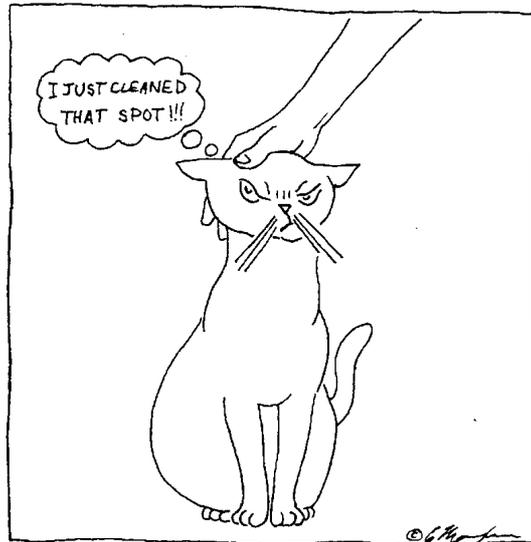
The Girl in Question—Rosie

Worming made Easy!

By Dr Hendrika Tegelaar (Veterinarian)

Now that so many dog owners have opted for convenient heartworm injections annually it is easy to forget "the other worms".

Time passes so quickly and who likes giving dogs tablets? No one! It is still very important that dogs are wormed regularly. Every 3 months is ideal for the intestinal worms-round / hook / whip and tapeworms. These can cause mild to serious disease in your animal. Diarrhoea, weight loss, poor coat to name a few signs but also may become a potential hazard for young children whose hygiene after



FELINE INDIGNATION

(Cartoon Courtesy of Dr Libby Thompson)

petting their dogs may not be ideal.

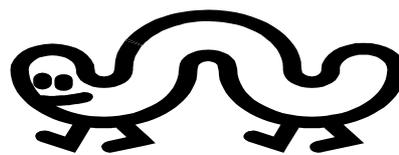
These zoonotic diseases may be skin rashes or the development of cysts in the liver or lungs, which are difficult to detect. This is especially relevant if your dogs have access to raw sheep offal (weekends on the farm?)

Prevention is always better than cure and now Bayer have found a tasty formula which dogs love. Drontal Chewable Allwormers have a unique liver flavour so no more fighting to give worming medication.

Your dog will love it – something we see all the time at our surgery. It comes in two sizes, 10 kg and 35 kg doses. Chewables can be halved for more accurate dosing and minimal waste.

As a special promotion, when you bring in this voucher and purchase one treat you will receive another free, that's \$14 for free for the larger chewie.

And of course Drontal often succeeds where cheaper wormers fail. You may as well pay for something with a great track record in the veterinary industry.



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