

The Seaforth Howler

Editorial

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Poor old Angel our stalwart clinic cat has suffered from serious asthma for many years now. Unfortunately its recent progression required her euthanasia. Many thanks to this lovely cat who brought us many years of happiness. She is missed.

In this issue we reiterate our annual tick prevention advice, just in case you need a refresher!

Bird flu has been in the news for many months now. We reprint an excellent article from Vetafarm which puts it into perspective and cuts out the hype the media is prone to.

Who's working when? Clients often prefer

to see a specific vet, but when are they on? A short article will explain how you can easily work this out year round.

Jenny Short our newest nurse has been put through the rigors of TAFE training. She explains how it is far more involved and rewarding than she first expected.

David Collins is in the process of trying to find out how we can hone our practice to make it an ever better place for you and your pets to visit.

Do you have a story you would like to see in print? We cannot promise to print them all but we can certainly try.

Inside this issue:

<i>Editorial</i>	1
<i>Bird Flu in Perspective</i>	1
<i>Who's Working When?</i>	2
<i>Becoming a Vet Nurse</i>	2
<i>Can you help us...?</i>	3
<i>In Bed with Trev</i>	3
<i>Charitable works afoot...</i>	4
<i>Revolution</i>	4

Bird Flu in Perspective

Article taken from Vetafarm Bulletin issue 4, 2006.

Ed: "Avian flu (better known as **Bird Flu** in the media) has instilled much fear and trepidation into the international community. Before that we had the SARS scare that had people running about airports wearing surgical masks. So what is the truth about avian flu when you get beyond the media hype?"

The following article gives an excellent, logical analysis of the issues and puts it all into perspective.

We thank Vetafarm for allowing us to republish this article."

AVIAN INFLUENZA - IS IT A NEW DISEASE?

No - Bird flu is a very common virus in waterfowl. There are 16 different strains of avian influenza. Some are harmless, others are deadly (to waterfowl and poultry). Avian Influenza has hit Australia 5 times (1976,1985,1992, 1994,1997), but only affected a small number of poultry farms.

WHAT DOES AVIAN INFLUENZA LOOK LIKE?

It mainly affects water birds and poultry.

Typically it is a rapidly progressing respiratory disease with **coughing, sneezing, rasping and sudden death**. Swelling and darkening of the comb and wattles is common. *Obviously the birds look sick!* Poultry will drop feed and water intake and egg production will stop.

PANDEMIC HUMAN INFLUENZA IS NOT THE SAME AS AVIAN INFLUENZA!

A 'pandemic' is a disease outbreak that affects a big proportion of the population quite

News Column

- **Dr Janelle Clarke will have her in baby in early October. We wish her well!**
- **Our sympathy to Dr Hendrika on the loss of her beloved dog Sally .**
- **Angel, our clinic cat RIP.**



rapidly.

Human influenza pandemics occur irregularly - the last was in 1968. As human flu viruses change constantly there is no way to predict which strain will cause a pandemic.

HASN'T THE BIRD FLU H5N1 ALREADY KILLED PEOPLE?

In fact there are now several forms of H5N1 (*the numbers are just a way of identifying this virus*).

Avian Influenza H5N1 has killed about 90 people worldwide since being discovered. It has a fatality rate of about 50% of infected people. Ordinary human flu viruses have killed *millions* of people in the same time. Deaths from H5N1 have occurred where the virus was raging in domestic poultry and hygiene was poor. As far as Australia is concerned there are no conditions in this country that would allow H5N1 to affect people.

WELL WHAT IS ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?

The fear is that a human flu virus and the H5N1 bird virus will join and create a monster.

Under conditions of poor hygiene and large populations of poultry with people in close contact it may be possible for the two viruses to exchange genetic information (*but all the experts agree that this is a very small possibility and depends on a whole series of events taking place in a living cell at the same time*).

HOW DOES THE VIRUS SPREAD?

- Live poultry markets in Third world countries are a good site to spread the virus.
- Back yard poultry flocks that are kept in poor conditions.
- Fighting cock transport and fights are a good way to spread the virus.
- Migrant ducks in rice paddies and shallow lakes.
- Countries with poor veterinary services have difficulty containing the virus when it appears.

WILL H5N1 COME TO AUSTRALIA IN MIGRATING BIRDS?

The H5N1 was first detected in 1996 and has not been found in Australia yet.

The virus naturally resides in waterfowl that do not migrate to Australia. The common migratory waders we see *do not* carry the disease.

Australian poultry industry biosecurity is very good and will detect the virus in any legal import of poultry to Australia (*illegal imports may be a risk*).

ARE THERE ANY RISKS WITH FOOD SUCH AS EGGS OR POULTRY MEAT?

Well-cooked eggs and meat from poultry are completely safe. You are more at risk of Salmonella food poisoning than you ever will be from Avian Influenza.

ARE MY AVIARY BIRDS AT RISK?

No. Parrots, finches and canaries are rarely affected by Avian Flu viruses (*the viruses pre fer poultry especially waterfowl*).

Bird keeping conditions in Australia are much better than those where the Bird Flu is being seen and all Australian bird veterinarians agree that aviary birds are not at risk nor pose a risk.

Who's working when???

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Its great that we have a diversity of vets at Seaforth Veterinary Hospital. Someone to suit all client types. We have four partners and two associates, that's six vets.

However this makes it difficult for clients to work out who is working on any particular day.

Two points here.

1. The Seaforth Veterinary Hospital vet timetable is published online towards the end of each month. So you can visit our web site (www.svh55.com), click upon the **Staff** navigation bar, then upon **Timetable**. You can print out a copy for yourself from this PDF version.
2. For those who detest computers and feel left out, well there is a rough rule of thumb that will help (excepting vet's holidays, study leave, weekends and public holiday cover)
 - **Hendrika**: every Monday, Tuesday
 - **Terry**: every Tuesday, Thursday
 - **Rob**: every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
 - **Dave**: every Monday, Wednesday and Friday



Weekends are worked on a rotor basis of one weekend in four.

Usually the second veterinarian on the weekend is Dr Libby Thompson.

So there it is, clear as mud! You can always, of course, just ring us up.....!

Some client's have also suggested we e-mail timetables to clients (and even the Howler, which is also in PDF downloadable format from our web site). This is certainly possible. If you are interested in this option please call our receptionists and we can collate a list of e-mail addresses of those wishing this service.

Becoming a Vet Nurse

By Jenny Short (Veterinary Nurse)

Since starting at Seaforth Veterinary Hospital in January as a Full time Veterinary Nurse, I've learnt a lot from just the basics to the more technical side of nursing.

Having previous experience with animals as a kennel hand in Adelaide and as a veterinary nurse briefly in the UK, I gained basic knowledge, but was unaware of how much nurses get to do and their responsibilities. I have learnt a great deal more than expected, for instance how to prepare animals for surgery, monitor anaesthetics, perform dentals, take X-rays, process in house blood tests and perform the general day to day duties of cleaning, giving medication and injections etc.

I was very well trained by our head nurse Sam, working by my side for the first few months. Also the vets and other nurses were always willing to help and offer explanations when I was having trouble.

As a full time nurse, I have gained lots of practical experience and was lucky enough to be able to enroll at TAFE to complete a Veterinary Nursing course to become qualified. This has really helped me get a better understanding of the theory side of nursing. I would encourage anyone who is interested in animals to give veterinary nursing a go, as it is such a rewarding and fulfilling job.

Tick Prevention 2006

As always prevention is better than cure. Ticks do kill so each year we review our recommendations for the current most effective preventative regime. This years recommended minimum is as follows:

Dogs:

1. Frontline applied every 2 weeks and a tick collar (KilTix is the one recommended by Seaforth Veterinary Hospital)

Or....

1. Advantix applied every 2 weeks

And in addition to either choice.....

- Daily tick searching
- Clip down long coated dogs
- Avail yourself of a tick hook for tick removal

Cats:

1. Frontline applied every 2 weeks
2. Daily tick searching
3. Clip down long coated cats
4. Avail yourself of a tick hook for tick removal

A *tick hook* is great for complete and easy removal of tiny larval to large adult ticks

Can you help us to improve our service?

By Dr David Collins (Veterinarian)

We are always looking for ways to maintain and improve our excellent service. We recently help a focus group meeting with some of our very special clients, and they let us know what we do well and what we could do better.

We really value your input too, any suggestions on how we could help you and your pet are gratefully received.

We will be sending home some client surveys soon to make sure your pet has received nothing but the best care.

Of course the greatest compliment you could give us is to refer your friends or family to us. We guarantee they will receive the best possible health care for their pet that you have come to expect.



In Bed With Trevor

By Wendii McCulloch (Receptionist)

As you can see, it didn't take long for Trevor to settle into his new home. However, it was not quite reciprocal to start with.

Trevor came to Seaforth Vets as a boarder at age 7, his elderly owner was in hospital and she unfortunately passed away, so we promised to re-home him. All the staff here know that I'm partial to a chubby cat (he was a cuddly 10.5 kg) and we formed a bit of a bond. We already had a cat at home, Max, who was dying of heart disease, so I agreed to take Trev if Max deteriorated quickly.

Max was a very gentle soul and a gentleman, I learned a lot from him. We were devastated to have to put him to sleep. A few weeks later I took Trev home and he barreled into our lives. It was still too soon as he was the antithesis of Max. I struggled to accept him fully, even though I liked him. It wasn't until I voiced my concerns that I realised it was all part of the normal grieving process and just to relax and allow him to be himself. Now, I love him to bits, if he's not following me, or lying all over me, I feel like a limb is missing. I've never had a cat who loves me so much. Our favourite time is first thing in the morning or last at night when he tunnels under the covers with me and we have a "quality" snooze. I try to check all paws before he determinedly bulldozes under the doona.

He is now 10 years old and his weight has always been an issue, especially with the Vets, but after having him on Hills Feline R/D, and the Nurses Weight Clinic since 06/03/06, his last weigh-in was 8.95 kg on 03/09/06. Slowly but surely we are heading for approximately 7.5 kg. I must admit he is more active and playful after losing weight.

He is also a classic example of why we should keep our cats in from dusk till dawn. During the day he is such a scaredy-cat and prefers to stay inside, but as soon as that sun goes down, his instincts kick in and he is a different cat. We've caught him at the neighbours house, sniffing around and just won't come when we call, which he always does. So to prevent him getting into fights, which can cause injuries and abscesses, getting hit by a car, or killing wildlife, we always make sure that we feed him and get him inside just before sun-down.

I really believe that our animals choose us, not the other way around, boy did Trevor pick the right family for his indulgences.



Quality Snooze

Seaforth Veterinary Hospital

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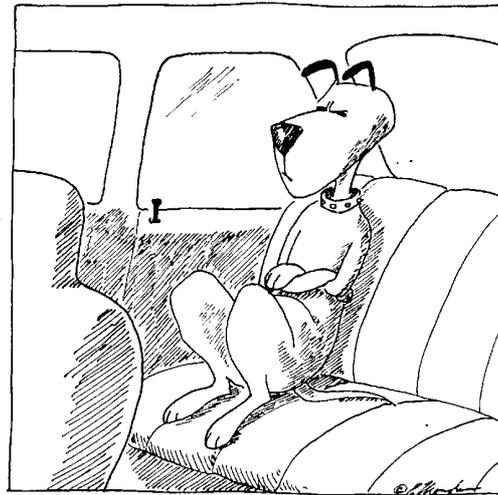
Charitable works afoot at Seaforth Vets

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Its nice to know your local vets do try to do their bit for the community. Most of our clients would be unaware of the work we in fact do.

- **Bear Cottage:** We tend to the veterinary needs of Scooter the black Labrador who brings so much enjoyment to the sick kids of Bear Cottage. When he's broke we fix him up good and proper, and keep him well oiled.
- **Wild Life:** We discussed this in detail in the last Howler. Like most veterinary practices we do not charge for all the wild life we take care of. Did you know that vets Australia wide do about \$20 million of free work for wildlife a year!
- **Lost and Found:** At Seaforth vets we receive may stray animals in a week. We are pretty good at reuniting them with their owners, especially since the advent of compulsory micro-chipping. Did you know that we regularly update our web site of Lost and Found (www.svh55.com) so clients can quickly check and see if their missing pet has been brought here..
- **Guide dogs for the visually impaired:** For clients who require a guide dog we supply our professional services free of charge.
- **Delta Dogs:** Ever seen those dogs wandering about hospital cheering up the patients? Well they need regular health checks so they do not put ill patients at further risk. These check ups we do free of charge. The labs pitch in and also run required routine tests for us.
- **Students:** We regularly have Australian and even overseas veterinary students studying here. They take part in the day to day activities of running a busy veterinary practice. This experience at the "coal face" is invaluable to them when they eventually qualify.. a great head start to their professional career. We also accept a limited number of high school students wanting to do their work experience with a vet.

So as you can see on top of our busy days we do take time out to do our bit for the community, and enjoy doing so!



GEORGE WANTED TO DRIVE

(Cartoon Courtesy of Dr Libby Thompson)

Revolution

In Spring, flea eggs and larvae can survive in your carpet for many days (If your animal is not treated regularly with a complete flea control product).

REVOLUTION, which is applied monthly as a convenient topical spot-on on the back of your animal's neck, treats and protects against fleas, mites, heartworm & intestinal worms (in cats). For further details about **REVOLUTION**, please go to

www.pfizeranimalhealth.com.au

or call in and visit us at the clinic.

Vet Note: The small volume required, its water fastness within 2 hours and its non oily nature are additional attractive features of Revolution.

