



The Seaforth Howler

Editorial

Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Late again! Oh well its been very busy....

In this issue we would like to extend our warmest congratulations to Samantha Hiscock on her engagement this February.

In late Dec 2007 we promoted Sam and Jane to management positions within the practice. Sam now carries the title of Nursing Manager and Jane Admin Manager. It will take a year or so until they are up and running in their new roles but we hope it will streamline our internal structure with the ultimate aim of spending more time on our clients!

Finally thanks to Sam for 10 years of excellent service as she attains her long service with Seaforth Vets.

Vets, Janelle, Libby and Jen often perform weekend and holiday cover for the practice. As Dr David Collins has taken one years

study leave you will be seeing a lot more of these excellent vets as they cover for his absence. Many thanks for their help.

Janelle has written a useful article on FIV and FELV vaccines for cats.

Worming is ever important for our pets and Wendii tries to make it simple to understand, when and what to use.

We are proud to announce that we have just installed a new digital x-ray unit at Seaforth Vets. What does this mean for our clients? Read my article on page 2.

Eukanuba have just launched a new range of pet diets, Hendrika outlines what's new in food and how these diets feed and treat common conditions.

Though late, I hope you enjoy this edition of the Howler!

Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Editorial | 1 |
| FIV/FELV Vaccination | 1 |
| Digital X Rays | 2 |
| Let's treat worms! | 2 |
| Cat Flu Reviewed | 3 |
| Client's Gallery | 3 |
| Media Snippets | 4 |
| New Eukanuba Diets | 4 |

FIV and FELV Vaccines and Your Cat

By Dr Janelle Clarke (Veterinarian)

At Seaforth Vets, we routinely recommend and vaccinate cats with an F3 vaccine, which helps protect them against rhinotracheitis, calicivirus (cat flu) and panleucopaenia (enteritis).

There are 2 additional vaccines available to us that we would like to tell you about, as they can help to protect your cat against other potentially fatal diseases. These are not essential for all cats, and we tend to recommend them on an individual basis. Please feel free to talk to us if you think that your cat may be in the risk categories described for either of these diseases, and we can create a personalized vaccination plan for your favourite feline.

The FIV vaccine helps to protect cats against the Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) which is similar to HIV in humans. It is important to note that the virus is not transmissible in any way to humans. The virus affects cats by weakening (sometimes over many years) the immune system, to a point where everyday infections can become life-threatening. Symptoms of FIV include fever, lethargy, inappetence, weight loss and chronic infections. There is no cure for FIV. Australia has one of the highest rates of FIV in the world, with approximately 29% of cats affected Australia wide, and 14% of cats in NSW carrying the virus. FIV is shed through the saliva, and is primarily spread by fighting. Hence we see it most commonly in outdoor cats, stray cats and cats living in catteries or multi-cat households. We would recommend vaccinating cats that may fall into these categories. Vaccination involves a course of 3 injections a month apart, followed by a yearly booster. Adult cats are also blood tested prior to vaccination to check that they are free of the disease.

Feline Leukaemia Virus (FELV) is another life threatening (although less common) disease of cats. It results in immune suppression and can cause cancers such as lymphoma, leukaemia and anaemia. We will sometimes see cats that are infected with both the FIV and FELV virus.

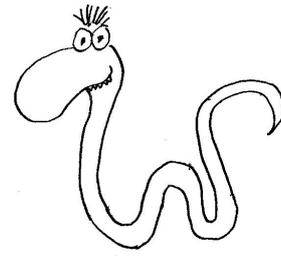
News Column

- **A big congratulations to Sam (our head nurse) on her engagement!**
- **Hearty congratulations to Jane and Sam on their promotions to management positions.**



Cats are exposed to the virus through contact with saliva or urine, although unlike FIV, it can be spread through social grooming and sharing bowls as well as through fighting. Hence we tend to see this disease in catteries, multi-cat households and outdoors cats. Recent studies suggest that 1-2% of Sydney cats are affected by the FELV virus. Although the prevalence is low (in this case lower than in cats overseas), FELV is a serious and deadly disease. If you have cats that are in contact with others, then it is worth considering this vaccination for your cat.

Vaccination involves 2 injections a month apart, followed by a yearly booster, with an initial blood test for adult cats.



Let's Treat Worms!

By Wendii McCulloch (Receptionist)

Worming medications can be confusing—what goes with which worm or which goes with what worm!

There are 5 types of rotten wrigglers:

Heartworm— The adult worm resides in the heart and pulmonary arteries. It can lead to heart failure and if left untreated it can be fatal. It can be passed onto other cats and dogs by mosquitoes, so no pet is safe. The incidence in cats is very low. Dogs are much more prone to heart worm hence why it is a mandatory preventative in all dogs in Sydney.

Whipworm—Live in the large intestines and can cause diarrhoea and even anaemia.

Roundworm— Live in the small intestines. They can also cause diarrhoea liver and lung problems. In pups the associated diarrhoea can be chronic debilitating and even fatal. These worms are of zoonotic significance, ie can affect humans, especially children whose hygiene standards are often lower. Migrating larvae can in rare circumstances lead to blindness.

Hookworm— look rather ferocious under the microscope. Mouths like shark jaws attach to the small intestinal wall, and they feed on mucosa and blood. They can cause severe anaemias and diarrhoea.

Tapeworm— Infestation can be through undercooked meat, hunting and more commonly in Sydney through flea grooming by the pet. Small white rice grains stuck about the bum (often wiggling) will alert you to the presence of adult tapeworms within your pets small intestine. Certain tapeworms, echinococcus species, can be potentially fatal in man, causing very large cysts in the body such as liver and brain. Good control of tapeworms is important for your pet and the human population.

In case you are thinking we forgot ringworm, well that is a fungal infection and not a worm at all!

Puppies and kittens can be born with worms, acquiring them through the mothers milk. So we advise you treat the pregnant mother about 1 week before giving birth.

Start worming the offspring 3-4 weeks after birth and continue every 2 weeks until their final vaccination at 16 weeks. Thereafter worming is every 3 months.

It is important to note that worming is based upon body weight, so be sure that you pets weight is noted. We routinely weigh all patients in for whatever reason or at vaccination time.

What options are available?

Proheart injection: This product is essentially a once a year injection than confers protection against heartworm for a

Digital X Rays at SVH

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

At Seaforth Veterinary Hospital we like to keep at the forefront in veterinary medicine. As such we have just made a major investment in digital x ray equipment . This places us as market leaders in the technology field on the northern beaches.

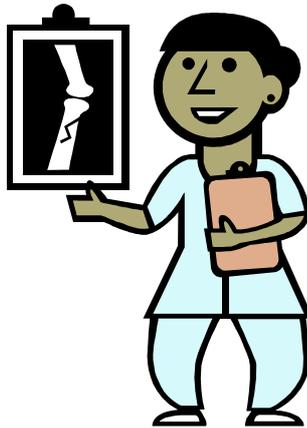
All very nice, but what does this mean for you the client?

Digital x ray acquisition means we no longer require conventional x ray film, a dark room or all the toxic chemicals that go with it.

The benefits extend to everyone:

1. Greener product, less pollution. We all benefit.
2. Reduced x ray exposure by the pet. Images can be digitally enhanced so there is no need to repeat x rays for better exposure settings as often happens.
3. Reduced exposure of staff to x rays, for the same reasons.
4. Faster processing time. From plate to viewable image is now a mere 90 sec. Faster turn about means animals are under anaesthetics for reduced times, making things safer.
5. Eliminating chemical exposure of staff.
6. Improved image storage and retrieval for the client.
7. Each client gets a DVD copy of the x-rays. Previously x rays had to stay on site for 5 years, but now the client can take a copy home to show the family.
8. E-mailable copies for quick referral to specialists for difficult cases.
9. No need for a dark room means increased space in the hospital where floor space is a premium.

We will be phasing in the equipment over the next month or so, giving our staff time to adjust and learn the new technology. One thing is for sure, it is a great advance for our hospital and the service we offer our clients!



period of 12 months, so we typically do this at vaccination time. Many of our clients like the convenience of protecting against heartworm in this way. Price-wise, it is very economical when compared with other monthly products. But be aware that Proheart does NOT give any protection against the other worms. You still need to worm / 3 months with an "Allwormer".

Allwormers are available as chewies (such as Drontal, very popular for ease of administration) or flavoured tablets. If you prefer not to have your dog injected with Proheart then you will need to give them a monthly heartworm product. These days most monthly heartwormers also include a component for allworming as well, which is handy. Such products include, Sentinel, Interceptors, Guardian Chews and Milbemax.

Cats and heartworm? Although they can on rare occasions acquire heartworm it is rarely fatal. For this reason most clients do not routinely give heartworm preventatives to their cats. However if you wish to remove this small risk then choose Milbemax and worm every month for full protection.

Finally note that for those scared of giving tablets to their beasts you can also choose Revolution Top Spot. This liquid is applied to the back of the neck and not only provides topical heartworm prevention / month but also offers effective flea and ear mite control! In cats it also provides internal worming except for tapeworms.

Well I think I cleared that up!?

This is why we strongly advocate you buy your worming products at your vet— they come with sound professional advice and the product is tailored to your individual pet's needs. We receptionists are happy to help you understand and choose the best product for you pet.

Cat Flu Reviewed

By DR Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Cause

Cat flu is caused by 2 possible viruses. If your cat is vaccinated against cat flu (ie has had its F3 vaccine) they can still contract cat flu as viruses can mutate. Vaccine can never cover against all variants of a virus.

However a vaccinated cat rarely gets a dose of flu as bad as an unvaccinated cat since the vaccine will offer some cross protection against variants.

Secondary bacterial problems can arise, hence why vets will often issue antibiotics to minimise the duration of signs.

Signs

Mainly sneezing and discharges from the nose and eyes.

Spread

Cats sneeze and produce an aerosol that other cats breathe in. Mutual grooming and shared food bowls will also aid spread. If you have more than one cat in a house, likely they will all get a dose.

Spread to Humans?

It cannot spread to your children or other family members, or your dog! Viruses are usually species specific.

How long does it Last?

Incubation (exposure to showing signs) period is about 5-7

days.

The illness phase will last 7-10 days if treated, longer if not treated, and may even become a life long issue.

Treatment

- **Antibiotics:** Cat flu can become chronic (chronic sinusitis) and debilitating in some animals, which is why we always like to offer antibiotic cover to cats. No one wants a chronically suffering cat!
- **Eye Drops:** If eyes are discharging we also likely to issue eye drops.
- **Mucolytics:** If the nose becomes clogged with a thick snotty material we can offer mucolytics to make it runny again so allowing them to breath more easily.

Home Care

What can you do to help? Medicines are only half the story. You can help in a number of ways

- **Feeding:** Feeding and fluids are very important. If their appetite is reduced, try feeding more aromatic foods, such as sardines, fish, BBQ chicken, and gently warm them. Feed moist fluids to encourage fluid intake. Do not offer milk products.
- **Steam:** If the nose is heavily clogged then a steamy bathroom will help loosen thick mucus.
- **Clean Nose:** Clean any thick discharged mucus away from the nostrils using warm water and cotton buds.
- **Clean Eyes:** Wipe away any discharges from the eye using normal saline (1 teaspoon of table salt in 600 ml warm water). Use a clean wipe per eye. Wipe down and away.
- **Hygiene:** Wash your hands after handling infected cats, to minimise spreading it to your friends and neighbours cats. Thoroughly clean feeding bowls.
- **Isolate:** Ideally keep you cats in until clinical signs resolve, this way the greater cat community will suffer less.

Client's Gallery

We have received some photos from clients recently and decided to put them into the Howler. We can't promise to put every last picture we receive but we will make a selection.

Mrs Jennifer Newman sent us this photo of the amazing Bob the cat who lives with 9 dogs! Bosco is his favourite dog, and here we see him giving Bosco a good wash (dirty dog!)



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Sha Kelly was a great dog in all respects, often visiting Seaforth Vets in a packed car of one man and 5 dogs. She would often do her own shopping. A perfect dog!

Unfortunately she passed away late last year and Mr Kelly was kind enough to send us the following picture. She will be missed!



Media Snippets...

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Sad Facts.....

COUNCIL pounds killed dogs and cats at the rate of 66 a day last year. Blacktown Council being the most ruthless in NSW for euthanasing unwanted pets. Only about half the 49,916 dogs and cats that went into NSW council pounds in the 2006-07 year came out alive. 24,003 animals were put to sleep, usually by injection after owners refused to collect them, new homes could not be found and animal welfare groups were unable to assist. Across NSW, **39.8 per cent** of the 36,871 dogs and 71.4 per cent of the 13,045 cats in pounds were euthanased, the survey figures show.

The figures indicate some country councils appear to kill every one of the animals that end up in their pounds. Among them, Forbes reported destroying every one of the 162 cats and 266 dogs that wound up in its pounds. Other country councils with almost complete euthanasia rates include Berrigan and Walgett. No cats get out alive from Broken Hill, Cootamundra, Leeton and Warren. On the other hand, some councils have a strict "no kill" policy with Gosford, Pittwater, Hastings, Blue Mountains and Mosman reporting either no deaths or negligible

deaths.

..... *Obtaining a pet is a very personal thing. Never encourage the buying of a pet as a surprise gift. Unfortunately many end up at pounds with the above outcomes!*

Happy Facts...

Are you a property investor? And you obviously own a pet, then did you know....

UNITS in high rises sell more quickly and for higher prices if the building is pet-friendly.

Up to 80 per cent of potential apartment buyers either have a cat or a dog or intended to get one.

The same is true all over Australia – if a building does not allow pets, buyers often looked elsewhere.

Units that are pet friendly are showing greater capital growth than those which are not and they stay on the market a shorter time.

A roomy balcony where a small to medium-sized dog could get some fresh air was just as much of a drawcard as facilities such as swimming pools, tennis courts and gyms.

Units on the Gold Coast which allowed pets were in high demand but owners tended to hang on to the property.

When the properties did come up for sale, they were snapped up quickly and generally at higher prices than buildings where no pets were allowed.

At Seaforth vets, I have for years seen our nursing staff with pets struggling to get rental accommodation.

It just takes someone to realise there is a great market out there, and to capitalise on it!

Eukanuba's new Customer Care Range

This newsletter is sponsored by Eukanuba's new range of dog food formulated in response to special dietary requirements.

All Eukanuba food, canine and feline have the dental defence technology of micro crystal coating each dog or cat kibble to help clean teeth and reduce plaque and tartar build up.

Custom Care has four formulations.

Sensitive Stomach: which is chicken and rice based, with no wheat, beef or dairy products. It also contains increased fibre to aid digestion and stimulate healthy bowel movement.

Weight Loss: Has 43% less fat and L-carnitine to promote fat metabolism. Contains beet pulp for non-digestible fibre and wholesome highly digestible grain and fish oils for the benefits of Omega-3 oil.

Sensitive skin: contains no chicken, corn, or wheat but instead is based on fish and has rice and barley as a source of carbohydrate. It also contains added fish oil for omega 3 and antioxidants to improve skin condition.

Healthy Joint: this formula is good for any large active adult dog even before obvious signs of stiffness and arthritis begin to show. By having the highest levels of glycosamine and chondroitin sulphate to support joint health and also L-carnitine to promote fat burning and hence controls weight, it helps on two fronts. It also has added fish oil for omega 3, a proven anti inflammatory to help reduce joint pain.

These new dry foods are now all available at Seaforth Veterinary Hospital and come in 2 sizes, 2.5 and 12 Kg bags.

