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The Seaforth Howler

Editorial

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Spring at last! But also commeth ticks and fleas. Ask our staff about all the latest in the armoury of this Tolkienian battle.

In this issue Mrs Relihan, a client, offers her perspectives on when it's time to say goodbye to a loved pet. When is the time right?

Libby shows us just how useful it is to keep an eye on your older pets water intake and output. Often an early warning system to significant disease.

Kath recalls this years Dog's Day Out in Manly.

A big thanks to all our staff who gave up

their time to attend and help make it a success, despite the weather.

Jane reviews the importance of 7-Plus Health checks in the senior cit. of the canine and feline world.

Wendii goes goo-goo over Piggy Poo, while I go in search of the worlds weird pet stories in Media Snippets.

Enjoy, as they say!

News Column

- **Congratulations to Jane for graduating from her Management study course!**
- **Sam is off to Chandigarh in India for the second leg of her marriage in Nov/Dec!**
- **Welcome to our new nurses, Brooke and India**



by Libby Thompson (Veterinarian)

When examining your cat or dog, we often ask whether your pet is drinking or urinating more than usual. Unless your pet is urinating more frequently, polyuria, or greater than normal urine production, often goes unnoticed because they urinate outside on the grass. Polyuria is not to be confused with increased frequency of urination. An animal may look to be urinating a lot but producing normal amounts of urine, as with cystitis. On the other hand, polydipsia, or greater than normal water consumption, is much more easily observed.

Polydipsia, for dogs is water consumption over 90mL/kg/day and for cats, over 45mL/kg/day. You may see your pet drinking more because it is a hot day or you have changed their diet from wet food to dry food, but in these cases, consumption should not exceed normal limits. Polyuria/polydipsia, (PU/PD), can be a sign of many different disease processes and factors. The most commonly seen diseases to cause PU/PD are renal failure, diabetes mellitus and hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's Disease). In cats, hyperthyroidism may also cause PU/PD.



Polyuria/polydipsia is a common sign of pyometra, which is a life threatening infection within the uterus of undesexed female dogs and cats. Occasionally it can occur in the uterine stump of de-sexed female animals. Drugs such as anticonvulsants, corticosteroids and diuretics can also cause PU/PD.

Less commonly seen problems with

polyuria/polydipsia as a symptom are diabetes insipidus, hypoadrenocorticism (Addison's disease), Fanconi's syndrome, various neoplasias (cancer), hepatic failure, behavioural problems, electrolyte imbalances, dietary protein restriction, pyelonephritis, fever and pain.

Age, sex, species, breed and history can help differentiate between these causes of PU/PD but usually further diagnostic tests are required. Sometimes simple blood and urine tests may give a diagnosis but sometimes other tests like ACTH stimulation tests, water deprivation tests, culture and sensitivity tests, biopsies, exploratory laparotomies, ultrasound or even MRIs maybe required.

The list of causes of polyuria and polydipsia is by no means complete but hopefully shows how important is the question -'How much is your pet drinking and urinating?'



Dog Dude Attitude

Annual Dog's Day Out

By Kath Salier (Veterinary Nurse and receptionist)

August! - Time for dogs across the peninsula to take their owners/attendants to the Manly Council's annual Dog's Day Out. The event is traditionally a fun family day complete with veterinary stalls, trade stalls with everything for the dog owner, food stalls, assorted pet services, animal welfare stalls, and events. This year there was an impressive flyball display, demonstrations of obedience and agility by the Manly & District Kennel & Dog Training Club and for the first time the Jack Russell racing team!

The aim of the Dog's Day Out event is to promote responsible pet ownership and provide a fun day out for all. There was an amazing turn out this year with dogs of all shapes and sizes taking advantage of free treats and play time with other dogs. This is an annual event held at Queenscliff Lagoon. We hope to see you and your furry family at the next Dog's Day Out August 2009!

Seven Plus Health Checks

By Jane Molchanoff (Admin Manager, SVH)

The advances in animal healthcare knowledge, facilities and diagnostic tools mean that our pets are now living longer than ever. In order to give them the best chance of a long and healthy life, Seaforth Veterinary Hospital recommends animals over seven years of age have two comprehensive health checks each year; one accompanying their annual vaccination and a second exam six months later.

At around seven years of age, both cats and dogs enter their senior years. Pets, on average, age five to eight times faster than humans, which means a medium sized 10 year old dog is the equivalent of a 60 year old person and a 10 year cat is approximately 56 years old in human terms.

Often pets begin to develop diseases common to their senior human counterparts, such as diabetes, heart disease, endocrine disease and cancer. These diseases can go unnoticed in their very early stages – therefore preventative health care is very important.

Working closely with our clients allows us to evaluate their pet's general health and condition and monitor any changes observed in weight, appetite, behaviour, skin and coat and mobility. Early detection can help in disease prevention and can minimise suffering. Our experienced veterinarians may recommend a range of diagnostic tests depending on detailed histories gathered at your pet's seven plus health check including baseline blood work, x-rays, urinalysis or biopsy.

Did you know that in 2007-2008 more than 200 clients availed themselves of this service? The numbers grow each year.

So when your pet receives their 7+ health check reminder, please make an appointment with one of our veterinarians .



They all agree a seven plus check is a great idea!

Selecting the time for Euthanasia. A personal perspective

By Jennifer Relihan (Client)

We recently made the difficult decision to have our beloved dog euthanased. Lottie was our 16 and half year old Cairn Terrier (who had herself) lost her brother to cancer 2 years ago. On his death Lottie was stricken with grief so to aid our family along we welcomed a new 7 month old Cairn "Mac" into the family. He turned the bluest of days into pure sunshine but Lottie was clearly lost without her life long mate and many of her quirky traits soon disappeared. Even though she had remained playful, cheeky and sprightly late into her brother's illness, Lottie was now a shadow of her former self. Mac did his puppy best to bring her out of herself and she taught him a lot about puppy etiquette.

Over the next year we observed how Lottie kept going strong despite worsening arthritis, fading eyesight, loss of hearing and progressive dementia. The latter was the hardest as when she was not asleep she was agitated and would bump around the house at night requiring someone to get up at least twice a night to help her get 'unstuck' somewhere in the house. She no longer had reverse gear. She would get stuck behind doors, under table and chairs, in between the toilet and vanity, even tried to enter the oven one time when I was changing shelves and left the oven open unattended. The heat made no difference. My husband built her a 'disability' step so that she could still manage to have her meals with Mac outside. Only she would get lost in the yard and couldn't work out how to get back in.

Taking 2 dogs at either end of the age spectrum on a walk was clearly not fair to Mac who was constantly asked to stop and 'wait for Lottie'. As her condition worsened and she could no longer walk the street length my husband carried her everywhere. She would become very aggressive when she sensed other dogs around and we were concerned about her possibly biting children.

My 'work at home' days were spent caring for Lottie, moving her in to a sunny spot, fetching her when she got lost in the yard and cuddling her, all in between computer work. It was very hard.

I also felt it must have been a lonely world for her so we encouraged all family members to spend lots of time with her.

I had talked about euthanasia of Lottie with Dr Hennie but after sharing so much of your life with a friend the thought of finality is too much. A few signs helped us to make the decision when her health took a turn for the worse during the cold July days and we watched Mac closely to see if he was sensing something. On Lottie's last Friday with us Mac spent the entire day licking her face (something he would have never done) and then distanced himself from her. We knew then that her time had come, that we must let her go and not suffer any longer.

The choice at the end was a balance of her ailing health, how much Lottie's dementia was affecting both herself and our family, (18 months of broken nights) and putting things on hold to care for her. At 16 1/2 years she had a wonderful life with us, we miss her terribly but now we watch Mac as he learns to take on the role as 'sole dog'....until we get him a new friend!



Always cover the Piggy's eyes!

By Wendii McCulloch (Receptionist)

Recently I had to take my Guinea Pig to see his Specialist. I had to cancel lunch with a friend and she thought it was the best excuse she had ever heard. The fact that it came from me, was the only reason she believed it!

"Mr Piggy Poo" went to see Dr David Vella (Exotics Vet) at Crows Nest. He had had an ongoing eye problem, but apparently that was all okay, it was his teeth that caused concern. David was extremely gentle, patient and very informative. After covering Piggy's eyes with a towel, he showed me the skull of a Guinea Pig to emphasise the importance of maintaining their teeth and having a proper diet. Like rabbits their teeth constantly grow during their lifetime. They have a very strange mouth indeed. Their 4 front rodent teeth need to meet at a particular angle, otherwise it could interfere with eating, or they could stop eating altogether. Back inside their mouth they have a second lot of teeth, rather like ours, but sloping inwards, they almost have 2 mouths! Mr Piggy's front teeth had visible ridges, were growing too rapidly and had started to curve the wrong way. David sedated him and did some correctional work. On the second visit he modified the angle of the front top teeth, without sedation (he behaved impeccably - a very proud mum!) and now with the right diet, subsequent rechecks with Dr Janelle and Dr Henny, all seems to be well. This wholesome diet included a trip to a farm in Terrey Hills, to buy a bale of Oaten hay. They need a constant source of this as it encourages lengthy chewing. Not all hays are acceptable, no Lucerne or Clover as these are too high in protein and calcium. Other types include: Timothy (imported), Pasture, Paddock or Ryegrass and of course normal green grass. The rest of their diet needs to be fresh leafy greens and herbs: broccoli, celery, endive, carrot tops, Brussel sprouts, spinach, bok choy or dark leafed lettuce varieties - parsley, dandelion, coriander, basil, dill and mint. They also require a dietary source of Vitamin C, usually provided by the leafy greens, but small quantities of citrus or kiwi fruits can be supplied. I was feeding my rabbits and Piggy the seed/grain mix from the supermarket, apparently this is a NO NO also, the reason why all my 3 were a bit pudgy! Unless it is a high quality pellet (usually imported) and then offer only as a treat. As with all pets, any dietary changes should be made gradually as it may cause tummy upsets. As an Exotic Vet, David attends

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to (small mammals) rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs, rats, mice - (reptiles) snakes, lizards and turtles - (amphibians) frogs, axolotls. For more information regarding diets, housing, handling, health care and vet care, please look up his website: www.davidvella.com.au.



Media Snippets...

By DR Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Lock up your Chickens!

A SWISS court has ordered that a chicken be locked up in a soundproof box every night so its neighbours can get a good night's sleep.

The court at Ticino in southern Switzerland even stipulated that the box, in which the chicken must be kept from 10pm to 7am, should be at least eight cm thick and insulated with glass wool. The decision ends a five-year battle between the authorities in the village of Sant'Antonio and the chicken's owner.

The authorities, alerted by complaints from neighbours, earlier ordered that the bird be put in a henhouse at night. The measure, however, was found to be pointless.

Oops!

ABOUT 60 newly hatched sea turtles lost their way during their ritual passage to the sea and marched into an Italian restaurant instead.

The baby turtles - which ended up under the tables of startled diners at the beachside restaurant - were probably thrown off track and lured by the eatery's bright lights, said Antonio

Colucci, who was called to help rescue the group.

"They saw the artificial lights and took the wrong route," said Mr Colucci, who works on a turtle monitoring project for the conservation group World Wide Fund for Nature.

"The diners were at first quite curious and then someone alerted the coastal authorities."

The stranded turtles, which had hatched on a beach in the southern Italian region of Calabria, were released into the sea. Female sea turtles nest on beaches and their offspring instinctively head to the sea after hatching from their eggs.

Elephant addiction...

No we are not referring to our Mahout, Jenny the nurse. However she did point out this article to me.

A once drug-addled elephant fed heroin-laced bananas by illegal traders will return home after emerging clean from a three-year detox programme on China's tropical island province of Hainan.

The four-year-old bull elephant, referred to as "Big Brother" (Xiguang) was captured in 2005 in southwest China by traders who used spiked bananas to control him.

Police arrested the traders and freed Xiguang. He was confirmed to be suffering from withdrawal symptoms and sent to a rehab centre for treatment.

A year of methadone injections helped wean Xiguang off his addiction.

Now clean, Xiguang was expected to live happily ever after at a wildlife park in Kunming, capital of the elephant's home province of Yunnan on the mainland.

A load of balls....

Oscar a 5 yo. black labrador had to have 13 golf balls removed from his stomach after eating them on walks near a golf course in Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland.

He was taken to the vet after his owner noticed a rattling noise coming from his pet!

The vet, was stunned: "When I went into his stomach I was expecting one or two balls, but they just kept coming." One of the balls had been in Oscar's stomach so long, it had turned black.

Oscar's owner, takes him for regular walks near the golf course. Oscar is thought to have swallowed the balls over a period of months.

The owner says Oscar normally picks up golf balls and brings them home but must have been swallowing some all along.

"He hunts golf balls down like truffles. He finds them in all sorts of places where golfers lose them."

Oscar has recovered from his operation and is said to be in good health. He now wears a muzzle during his walks to break his habit.

