



The Seaforth Howler

Editorial

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By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Another overdue but worthwhile issue of the Howler hits the streets!

In this issue we review our current vaccination policy in light of the current push for longer acting vaccines.

We thank Mrs Bray, a client of Seaforth Vets, who was prompted to write regarding the use of name tags in dogs in response to a recent incident that could easily have gone pear shaped.

Thundery weather is afoot! and the Behaviourists have written a timely article on the subject for all our clients.

Nurse India Brooker offers her advice on Caring for Rabbits / Nutrition, in part II of her series.

And yes, its going to be a terrible tick season according to all the pundits. Dr Tegelaar has

written an updated article on the issue with many new facts to digest. Touch wood so far the tick season as seen from Seaforth Vets has been mild to moderate only, but things can change so easily depending upon the weather.

Finally: we wish Sam well on her maternity leave and hope all goes well.

In January, junior nurse Brooke leaves for a stint in Guatemala, where she will work with her brother at ARCAS, a wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centre. We wish her well in her big adventure and hope she has a safe return!



Our new vaccination policy



News Column

- **Our Nursing Manager Sam has now left on maternity leave and will return next year.**
- **Nurse Brooke is off to help Guatemalan wildlife in January 09! We wish her luck in her adventure.**

By Jane Molchanoff (Admin Manager)

For a year or so the WSAVA (World Small Animal Veterinary Association) has recommended reducing the vaccination burden upon the general pet population, but to a large extent this depends upon the availability of vaccines that can *guarantee* such extended periods of immunity.

For dogs such a product has arrived and it now allows us to *start* revising vaccination frequency in dogs, cats and rabbits. This will be an ongoing process as new products appear on the market allowing us to move forward..

Vaccination is one of the most common veterinary procedures undertaken in small animal practice. It is hard to overstate the importance vaccination programs have played in reducing the incidence of deadly diseases in small animals worldwide. So we cannot lightly change our programs unless manufacturers can guarantee the same or better protection for our community of pets.

Seaforth Veterinary Hospital has always been dedicated to offering the best treatment available for your pets using the latest advances in medicine, as well as providing information on preventative health care measures. An annual check is the cornerstone of keeping your pet happy and healthy. These checks allow our vets to check that your pet's teeth, skin and all other important parts stay in good working order. We can catch medical problems early, saving you time and money and your pet the distress of illness. During an annual check, the vet will discuss your pet's vaccination needs and decide upon the most

appropriate vaccination schedule.

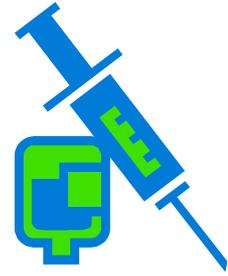
Seaforth Veterinary Hospital recommends the following vaccination schedule:

Dogs

- Annual health check for dogs under 7 years, twice yearly checks for dogs over 7 years
- C3 vaccination every 3 years (protects against distemper virus, hepatitis and parvovirus)
- Kennel Cough booster annually

Cats

- Annual health check for cats under 7 years, twice yearly checks for cats over 7 years
- F3 vaccination every 3 years if isolated indoors and NO contact with other cats at all
- F3 vaccination annually for all other cats



Dog Tags

By Mrs Christine Bray (Seaforth Client)

Have you ever had a strange dog come into your property and thought "Poor thing, he's obviously lost. I'll just phone his owner and if they're not at home I'll take him there so he'll be safe until they come home"? After you read this you might have other thoughts.

A very friendly dog arrived at our front door recently, around dusk. I could just read the name on his metal tag, which was badly worn, and his phone number was

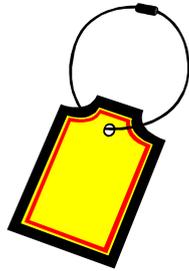
indecipherable in the dim light. Because he was rather large, and boy dogs being boy dogs, I didn't want to chance bringing him inside where the light would be better.

I called Seaforth Veterinary Hospital (SVH), who identified him by his name, and told me where he lived. I was considering taking him there when he snapped the "small dog" lead I was using and headed back up to the busy road. A passing car stopped and we decided it would be best if the driver could take him to SVH, and they could contact the owner or maybe hold him overnight if necessary.

As it happened this was the best decision because we heard later that his owners were away for some time. He was being minded by a friend of the owners but had found a way out of what they thought were escape-proof grounds. Had we delivered him home and shut him inside his own property he might have suffered from thirst, hunger, or even tick bite.

I guess the moral of the story is:

- Check your dog's tag yearly to make sure its name, address and phone number are easily readable; and also have an appropriate emergency contact details, for instance the name and phone number of your vet, on the reverse side of the tag.
- If you move house or change phone numbers make sure the old tag is replaced asap.
- If you find a dog and can't contact the owner immediately, phone the local vet to see if the dog is known to them.
- If you see a stray dog don't deliver it to its home address and assume its owners will be there to take care of it – they



might be away for weeks.

- Minding someone else's dog is a big responsibility, so make sure that your property is truly escape-proof, bearing in mind the type of dog to be minded.

Media Snippets

A Real Hanger On....

This amazing story is of a New Zealand cat that clung to the underside of a car for 100km!

3 yo Poppy the Burmese apparently made the terrifying trip from Levin, near Wellington to Hunterville, about 100km from her home, suffering only a broken tail in the process.

Adding to this trauma she spent a further 3 weeks feral on farmland before she was seen spotted by a farmer who normally would let her have both barrels. However he noticed she had a red name tag which saved her from that fate. Having some obvious external identification on a pet in addition to a microchip obviously pays off handsomely at times!

Pedigree dogs exposed...

Most people will be aware of this British program that aired on the ABC in Sept, along with the Australian follow up on Catalyst with Dr Jonica Newby. Anyone with any sensitivity could not fail to be shocked by the degree to which some breeders will go to win in the show ring. The gist of the criticism is that kennel clubs, by rewarding breeders on dog appearance alone ("breed standards") have led to many debilitating hereditary diseases caused by intense inbreeding. The resulting diseases to a large extent are ignored in the pursuit of the "perfect" example of the breed.

The program was not intended to make anyone owning a pedigree pet feel guilty for doing so! Indeed many pedigree owners were horrified and stimulated into action to try and achieve a fair outcome for their favoured breed. Equal weight must be put on health as well as appearance in determining best in breed.

We hope the program does lead to lasting changes in breeding policies that results in the elimination of many of the hereditary disease such as syringomyelia in the Cavalier King Charles.

Caring for your Rabbit Part II

By India Brooker (Veterinary Nurse)

The correct amount of food containing the correct balance of nutrients will ensure that you have a healthy and happy rabbit for many years.

Like us, rabbits require a balance of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals and water.

Gone are the days of putting a rabbit hutch on the backyard and expecting them to keep the lawn short for you!

Dry Foods

The main part of a rabbit's diet should consist of good quality rabbit pellets, several varieties of hay (lucerne, meadow and oaten), grass and clover. These should be available to your rabbit at all times – a wall rack is highly recommended as this will keep foods dry and clean.

Fresh Vegetables

You should feed your rabbit up to three fresh vegetables a day.

Suitable vegetables are: asparagus, basil, broccoli, brussel sprouts, capsicum, carrots, celery, cucumber, dill, dandelions, parsley, spinach and zucchini.

Do **NOT** feed your rabbit: cabbage, cauliflower, cauliflower leaves, raw beans or rhubarb.

Fresh Fruits

Fresh Fruits are good for your rabbit in only small amounts as too much sugar can give them diarrhoea.

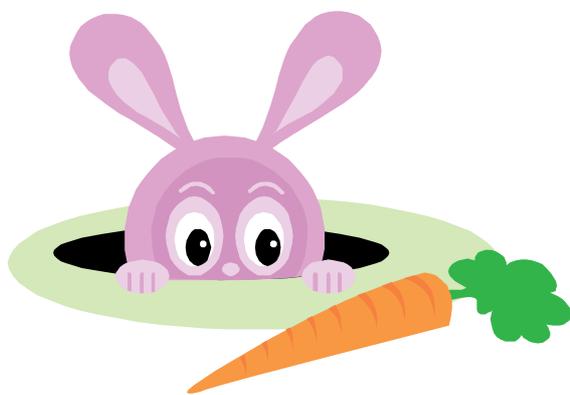
Suitable fruits are: apple, banana, blueberries, grapes, honeydew melon, peaches, pears, pineapple, raspberries, rockmelon, strawberries, tomatoes and watermelon.

Wooden Sticks

Wooden sticks should be available to your rabbit for chewing. This helps to prevent their teeth from over-growing and is a source of environmental enrichment.

Fresh Water

Water really is the source of life and as most rabbits are kept in an enclosure you must supply them with fresh water each and every day. This is best kept in a drip feed bottle to prevent contamination.



Free Information Session

For Seaforth Veterinary Hospital Clients

First Aid for Pets

Time 6.00pm

Date: Thursday 19th Nov.

Venue: Seaforth Veterinary Hospital

To Register your interest please e-mail

Jane on:

Jane@svh55.com

Stormy Weather ahead: Helping dogs cope

By Dr Kersti and Dr Jacqui Ley (Veterinary Behaviourists)

Storms can be extremely frightening for many dogs, making storm season a stressful time for owners as they attempt to keep their pet safe and relaxed. Dogs may react to storms by pacing and panting in mild cases, but if they are really frightened then they may panic and attempt to escape or to find a den where they feel safe. They may also attempt to find someone they feel safe being near. The amount of damage a frightened dog can do to itself, property and people is startling.

Veterinary behaviourists treat and help manage storm fears in dogs and cats. We have recently completed a study of 177 dogs that are frightened of storms. Owners were asked about previous treatments they had tried to relieve their dogs' storm fears. Forty three different treatments were identified which were divided into three groups: Interactions, Natural Therapies and Veterinary Prescription Medications. Interaction style treatments included things such as letting the dog inside, playing games or doing targeted training. Natural Therapies involved rescue remedy, lavender oil or other over the counter packaged natural treatments. Veterinary Prescription Medications grouped together medications supplied by veterinarians such as Prozac®, Clomicalm®, Valium® and sedatives.

The owners were also asked about the outcome for each of the treatments they had tried. Did it worsen, remain the same or did it help improve their dog's behaviour during storms?



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The results showed that the group of treatments that improved dog behaviour during storms were the Veterinary Prescription Medications.

What can you do if your dog is frightened of thunderstorms?

- (1) Give your dog what it wants when it is frightened during a storm. For some dogs this means providing a den or safe hiding place or even just allowing them access to the place they find works best. This might be the shower recess, cupboard or under the house. Other dogs prefer human company during storms. If it is not possible to be home during your area's stormy weather, consider using a dog minding service or dog day care centre to keep your pet safe.
- (2) Don't be afraid to talk to your dog if this helps calm it. Some dogs do not respond to being spoken to when scared, but if your dog becomes calmer if you pat it and speak to it, then do this.
- (3) Use Dog Appeasing Pheromone (DAP) to create a calming environment for your dog. DAP is available as a plug-in diffuser and releases a pheromone that many dogs find calming when they smell it. The diffuser should be placed where the dog spends a lot of time when it is scared and positioned so your dog can get close to it. It must be left on all the time to be most effective.
- (4) Speak with your veterinarian about medications that can be used during storms to help keep your dog calm and relaxed. Your veterinarian will prescribe the medication after a full physical work up and sometimes even blood work. Your veterinarian at SVH will not use sedatives as it is well documented that these can increase a dog's reactivity to noises. You will need an appointment so your veterinarian will be able to discuss your dog's health.
- (5) If your dog has a severe noise phobia you should consider long term treatment, especially if your dog's behaviour is deteriorating. A behaviour consultation with one of the behaviourists is needed to fully assess your dog and identify your dog's triggers. Treatment generally involves modifying the environment for your dog, targeted behaviour modification exercises to help them learn better coping strategies and, where necessary medication.

Many dogs suffer through stormy weather unnecessarily. There is a lot that can be done to reduce their fear and help them cope- ask us at SABS 9949 8511.

By Dr Hendrika Tegelaar (Veterinarian)

Ticks are prevalent in our area due to the large areas of natural bush and wildlife.

We live in a wonderful part of Sydney but with everything there is a down side and ticks are it for our pets. Tick poisoning is mostly a seasonal occurrence starting in Sept. (early spring) and extending til Easter. The beginning of the season is always the worst, as animals will not retain any immunological memory from last year. We do however get occasional paralysis cases in winter as well so we can never be complacent.

The Tick Lifecycle

Adult female ticks when fully fed, drop off the host animal and lay 2000-3000 eggs!

After 7-9 weeks in warm weather the eggs hatch into larvae. Unfed larvae may survive for as long as 23 weeks but will normally attach to an available host and feed for 4-6 days before dropping off to moult into nymphs.

Nymphs may survive 9 months unfed in leaf litter and under bushes in protected areas. These nymphs reattach and feed for another 4-7 days. The nymphs are commonly known as grass ticks and can be very itchy.

After 3-10 weeks on the ground the nymphs moult into an adult and it is this which carries a large amount of toxin and causes paralysis.

The adult female does not inject detectable amounts of toxin until the third day with peak amounts being injected on days 5-6. The adult male does not attach or suck blood, is yellowish brown flat and oval, smaller than the female.

The onset of clinical signs usually occur on days 5-7 of attachment.

The toxin attaches to nerve endings causing:

- **Peripheral nerve dysfunction.** Difficulty jumping and walking.
- **Oesophageal dysfunction:** Inability to swallow effectively, they will go off their food and gag or retch.
- **Respiratory difficulty:** As the larynx is unable to open fully leads to laboured inspiration and expiration. Later the respiratory muscles of the chest and diaphragm may become affected making things worse again.
- **Direct effects on the respiratory centre of the brain**
- **Effects both in heart muscle and on the blood circulation**

What can you do?

Remove ticks you see, kill ticks you cannot... using...

Frontline Plus:

This product when applied every 2 weeks to the back of the neck of your dog or cat will help kill the female tick that attaches to your pet. It does not kill immediately as the tick needs to be in contact with the Frontline's active ingredient for 2 days before the tick dies. However as the female takes 3 days to become toxic you can see that it is an effective means of protecting your pet from Tick Paralysis.

Frontline Plus is the only safe tick control product available for cats which are equally as likely to be poisoned as dogs, especially as they often roam out of your yard into bush and, contrary to popular belief, do not groom ticks out.

Remember never be complacent. Check your animal regularly and be aware of symptoms.

