



# VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

NOVEMBER 2010



## Introducing Helen

Helen Sheard is the latest vet to join the Totally Vets companion animal team. Helen grew up in Dunedin and Central Otago and graduated from Massey University in 2002. Her first jobs in the veterinary industry were in mixed practice in Raetihi and Taihape where she worked for several years, accumulating a tribe of retired huntaway dogs along the way! Helen moved to Feilding two years ago and until now has been working as a locum at many small animal practices in Palmerston North. Helen will be working at the Feilding clinic on Wednesday nights, some Saturdays and also covering holiday and sick leave. We have a lot of people away for various reasons until the end of this year so you will be seeing quite a lot of Helen! Outside of work Helen loves spending time in the great outdoors with her dogs, running, tramping or muddling around on her bright green 1973 Honda motorbike... when it decides to go!

## Our pets love our new clinic!

### Aimee Perrett

Have you visited us at our new purpose-built clinic at 25 Manchester Street yet? We have been there since the end of September and we love it. More importantly, our visiting furry four-legged friends love it too!

Squeezing 47 staff into a building designed for 24, it was time to move and find somewhere bigger. Our new premises are literally across the road from our previous ones, and still opposite the saleyards. Check out the feedback on our new clinic from our pet friends below - they're the ones that count!

### "I love the new wooden-look floor when you come in - it feels like home"

- Bob, Huntaway/Labrador cross, visiting for a vaccination.

### "It's huge! So big that Mum and I can have our own cat space in the waiting room"

- Mitzy, Burmese cat, dental check-up

**"Puppy preschool is even more fun with the extra space AND I can sit and lie down when I'm told now! I wish it was longer than four weeks!"**

- Amber, French Bulldog, 13 weeks old, 2nd week of puppy pre-school.

**"There are so many collars, toys, beds and food to choose from - where do you start?"**

- Blackie, Domestic Short-Hair, having a cat bite abscess attended to.

**"The new grooming room is like a day spa - I felt very special"**

- Buffy, Bernese Mountain Dog, visiting for her regular bath and blow-dry.

**"Now we have our own room for our weight-loss consultations"**

- Jack, Jack Russell, a bit on the tubby side but working hard on losing weight.

**"It was lovely waking up from my anaesthetic in a special recovery room before I went back to my nice bright kennel"**

- Leo, Golden Retriever, having a lump removal surgery.

**"I really appreciated the designated outdoor walking area when I was in hospital for a few days"**

- Maggie, Bichon Frise/Shih Tzu cross, urinary issues.

**Come in and see us soon and check it out for yourselves!**





## PICK OF THE LITTER

# The Fresh & Clear Water Fountain

- Promotes regular drinking
- Can help prevent kidney or urinary tract problems
- Built-in filtration and constant movement helps keep water fresh, cool, clean and clear!

- Holds 2 litres of water, eliminating the need to refill daily
- Easy to clean and maintain as well as energy efficient
- The filter collects food, hair and debris from the water and also helps reduce bad taste and odours and absorbs impurities in the water
- The circulating water flow cools and aerates water adding oxygen

**RRP \$89.00 but at Totally Vets you can pick one up today for only \$56.00!**

**Suitable for cats and small dogs.**



## Hot gossip!

As you read this, **Christine** is away half way around the world having a relaxing (not!) time trekking around Nepal! She has been training hard for this so we hope that she is surviving and we look forward to hearing all about it when she gets home. **Julie**, one of the receptionists based primarily at our Palmerston North clinic, has recently become engaged to her partner Nick, who is **Glenda's** son (Glenda works in our accounts department)! Congratulations to them both. Glenda has also been off travelling the world and has been on holiday in Vietnam for a month. **Rebekah** has recovered (just!) from a busy time performing in the Palmerston North production of Jesus Christ Superstar which was staged at the Regent on Broadway. **Jackie**, one of our reception girls at the Feilding clinic, was awarded 'Netballer of The Year' and 'Most Valuable Player' at the Feilding Yellow's Rugby/Netball prize giving in September. Continuing in the sporting awards, **Charmaine** was recently awarded 'Best and Fairest' at her hockey club prize giving.

## Services available at your Totally Vets clinic

### Christine Moloney

With the opening of our brand new clinic in Feilding, we thought we would take this opportunity to remind you about some of the services that Totally Vets has to offer.

We have a variety of consultation times available for you to attend and to ensure that you are seen promptly, it is always best to schedule an appointment. We are open late on Tuesday and Wednesday nights and we have a Saturday morning clinic available. These are very popular days, so appointments are essential. We have a 24/7 after-hours emergency service available for all those unforeseen accidents; however, we do not have a vet on site at all times after-hours, so make sure you give us a call first before arriving at the clinic.

We have a brand new radiographic suite where we are able to take x-rays then instantly develop and assess them. Suzanne has just completed a course in radiology and has a special interest in this field. We also have

a new dark room especially designed for ultrasound scanning which Sally has an interest in.

We now have three large surgery suites, one of which is dedicated to dentistry and the use of our high-speed dental equipment and ultrasonic de-scaling unit. Our two larger sterile surgery suites have viewing windows which are great for teaching purposes, especially for the UCOL Diploma of Veterinary Nursing students who use our clinic as their teaching facility.

Kellie has just completed a course in animal acupuncture which she has been able to use as a treatment aid in a variety of conditions. Jeanette has a special interest in ophthalmology (eye medicine) and has been successful in treating a number of eye conditions.

We have an in-house laboratory that gives us the ability to perform basic diagnostic tests quickly and efficiently. We have our own blood analysing machines which enable us to perform haematology and biochemistry blood tests which are especially helpful after-hours when the veterinary laboratory is unavailable.

We all have a special interest in "wellness". We can tailor health care packages for our geriatric patients, our Puppy Preschool programme is as popular as ever and our famous Lite Paws Slimmers Club is still going strong.

**Our large team of dedicated small animal veterinarians and veterinary nurses are always available to offer their expertise to help you keep your pet at peak health - we are only a phone call away!**



# Who's been a good boy then...?

Treat your cats and dogs this Christmas to their very own present, ready and waiting for them underneath the tree on Christmas morning.

Each gift is beautifully wrapped and contains a selection of toys and treats specially chosen for your four-legged friend... All for only \$7.00 each!

Presents are available for purchase from 1 December 2010, from the Feilding branch only.



## The Sphynx Cat

Helen Ryan

While the lack of coat on a Sphynx is not your average cat lovers cup of tea, this rare breed does have its admirers.

Many cats can tend to be aloof towards their owners but the Sphynx however requires a lot of special attention which equates to a close bond between cat and owner.

A relative of the Devon Rex, the breed itself is recognised as being healthy and robust. They generally have a wedge-shaped head and

sturdy heavy bodies. The skin is the colour their fur would be and this could be any of the usual cat colouring and/or markings.

Despite the Sphynx's main unique characteristic being its lack of coat, it is not truly hairless. It has been likened to stroking a peach as they are covered in very short fine "fuzzy" hair. This hair is not enough to protect them from the cold or heat and they are therefore prone to both sunburn and hypothermia. Consequently, spending long periods of time outside can be detrimental to their health.

Contrary to popular belief, the lack of coat does not mean that the Sphynx is the cat for those with cat-specific allergies. These allergies are not triggered by the hair but by a protein in cat saliva and sebaceous glands.

Because of the lack of hair, they potentially require more maintenance than their coated cousins. They are reluctant to groom as the rasping action of the tongue can cause trauma to their skin. Body oils which would normally be absorbed by the hair build-up on the skin, giving it an oily feel and a rancid smell. There is little or no hair in their ears to protect them so they have dirtier ears and more ear wax. The skin under and around their nails gets dirty and oily too. Weekly bathing, ear and nail cleaning is needed to help with this.

**A very rare breed, Totally Vets has only two Sphynx cats under our care - Huey (grey) and Mr Magoo, (seal point) and the reception and hospital staff all love to 'ooh and ah' over them when they visit us. Both cats are owned by Diane and Andrew Gaskin, who provided us with these gorgeous photos!**





# The annual health check

Sally Browning

Veterinarians and clients have been sold on the annual visit for 'shots' for decades - usually prompted by the need to have a valid vaccination certificate for boarding kennels during the annual Christmas holiday at the beach.

In the last five years, much research has been done to test how long immunity from disease after vaccination actually lasts - and the answer is a complex one which requires an

analysis of risk of disease to an animal, its current health status, age, vaccine brand etc. A vaccination programme for our patients should be tailor-made for the individual animal if we seek to protect from dangerous diseases and do not vaccinate without need.

The most important part of the annual visit for 'shots' has always been the examination and the discussion of any concerns that the owner or veterinarian has. Vaccination status is only one aspect of the visit if we are doing our job properly! We still have a protocol to follow to ensure protection from disease, but in many instances, a vaccination is not required during the visit.

"Great!" We hear many of you saying... "I just won't come if my pet doesn't need a vaccination, what would be the point?" It may help to think about one year as a percentage

of your pet's life span. For example, one year is equal to 7% for a dog who lives to the grand old age of 15 years. This would be the equivalent of a person only visiting any health professional once every seven years... and only if they lived to a measly 70 years! An argument could be made for more frequent checks as pets' age, as health problems or concerns may develop more quickly.

A lot can happen in '7 years' and as a group, we have decided to focus on the annual health check or vaccination visit as a chance to optimise your pet's health, not as a quick and easy five minute jab and signing of the certificate visit.

**We look forward to seeing you all each year and remember not to throw away your pets health check reminder card next time one arrives in the mailbox!**

# Think before you buy...

Rebekah Willink

Being a responsible pet owner means caring for your animal, ensuring it is registered, well-behaved and healthy. So before you fall in love with that cute little bundle of fur in the pet shop window, take a moment to think about the long-term commitment and expense that can be involved with owning a pet.

## INITIAL COSTS

- Purchase. You could get a kitten for free from a friend, adopt a pet from a local animal shelter or SPCA or spend hundreds to thousands of dollars on a purebred pedigree dog.
- Shelter. Legally\* you must be able to provide adequate shelter for your pet.

- Collar/lead/identification tag/food and water bowls. Legally\*, you must also be able to provide adequate food and water for your pet.
- Securing your property to make it safe for a pet.
- Registration and microchipping fees. Legally\*, a dog must be registered with the local council and newly registered dogs must also be microchipped.
- Veterinary care. Vaccinations, desexing, flea and worm control are all important parts of caring for a pet. They are not legal requirements but are highly recommended to aid in the long-term health of your cat or dog.

## DAILY COSTS

- Food. There are many options regarding pet food and although premium food purchased from a vet clinic or pet store may cost more per bag, it is often much more cost-effective in terms of health benefits and food efficiency (i.e. you feed less per day).

## ANNUAL COSTS

- Registration. It is a legal\* requirement for dogs to be registered with the local council on an annual basis.
- Vaccinations and flea and worm control. Vaccinations should ideally be repeated every one to two years and most flea and worm treatments should be given every one to three months.

## OTHER COSTS

- Boarding kennel/cattery charges.
- Miscellaneous veterinary charges. If your pet becomes unexpectedly sick or is involved in an accident, it is important to know that you will be able to pay for any treatment that they may require. Pet insurance is an option.
- Training schools (puppy classes, obedience etc).

**There are many costs involved with owning a pet so it is important to think about all of the above things before buying an animal. That way, you can become the best possible pet owner!**

\*Refer to the Dog Control Act 1996, Section 5