



VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

FEBRUARY 2014



WOW, our everyday price!

Nutro Natural Choice Lamb and Rice dog food in a 13.6kg bag size* is now available for just \$109...and this is our everyday price!

An amazing price for this fantastic food – don't delay, pick up a bag today!

* Available in adult and large breed adult formulas.



Cute and cuddly kittens

Kayla Houghton

Having a new addition to the family isn't always planned – sometimes it's the big round eyes and quiet meow that pull on your heartstrings, and before you know it you have a kitty companion for life.

If you have made the decision to adopt a new kitten, it's a good idea to make sure you are getting a healthy one. Look for a playful, confident, clear-eyed kitten that is doing all the "normal kitten things" like playing, eating well and using a litter tray.

Ideally your kitten will have been introduced to, and be using, a litter tray already. When you take your kitten home, show it where the litter tray is located and let it scratch and explore it. Try to place your kitten in the tray after meals, after waking up from a sleep and after playing to remind it to use the tray. Make sure the tray is kept very clean – kittens are clean animals and will not want to go to the toilet where the tray is soiled so will seek elsewhere to go (like behind the couch!).

Kittens need to be wormed every two weeks until they are twelve weeks-old, then every month until they are six months-old, then every three months for the rest of their lives. When giving your kitten a worm treatment you should

make sure you are treating it with a suitable product – not all products are safe to use on kittens. You also need to make sure that you have an idea of how much your kitten weighs, you can do this by weighing it on your kitchen scales or bringing your kitten into the vet clinic.

Flea control is very important in such young animals. If kittens are infested with fleas, they can become severely anaemic from the fleas ingesting their blood. Apart from the risk of anaemia they also cause skin irritation and can carry tapeworm. To ensure you don't get a flea problem in your household, you should flea treat all of your animals, all year around – not just in summer. We recommend using a good quality topical application, on the back of the neck – don't hesitate to ask what will be best for your situation.

Vaccinations are important to help prevent some illnesses such as "cat flu" or "snuffles". Your kitten will need the initial vaccine and then a booster injection three to four weeks later. Usually after their initial course as kittens they will then need a vaccine every year or second year.

The oldest cat in history lived to the grand old age of 38 years old (!) however the average moggy usually lives until around 14 years of age. If you get a kitten, just remember they do grow up, and depend on you to keep them happy and healthy for the rest of their kitty lives.



PICK OF THE LITTER Pocket Pet Goodies...

Did you know? Totally Vets Feilding is also a one-stop shop for pets great and small.

If you are in the market for something specific please ask – as we can order just about anything by request.

If you are a pocket pet lover, we have a large selection for these furry creatures – accessories, toys, feeding equipment plus...

Pine bedding \$6.90

Hay bedding \$5.00

(Bales often available by request – just ask)

Rabbit and guinea pig treats

400g packet for \$10.30

Mouse and rat Supermix food

450g for \$4.70

Rabbit and guinea pig Supermix food

2.5kg for \$10.30 or 5kg for \$19.40

Collapsible, easy clean pocket pet cages

Two sizes available, starting from just \$80.00

(Products available at the Feilding clinic only, prices subject to change)



A recent group of puppies and their families on 'graduation day' at the park.

Puppy Primary... the next step

Rebekah Willink

As well as our hugely popular Puppy Preschool, did you know we also offer Puppy Primary classes?

This course follows directly on from Puppy Preschool, has been designed and is taught by Sandy. This course is designed to reaffirm all the basic commands and behaviours your puppy has learnt so far and also to teach a few new ones with LOTS of fun along the way.

Dress up games (people and dogs!), obstacle courses, relay races, prizes, loads more freebies and a fun session out at a local park... the classes are held on a Tuesday night and the course follows the same format as Puppy Preschool (one class weekly for four weeks). The prerequisite for attendance is that you have also attended our Puppy Preschool, this way we know that all the puppies and people will be at the same level.

Positive puppy socialisation and training is vitally important, and training certainly doesn't end at the completion of a puppy class – that is the very beginning. To start your new puppy off on the right paw, don't delay and sign up for our puppy classes today.



Totally Vets prints **Vet Mates** on paper using FSC certified mixed source pulp from Well Managed forests and other controlled sources. The paper is produced under an environmental management system ISO 14001.





Elsa's early morning mishap

Debbie Asplin

It was early one weekday morning in the Spicer household – Nardiene (one of our lovely grooming ladies) was going about her "morning duties" when she heard her kids yelling and dogs screaming.

Running towards the noise, barely appropriate for the outside world, she went to see what the commotion was all about. Baby Elsa, a blonde Border Terrier cross who was not yet 6 months old, had been doing her crazy laps a bit too close to the rotary hoe and had staked herself on the left of her belly. There was bleeding and flesh exposed and wee Elsa was an unhappy pup! So Nardiene packed up her kids, cat (who was also having ongoing treatment for an injury), and Elsa and made her mission in to the clinic.

She flew in the back door with her baby in her arms saying she had been staked! Nurse Debbie straight away expected the worst case scenario, that maybe the injury had caused Elsa's intestines to be pierced, but it was clear to see from all Elsa's bouncing around that it was luckily only a superficial wound. Nevertheless, Elsa was going to need some surgery.

Vet Sally examined little Elsa and started the process for her surgery. Some sedation and pain relief injections were given and while these drugs were given time to take effect, her surgery nurse Kayla prepared her anaesthetic drugs, surgery room and all the equipment needed. Once Sally had Elsa anaesthetised and stable, she scrubbed her hands, and put on her surgery gown and gloves. During this time Kayla had cleaned the area on Elsa's abdomen and it was time to explore the wound.

There were two lacerations on her left flank, a puncture wound that had an entry and exit point through the skin, luckily not involving the muscle. The skin was cut out between these two vertical lacerations and closed horizontally. Little Elsa was under anaesthetic

for about 40 minutes and her surgery took 20 minutes.

She recovered very nicely and by noon she was having a late breakfast. She went home with Nardiene later on that afternoon (a little bit quieter than when she came in!) with her antibiotic and anti-inflammatory pills and some instructions to keep nice and quiet. Several days later Christmas arrived and Elsa was ready to celebrate with her family!



The Pekingese – Lion Dog

Helen Ryan

The Pekingese is an ancient breed of toy dog originating from China. It is known as a Lion Dog as it resembles Chinese guardian lions.

The breed is over 2000 years old and during this time its appearance has hardly changed. It was the breed favoured by royalty of the Imperial Court and its name refers to the city of Peking, where the Forbidden City resides.

Pekingese are very loving, affectionate and loyal with their families but can be wary of strangers. They don't like rough handling or being grabbed and poked so may not be the best choice for families with young children. For a small dog they can be very stubborn and

difficult to train so owners need to be firm but kind, and very patient.

For a dog with a potential for health problems, they can still live for 12-15 years. Some of the problems with the breed are what you can outwardly see by their characteristics. The flattened face causes them breathing difficulties and the bulging eyes can be susceptible to dry eye and ulceration. The eyes and the creases on the face need to be kept clean to prevent sores.

Due to their breathing difficulties and their thick coats, it can be hard for them to regulate their body temperature and they are prone to heatstroke when exposed to high temperatures. It is recommended that if not being showed their coat be clipped short. There are other issues in regard to their long back relative to the length of their legs. The legs are noticeably bowed and restrict the Pekingese's movement. Care needs to be taken to support them properly when lifted and they may have problems with stairs and jumping up on things.

The Pekingese traditionally had a short more spaniel-type coat, but modern breeders and dog show judges preferred the longer coat that is more commonly seen today. This sort of coat requires daily brushing and regular trips to the groomer so a shorter 'puppy cut' may be more practical for many owners (and as mentioned above, makes it easier for the dog to keep cool).

Pekingese Trivia... Did you know? Three dogs survived the sinking of the Titanic, and one of them was a Pekingese.





Bark, bark, bark!

Rebekah Willink

Barking is a natural and completely normal dog behaviour. It is one way for dogs to communicate with humans BUT if it becomes excessive or continual it could be a sign that there is problem that needs to be addressed.

When beginning to deal with a problem the most important thing is to determine the actual cause of the barking, as each cause will have its own treatment plan. You should find out when, where and for how long your

dog barks and what's causing them to bark. Knowing the sound/pitch and sequence of the barking will also be of help. Some detective work may be required to obtain this information, especially if the barking occurs when you are not home. You may need to ask neighbours for help, drive or walk around the block and watch and listen for a while, or start a tape recorder or video camera. Some of the common causes of, and possible help for, inappropriate barking can be:

Social isolation/ frustration/ attention seeking

To help:

- Provide adequate mental and physical stimulation/exercise on a daily basis
- Consider a "Doggie Daycare" facility
- Don't inadvertently reward the barking i.e. by giving attention

Separation anxiety/fears or phobias

To help:

- Desensitisation and counter-conditioning techniques should be used, with the assistance and supervision of a qualified trainer

Territorial/guarding/protective behaviour

To help:

- Minimise the ability to rehearse the behaviour – if your dog barks at passing

people/dogs, house them in area where they cannot see these things, so cannot practice barking at them

- Don't inadvertently reward the barking i.e. by encouraging your dog to bark at things they hear or see outside
- Teach a "quiet" command

A note about bark collars and muzzles

The main drawback of a bark collar is that it doesn't address the underlying cause of the barking. You may be able to eliminate barking, but 'symptom substitution' may occur and a dog may begin digging, escaping, or become destructive or even aggressive. Bark collars can cause pain and stress to a dog and if the barking is due to anxiety, fear or phobia a bark collar may make the problem worse, as you cannot treat fear with fear.

You should never leave a muzzle on your dog unattended or for long periods of time, especially on a warm day. A muzzle that is tight enough to prevent barking will also prevent a dog from opening its mouth to pant or drink, which could be disastrous.

Inappropriate barking can be a very complex topic, so please do not hesitate to give us a call or come in to see us at the Feilding clinic for more information or advice.

When fleas cause more than just an itch

Sally Browning

No one likes fleas – they cause itching and distress to our pets and sometimes to us. They also cause significant skin disease in allergic pets. What you may not be aware of is the potential killer that they carry in their saliva.

Feline infectious anaemia is caused by a parasitic bacteria called Mycoplasma haemofelis. A cat becomes infected with this by a bite from an infected flea. The bacteria attaches to the red blood cells and multiplies

in the cats blood stream. Soon the red blood cells are coated in the parasite – the immune system senses that these cells are sick and kills them by removal in the spleen. When enough red blood cells have become infected and destroyed the cat becomes anaemic (a low red blood cell count).

Anaemia makes the cat feel weak and lethargic as the life force of oxygen is not carried to their organs. They often breathe quickly, sleep a lot and stop eating. Sometimes anaemic cats will start to eat cat litter or dirt to obtain iron, which is lost when red blood cells are destroyed.

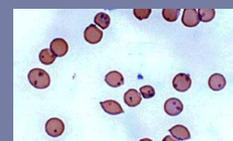
On examination the vet will find pale gums, a fast heart rate with a murmur, increased breathing rate and effort and sometimes a fever. Cats are very good at hiding disease and may be very ill before you notice it.

Diagnosis is made by clinical examination and a blood test, looking at red blood cell levels. We have seen cats with a red blood cell count of just 7% (normal is 27-47%) – this can be life threatening. Sometimes the parasite is

visible on a blood smear as small dark spots inside the cell. These are not always visible as the parasite numbers vary markedly as the numbers cycle from hour to hour even in heavy infections.

Treatment may require a blood transfusion – not always easy in our feline patients. Very ill cats are kept in hospital on oxygen and handled very carefully, as they can suddenly deteriorate with stress. An antibiotic called Doxycycline is used to stop the parasite from multiplying, and steroids prevent more destruction of cells by the immune system. Treatment can be complicated if the cat has feline aids or leukaemia viruses.

Of course prevention is better than cure – and regular application of an effective flea treatment is the only defence. Totally Vets are always happy to discuss an effective treatment programme for fleas in all your pets.



Left: Mycoplasma haemofelis as seen under the microscope