



# VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

MAY 2016



## Winter Woes!

### Rat-bait Poisoning

There are different types of rat-baits available but most of them work by preventing blood clotting. Any small injury that would normally cause only a bruise or a spot of blood can become life threatening. And there may not be any external bleeding!

### Antifreeze poisoning

The early signs are incoordination, stupor, and sometimes vomiting – owners will call concerned that their pets are acting 'drunk'. Severe damage occurs to the kidneys which can result in kidney failure.

If you have concerns about any of these contact the clinic straight away!

## Diabetes Affects Pets Too

### Sally Browning

Sugar and its evils seem to be ever-present headlines at present. One reason is its association with obesity. Our human health statistics show that diabetes is more frequently diagnosed as our population gets fatter. Many pet owners are unaware that diabetes can also affect their pets.

Cats are often similar to humans with obesity related type 2 diabetes. Dogs more often have type 1 diabetes with genetic factors, drug effects and other diseases coming into play. Pancreatitis is frequently the causative problem as inflammation of this organ causes damage to the delicate insulin producing islet cells. Dogs that are diagnosed with diabetes

will always be dependent on insulin injections, while cats may be lucky enough to go into remission with prompt, effective treatment.

Animals with diabetes classically present with an increase in water intake and urination, and usually have a good appetite but are dropping weight. Other more subtle signs include lethargy, poor coat and an increase in abdominal fat. Some animals are presented for general ill health and high blood sugar is incidentally found on screening blood tests.

The simplest test is looking for sugar in the urine (thankfully we now have a test strip for this – rather than relying on tasting the urine as doctors did in past times!) We can also test blood sugar on a single drop of blood with a glucometer or include it in a broader panel of biochemical tests. We always confirm diabetes with further tests and also check the urine for infections that can complicate treatment.

Most diabetic animals can be managed with insulin treatment, dietary changes and regular monitoring by their vet. If you are concerned about your pet a simple urine test is a very effective screening tool – why not bring a clean sample to their next health check, for peace of mind.



# Arthritis in our pets

Jo Nesdale

Does your furry friend suffer from arthritis?

Many things can be done to slow down the vicious cycle of inflammation and pain in those joints.

One of the biggies is ensuring your pet is not overweight. This can be done with controlled feeding along with good therapeutic exercise. Monitor exercise so there is no increase in pain after the activity. 'Small amounts often' works well.

Soft bedding, warm sleeping areas and cosy dog jackets also make a big difference.

Nutritional supplements like glucosamine and chondroitin, essential fatty acids & Bomazeal can help a great deal. Many veterinary joint diets have these supplements incorporated into the diet.

Prescription medications such as Synovan injections that aid with repair of arthritic joints, and anti-inflammatories are available so ask your vet what they would recommend for your pet.

**There are many things that you can do to help your arthritic pet suffer less and do more.**

## PICK OF THE LITTER

# Time to Get Cosy!

Heidi Pihama

Get your pets winter ready with a new warm coat and bed! Keeping warm and cosy is especially important for our older pets, as they are often thinner, feel the cold and have arthritis that can flare up with colder weather - so make sure they are snug and comfy during the cooler months.

With that in mind we have new beds and coats in store, with specials just for you!

Bed Prices slashed

**\$61.50 down to \$48**

**\$97 down to \$73**

**\$109 down to \$77**

**\$112 down to \$85**



# Bravo Bravecto!

Helen Sheard

Two different types of mange occur in dogs. The old adage taught at vet school is "demodectic mange is easy to diagnose but hard to treat, while sarcoptic mange is hard to diagnose but easy to treat". Sound odd? Read on...

Demodex mites are cigar shaped and live deep in the hair follicles. They are picked up by puppies from their mother while nursing. In most cases the pups' immune system keeps the mites under control and no mange is seen.

Some puppies are unable to keep the mites in check and the classic signs of mange develop – hair loss and thickened inflamed skin.

Sarcoptes mites burrow in the skin causing inflammation and severe itch. It is contagious to other dogs, and even to people. These mites are hard to find on scrapings as they are so mobile, however treatment is usually simple and effective.

As the saying suggests, demodectic mange has historically been difficult to treat – but now there is a new option in our arsenal! Bravecto – a tasty chewable tablet for dogs that kills fleas and ticks has now been found to help control demodectic mange for up to 12 weeks! This is great news, because previously the treatment for demodectic mange has been daily oral dosing or weekly injections with ivermectin, often required for months before cure is achieved. Owners of collie dogs might also be aware of a mutant gene in some collies (MDR1 now known as ABCB1) that causes increased sensitivity to ivermectins, making treatment of demodectic mange in these breeds very difficult. Bravecto is safe in MDR1 collies and can be used on puppies once they are over 8 weeks of age, as well as in breeding, pregnant and lactating dogs. This is a great step forward in treating this otherwise frustrating disease!



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# Introducing Apoquel!

Helen Sheard

As well as the new claim for Bravecto (see elsewhere in this newsletter) there is another new and exciting drug available for skin disease in dogs. Apoquel is a completely new compound that acts to block the receptors in the skin that trigger inflammation and itch. The drugs we have relied on previously – mainly prednisone and cyclosporine – both stop itching by suppressing the immune system in its entirety. Apoquel is much more specific – the receptors it targets are responsible for sending 'text messages' to other cells telling them to release inflammatory compounds into the surrounding skin. Apoquel blocks text messages at the source – like a parental lock for skin inflammation!

The benefits of Apoquel are:

- Fewer side effects than prednisone, which can cause increased hunger, thirst, and urination, a predisposition to diabetes and

infection, adrenal gland suppression and Cushing's disease.

- Excellent control of allergy-induced itch, even in food allergic dogs, whose itch is not well controlled by prednisone.
- Apoquel is safe to use with most other common medicines, flea/worm treatments and vaccinations. It also doesn't require a tapering dose as prednisone does.

As with nearly all the drugs we use, Apoquel is not perfect and there are some possible side-effects that were reported in low numbers in the clinical trials. Transient tummy upsets may occur; there may be an increase in papillomas (a benign warty skin growth) and if your pet does have a pre-existing cancer then Apoquel is not recommended. Despite this the drug is extremely popular in America, where they have been using up all the supplies for the last 3 years – hence only now is it finally available in New Zealand! So if you have a beloved dog who is struggling with itch, come and have a chat – this may be the drug for you!

## Superbugs – not just a Hollywood movie!

The thought of bacteria that can't be killed by antibiotics is a terrifying one, and unfortunately it is becoming a reality. You have likely heard of MRSA – a staph bacteria that is resistant to many of the antibiotics available.

And it's not just a human problem. Our pets can share this same bacteria, pass it onto their family members and vice versa. Studies have found that human carriers of this bug often have pet carriers in the same household. Does this mean you should hermetically seal your dog or cat and follow them round with Dettol? Of course not. We are surrounded by bacteria in this world, and the vast majority are either

not harmful, or beneficial to us. For example our intestinal tracts would be very inefficient if it wasn't for beneficial bacteria. However there are some very important things you can do to help reduce the chance of pathogenic bacteria developing resistance to antibiotics. Most importantly – if your pet is prescribed antibiotics, follow the directions to the letter (two tablets once a day is NOT the same as one tablet twice a day) and make sure you finish the course. If they don't seem to be working, or your pet is getting a stomach upset from them, let the clinic know so we can prescribe a different one. The longer bacteria are exposed to sub-lethal levels of antibiotics, the more likely they are to develop resistance and pass these new genes onto their offspring. We are trying our best to protect our antibiotics by using them only when necessary (it's not very often we will prescribe an antibiotic now without strong evidence of infection) and by using topical creams, washes and medicated lotions when appropriate. Once we lose our antibiotics, there's no going back!

## PICK OF THE LITTER

# Meal Time Stock Feed

New to the Market – Coming Soon to the Totally Vets Store

(18th April 2016)

Support local company Denver Stock Feeds in the Manawatu! They provide:

Free Range, Fresh and Organic Foods for Poultry, Pigs, Goats, Alpacas, Emus, Rabbits, and Calves.

The "Meal Time" range of stock feeds has been developed to provide a wider choice of products that support and harbour healthy, ethical and sustainable lifestyles. Because they believe "you are what **they** eat", they have only the best natural ingredients in them (from NZ of course!!). The Free Range Feed contains NZ grown grains and proteins, while the Fresh is Best range contains NZ and Australian grown grains.

So if you are rearing your own animals **and want the best for them as well as for yourself, please come in and try this new feed out!!**

20kg bags range from \$20.00-\$41.80



# Breed profile - The British Blue

Helen Ryan



The British Blue is a member of the cat breed British Shorthair. The breed evolved by interbreeding cats brought to Britain by the Romans with the wild native cats. More crossbreeding with Persian cats was done to improve the thickness of their coat.

While the blue colour has been the most popular, British Shorthairs now come in large variety of colours including fawn, white, black, chocolate and silver and patterns such as tabby, tortoiseshell or bi-colour.

For lovers of big cats this may be the one for you. They are often referred to as the 'bulldog of the cat world' as their bodies are large, sturdy and muscular. They have a 'cobby' build with a broad chest, shoulders and hips. The males are larger, weighing from 5-10kg with the females ranging from 5-7kg. They have round heads with large copper or gold

eyes set widely apart and the ever-endearing chubby cheeks.

These cats have a wonderful temperament and are an easy-going breed. They are the ideal cat for people who are at work all day as they have no problem being 'house' cats and are quite happy to laze around for as long as is required.

When they want attention they will let their owners know and have a tendency to hang out where their people are, as opposed to being all over them. Most prefer to keep four paws on the ground and be patted rather than being picked up.

The breed has become a favourite of animal trainers because of its nature and intelligence, and many have appeared in films and television commercials. Some more well-known famous British Shorthair cats include 'Henry' from the Whiskas adverts on television and also the 'Cheshire Cat' from the Alice in Wonderland stories.



## Puppy Preschool

Natasha Kirk

As a busy, buoyant veterinary clinic, we see animals in all shapes and sizes. And as the staff will tell you, it's always special when we see clients coming in with their puppies or kittens and watching them grow up.

Here at Totally Vets, we want the best start for you and your puppy. We provide a Puppy

Preschool class followed by a Puppy Primary course once you've graduated from Pre-school. The classes are taught over four weeks, and during that time your puppy will learn important commands such as sit, stay, lead walking and much more. Another important part of the course is socialisation. It is important for puppies to be socialised as soon as possible, and our puppy preschool gives them a safe environment to do this: to interact with other puppies under the guidance of our instructors in monitored play groups. Our instructors are experienced in puppy behaviour and put the puppies in groups of similar minded puppies so play is exciting and fun, but safe for everyone involved. It is also a great

way for your puppy to associate the vet clinic with an exciting, positive experience.

The only pre-requisites for joining our classes is that your puppy has had his or her first vaccination and is younger than 14 weeks. It is during this period that most puppies develop up to 90% of their behaviour traits towards other animals, their environment and people, so it's important to get those positive associations in early! Throughout the course you will also receive over \$120 worth of freebies for your puppy including food, and flea and worm treatments!

If you are interested in joining one of our classes, pop into the Feilding clinic and simply fill out an enrolment form.