

FDA investigates irradiation as possible cause of jerky treat problem (AnnArbor.com (Mich.) 9/18

Chicken jerky treats made from China have been linked with serious illness in dogs. The disease, a Fanconi-like syndrome, tends, due their size, to affect smaller dogs more frequently but any dog can become affected. Despite much laboratory testing and even several visits to manufacturing plants in China to date no causative agent has been found. The FDA is now looking at food irradiation as a possible cause.

Comments: *This is a serious concern and I highly recommend you do not feed any type of jerky treat, including duck and sweet potato, (and maybe any type of treat at all) made in China. You really need to **carefully** read the packages as sometimes this information is hard to find (even Milo's Kitchen jerky treats are made in China). If you are not totally sure it is made in the USA do not buy it. SEM*

As dogs mature, they're more susceptible to contagious yawning (LiveScience.com) 10/23

Yawning can be contagious in dogs as well as in humans a new study finds. And as in humans, dogs are more susceptible to yawning as they age. Children begin to yawn in response to others at around age 4 years and puppies at about 7 months. The finding of contagious yawning is important because it may indicate empathy. The same study showed that dogs were more likely to yawn if their owners did than if strangers yawned. It wasn't clear if the dogs were really mimicking the yawns unconsciously or reacting to the sound of their owner's yawns with stress. Another interesting bit of information from the study is that while half of the puppies yawned in response to "fake" yawns, no adult dogs did. The researchers felt that the ability to "catch yawns" may be an indication of dogs understanding mood and emotion and not necessarily understanding thoughts and motivation.

Comments: *Dog owners have never questioned whether or not their dogs show empathy but it is nice to see science working to validate what we have always known. SEM*

New cancer drug on the horizon in U.S. and Canada (Australian Life Scientist) 7/25

Immunocidin is a new treatment for canine mammary tumors that reportedly helps kill cancer cells. This drug has received regulatory approval in the U.S. and Canada and was scheduled to be launched in July 2012. The drug is produced by Bioniche and is injected into the tumor. The drug is based on a human bladder cancer drug, Urocidin, which is currently in stage III trial testing.

Comments: *To date I have not seen further information on this product. It is unclear whether this drug would be used instead of surgical removal of the tumors, in conjunction with surgery or in the case of non-resectable mammary tumors. SEM*

Allergy drops are alternative to injections for dogs, study suggests (University of Wisconsin (Madison)) 7/24

Twice-daily allergy drops, given under the dog's tongue, can be as effective as allergy injection in some dogs to control skin allergies. Like allergy injections, the allergy drops are used to desensitize to an allergen by giving it small doses of the allergen. The drops apparently act through a different mechanism than the injections so they may help dogs who have "failed" allergy shots.

Dogs that had a severe reaction, anaphylaxis, to allergy shots did not have the same reaction to the drops, so in this respect the drops seem to be safer than the injections. The cost for the drops versus the injections is fairly comparable. The allergy drops are slightly sweet in flavor so most dogs like them and they are a user friendly alternative to needle shy owners.

Comments: These allergy drops are now currently on the market. Both the allergy injection and the drops do need to be given under the direction and supervision of a veterinarian and both injection and drops are individually formulated for the dog after allergy testing has been done. SEM

Morning meal improves cognitive performance in domestic dogs (BI) 10/10

Dogs that were trained to search for hidden food did so with more accuracy when tested 30 minutes after a meal than those dogs that were fasted for 12 hours. The bottom line of the study is that breakfast can aid performance by dogs. Since the diets of domestic dogs is different, richer in carbohydrates, than their wild cousins' diet, which is richer in fat and low in carbohydrates, this probably is not true for wolves, coyotes and such.

Comments: It is unclear from the information how much food was fed in order to see these results. Does this mean that if we feed our dogs once a day they should be fed in the morning instead of the evening? For our breed and some of the sled dogs that tend to be fed a lower carbohydrate high fat diets would this still hold true? I know I for one will feed at least a few treats in the morning before an obedience or rally trial!! SEM

Study: Mushroom compound extends survival in dogs with hemangiosarcoma (PhysOrg.com) 9/10

A study conducted by two University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine faculty suggests that a compound, polysaccharopeptide (PSP) derived from the Yunzhi mushroom, is effective in fighting hemangiosarcoma. Typically in dogs that have hemangiosarcoma of the spleen median survival with no further treatment is around 86 days, some dogs in this study lived longer than a year with no other treatment than the mushroom compound. In addition no adverse effects were seen with this compound. Additional further trials are in the works to confirm these findings. The mushroom derivative compound used in the study was l'm-Yunity, chosen for its consistency and good manufacturing processes.

Comments: This is a very interesting study and I look forward to seeing more of their research. It is unclear from the article whether splenectomy, removing the spleen, was done prior to being placed on the compound. The compound is not inexpensive but neither is surgery and chemotherapy. I just recently had a case of hemangiosarcoma and have placed the dog on this. I will be interested in seeing the results. SEM

In mammals, semen causes direct effect on female brain, study finds (News-Medical. Net) 8/21

A team of scientists have discovered that a protein in semen acts on the female brain to prompt ovulation. All male mammals have accessory sex glands that produce seminal fluid, the role of this fluid has not been well understood but this study shows that these glands produce large amounts of a protein that have a direct effect on females. The protein has been dubbed ovulation-inducing factor (OIF) and has been found in all mammals that have been studied so far and implies an important role in reproduction. How it works, its role in various species and its

clinical relevance still need to be answered. OIF in the semen acts as a hormonal signal that triggers the release of other hormones that signals the ovaries to release eggs.

Comments: I find this very interesting. Is this the reason for the difference in reproductive rates in the various insemination methods, fresh, chilled and frozen since for chilled and frozen the seminal fluid is separated from the sperm? Could this be part of the reason some male dogs despite good sperm counts do not have good fertility – do they not produce enough OIF? Hopefully these questions will be answered with further studies. SEM

Researchers develop seizure alert implant for dogs and people (Minnesota Daily (University of Minnesota), The) 4/4

A vest developed to be worn by epileptic patients can detect seizures before they occur and alert the wearer via lights on the vest. A small implant that contains electroencephalography, EEG, capabilities sends the messages to the vest. The device has been tested by the University of Minnesota and is being further tested in Australia. The technology is already being developed for use in dogs.

Comments: This is an exciting development (way to go my alma mater) and could be very beneficial for those dogs, and people, with hard to control epilepsy. SEM