

Goose eggs may hold key to more effective treatment for parvovirus (Gazette (Montreal) (tiered subscription model), The/The Associated Press) 6/1

Early testing of goose antibodies, produced by the North Dakota company Avianax, on 50 puppies affected by parvovirus resulted in a 90 percent cure rate. Currently there is no specific treatment that targets parvovirus, this company is trying to change that - and at an affordable price as well. Typically to symptomatically treat a parvovirus case may cost as much as \$2000.00 and may take as many as 6 days or more of treatment. The goose antibody treatment costs \$75.00 a dose and works as quickly as 2 days. Other diseases such as dengue fever, avian flu, some cancers as well as rabies may also be candidates for the goose-derived antibody technology. The product to treat canine parvovirus, parvoONE, is hopes to be on the market by spring 2015

*Comment: What's good for the goose is good for the... puppies!! This will be a great step forward in the treatment of parvovirus, and potentially other diseases, especially with parvovirus outbreaks occurring lately. Make sure your dogs are properly vaccinated against parvovirus, **especially** your breeding bitches as their immunity is passed on to their pups protecting them until their immune systems respond to vaccination. SEM*

Problematic rat poison to become less potent (KQVR-TV (West Sacramento, Calif.) 6/3 (Los Angeles Times (tiered subscription model)) 5/31 (Wall Street Journal (tiered subscription model), The) 5/30

The maker of d-CON has agreed to stop making second generation rat poisons for the consumer market that have accidentally poisoned children, pets and wildlife. These will be replaced by a new line of bait products approved by the EPA for use in every state. The to-be-discontinued products are anti-coagulant rodenticides that thin the blood and prevent clotting and are more persistent and toxic than first generation products. Because they persist in tissues they work their way up the food chain wreaking havoc in non-target species including protected and endangered species (e.g. golden eagles, northern spotted owls, and San Joaquin kit foxes). One group of consumers who may be adversely affected by this ban are illegal marijuana growers in California who use these products heavily to protect their crops.

Comment: Having treated a number of animals, both dogs and cats, that have been poisoned by these products, I will not miss having to treat them. The only hope is that whatever replaces them has an antidote such as these products did (Vitamin K) as there is at least one new rodenticide (mentioned in a previous Veterinary Tidbit column) that has no antidote and can be quite lethal. Sometimes the devil you know is better than one you don't know. And who knew mice like to get high!! SEM

City replaces breed ban with behavior guidelines (ChicagoNow.com/Steve Dale's Pet World blog) 6/4

South Bend, IN no longer has a breed ban. The city amended its entire existing animal control laws and replaced it a new law that eliminated the breed ban while strengthening its animal control act. While providing greater regulation and oversight of dog breeder, it abolishes pet limits and replaces breed-specific language with behavior-specific language. Council member and head of the special Animal Care and Control Committee stated "There are many, many causes for aggression and I would argue that breed is not one of them."

Comment: Wow! It's nice to hear of a place where rational thoughts prevail. And no I don't think we can all move there - but it's a thought!! SEM

Pioneering veterinarians give dogs with lymphoma a second chance (Bellingham Herald (Wash.), The) 6/16

Adapting it from human bone marrow transplants, husband and wife veterinarians at Bellingham Veterinary Clinic in Washington state have pioneered a treatment for canine lymphoma. Canine lymphoma, one of the most common cancers in dogs, was considered incurable a decade ago with chemotherapy being only a temporary solution. Bone marrow stem cells are removed and preserved for re-injection after radiation therapy. After the bone marrow transplant anti-cancer T cells are infused into the patient. The procedure has been taught to three more veterinary hospitals around the country. More than 100 dogs have been cured by this new procedure which has a cure rate of 50%.

Comment: Another breakthrough treatment for a deadly disease. While not an inexpensive or simple procedure it does give owner's a viable option to cure their dog of one type of cancer. SEM

Canine osteosarcoma vaccine shows promise (WCAX-TV (Burlington, Vt.)/CBS News) 6/25

An experimental vaccine against canine osteosarcoma is being investigated by the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine. The concept of the vaccine is to educate the immune system to recognize, and kill, tumor cells. Dogs in the study were given radiation and a live bacterial vaccine. Many dogs given the experimental vaccine are still alive two years later when most dogs with osteosarcoma die within a year of diagnosis. If shown to be successful this could one day treat children with osteosarcoma and also women with types of breast cancer that are similar to osteosarcoma.

Comment: Another exciting development in our fight against cancer – both canine and human. SEM

Neuter timing linked to joint disease and cancer in 2 retriever breeds (Science Blog) 7/14

The effect of neutering on Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers younger than six months is associated with increased joint problems (hip dysplasia, cranial cruciate tear, and elbow dysplasia) and cancers (lymphosarcoma, hemangiosarcoma and mast cell tumors) in both breeds, but with different incidence rates between the two breeds. Both joint diseases and cancers, with neutering done at various ages, were much more pronounced in Golden Retrievers than in Labs. Neutering female Labs and male Golden Retrievers increased the cancer risk only slightly, but female Golden Retrievers elevated the risk of one or more of the cancers three to four times. Joint disease was significantly more severe in neutered Golden Retrievers and Labs, especially Golden Retrievers, than in unneutered dogs of the same breed.

Comment: This study revealed interesting breed differences in regards to the effects of neutering between just two breeds. Sweeping statements about neutering may not be possible as how it can affect one breed may not be how it affects another – also what about mixed breed dogs how might they be affected? Also be careful in making judgments about ALL cancers or joint diseases and neutering's effects, as this study looked at only three types of cancers and three joint diseases (note that mammary cancer which neutering can protect against, was not included in this study). The information here is noteworthy but is just a small part of the whole picture – we will need to see what more expanded – both by breed and by disease – research into this subject reveals before we can make educated informative recommendations about the best age to neuter (or not). SEM

Research uncovers genetic roots of canine heart condition (HealthDay News) 8/8

A serious and potentially deadly heart condition in Newfoundland dogs called subvalvular stenosis (SAS) has had its genetic cause identified. The disease causes a ridge or ring of abnormal tissue below the aortic valve restricting blood flow from the heart causing fainting, sudden collapse, irregular heart rate or sudden death. In children with the same disease surgery can correct the problem but in dogs it cannot. Having identified the genetic mutation (in a gene called PICALM) novel therapies may be able to be developed to treat this devastating condition.

Comment: SAS occurs in many other breeds besides Newfoundlands so the finding of this mutation may help many other breeds as well. SEM

Veterinary clinics test bacteria to fight cancer (FoxNews.com/Reuters) 8/13

Preliminary findings by researchers have found that a common soil bacteria, Clostridium novyi, when injected into solid tumors in pet dogs and one human shrank many of the tumors. Looking for a more effective cancer treatment for inoperable tumors which often fail to respond to radiation and chemotherapy, scientists resurrected a 100 year old treatment that had been unsuccessful using other bacteria. The new bacteria that was used was genetically modified to remove DNA that causes the production of a toxic protein, and only spores of the bacteria was used to minimize causing an infection. Of the sixteen dogs treated, three tumors shrank and three others disappeared. Further trials are in the process to look at safety and optimal dosing of the treatment.

Comment: Another interesting study looking at novel ways to fight the war against cancer. SEM

Barking Dog? Swine pheromones may help (PhysOrg.com) 8/25

A serendipitous discovery by a researcher has developed into a product to deter barking and other unwanted behavior, such as jumping and fence running. Called Stop That, marketed by Sentry for dogs and cats, the product is a synthetic male pig pheromone, called androstenone. The product has shown great success but as its effects last only about a minute, it is to be used as a tool to be used with training.

Comment: Again another species helping another. With barking being one of the big reasons for dogs being given up if this product can help train dogs to stop barking it may be a big help to keep barkers in their homes. Having been around boars I can understand why this product gets a dog's attention! Hopefully the concentration is low enough that only the animals can smell it and not the human! SEM

Canine epilepsy: Why some dogs don't achieve remission (PhysOrg.com) 8/27

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) has shed light on why some dogs do not respond to anti-convulsant medication. Epilepsy is a chronic condition, not a specific disease, characterized by recurrent seizures. Current drug treatments fail to reduce the number of seizures by half in about a third of epileptic dogs. The RVC studies showed that how close together seizures occur, rather than the number of seizures a dog has had, has more of an effect on achieving remission. The sex of the dog was also found to be a risk factor with less males going into remission than females, and breed played a role as well with Border Collies and German Shepherds at a higher risk of not being controlled with medication.

The study also found that the time from diagnosis to treatment or the number of seizures experienced before treatment did not affect whether or not the seizures were controlled with anti-convulsants.

Comment: The information from this study is very interesting in regards to treating epilepsy. If you have a male dog, a dog that has seizures close together, or a Border Collie or German Shepherd that seizures you may want to be more aggressive with treating their epilepsy. The thought to start anti-convulsant medication at the first seizure to “prevent the brain from learning to seizure” may not be valid from the results of this study. SEM

Tear-stain products under FDA scrutiny (Seattle Times, The) 9/1

Over-the-counter tear stain products are under scrutiny from the FDA since they contain an antibiotic that is not approved for use in dogs and cats or for the treatment of conditions associated with tear stains. The FDA has warned that if the products are not voluntarily removed from the market that the FDA may seize them or file for an injunction against the manufacturers

Comment: These products will probably be disappearing from the market shortly and if they return they may need to be available by prescription only or more expensive to buy. While I understand the FDA’s concern due to problems with antibiotic resistance I am unaware of any issues with these products causing problems in dogs. SEM

Actions speak louder than words for dogs, too, study finds (DiscoverMagazine.com/Seriously.Science?blog) 9/3

In an experiment, researchers looked at a dog’s preference for petting or vocal praise. Three groups were evaluated shelter dogs, owned dogs with strangers providing the praise or petting, and owned dogs praised or petted by their owners. Across the board all dogs spent more time near the person giving the petting than the person giving verbal praise. Researchers also found that dogs did not show signs of being petted too much. Petting seems to be an important interaction between humans and dogs while dogs seem to need to be conditioned for verbal praise.

Comment: Another study that shows what dog owners everywhere already knows – your dog can never get enough petting! SEM