

# Tails from the Dog House

The Quarterly Newsletter from the  
Sardis Animal Hospital

Spring 2004

Vol 2, No.1, pg 1



## Question: Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

### Answer: To Get its Flu Shots!

Can you believe it? Yet another animal plague is making headlines. It seems like every time this editor sits down to produce a quarterly newsletter another animal virus is filling the media and costing us millions. This time it's Avian Influenza, a disease that surfaces with some regularity in North America, but now makes news because of recent events in Asia and the size of the outbreak. The Chicken gods are smiling on us however and we seem to have dodged a bullet with respect to human health. Good fortune has endowed us with a strain of low pathogenicity to humankind. However, it's still going to cost us megabucks.

Here's a fascinating piece of information that gives us reason to ponder and wonder what is happening in this world of ours. In January, your editor attended a seminar given by Dr Brian Evans, Canada's chief veterinarian and head of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Dr. Evans is a very knowledgeable and talented veterinarian who we as Canadians can be very proud of representing us on the world stage through Mad Cow, West Nile, Avian Influenza and heaven only knows what may be next. He told us that in years past, the world would see the emergence of a new "plague" every 7 to 10 years. Now we are seeing emerging diseases of a global nature hitting us every 18 months!

Theories abound as to the cause of this phenomenon, and who is to say which cause(s) are to blame for increasing rates of mutation and spread of viruses. Here's a partial list: ecosystem changes due to global warming, deteriorating ozone losing its protective effect from cosmic rays, environmental toxins, pollution, exploding populations of both animals and humans living together under conditions of crowding, increase in travel of people, animals and animal products. Whatever the reasons, one thing is certain: We can expect more.

The spin-offs are far reaching. Experts are under pressure to solve complex problems quickly and take preventive measures to protect our future. Politicians are under pressure to satisfy a worried electorate and compensate where feasible. And who would have imagined that the CFIA would have to dispose of millions of chicken carcasses in a hurry. We just don't have the incineration capacity to deal with those numbers. Not even Colonel Sanders can handle that many fryers. So hold your nose folks, the Bailey Landfill has just found another use. Like it or not, this is an emergency! Stop whining! This is a time for us to pull together and let our sense of community supercede our perceived inconvenience. Let's put some trust in the bagging, burying and composting methods dictated by CFIA. It's not the first time this sort of thing has been done. Besides, it's the best we can do under some very trying circumstances.

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Tails from the Dog House  
is published quarterly by  
the Sardis Animal  
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## ANIMAL TRIVIA

Elephants can detect vibrations through their toes from up to twenty miles away. Thus they can be alerted to stampedes at great distances.



## **The Changing Face of Veterinary Medicine.**

### **Or "Is The Male Veterinarian an Endangered Species".**

#### **Mars, Venus and Veterinarians**

#### **Veterinary profession undergoing a complete gender reversal**

If you grew up with an image of the local veterinarian as a man, its time you updated your perception. The last 2 decades has seen a precipitous decline in males entering the veterinary profession with a concomitant increase female students applying. Your editor graduated from veterinary college in 1975, in a class of 60 men and 6 women. By the mid to late '80's the gender ratio was about 50:50. The current first year veterinary class at the the University of Saskatchewan has 61 women and 9 men. This situation by the way, is not unique to veterinary medicine. More and more women are joining the professions generally.

"So where have all the young men gone?" the folk song says. They've gone to other careers for a number of good reasons. The last several decades have seen other vocations become more attractive for young men. Male baby boomers were raised to aspire to be doctors, lawyers, teachers, dentists, and vets. By the nineties that started to fade, and young men have become more attracted to high tech, communications and computer related careers. Your editor raised 4 sons, all of whom had plenty of exposure to veterinary medicine. They all had after school jobs at the animal hospital. They were given work experience and had ample opportunity to see the veterinary profession and watch their father work. And although they all loved animals and could have done the work well and been good veterinarians, ( or physicians, teachers etc.) their interests developed in the same directions as so many of their peers. Three sons have degrees in Computing Science and one is studing to be a Civil Engineer and I am as pleased with their career choices as my parents were with mine.

So what impact is this having on Veterinary Medicine other than the Vet Colleges having to rebuild locker rooms? Does it really matter anyway. Like most issues, there are many sides to something as complex as this. From the animal owner's point of view the first question will naturally be "will I get the same or better service from one gender or the other?" Or which gender can I or my animal relate better to and develop a bond with? Or is it even an issue for me. Your editors opinion is this: Ability, skills and compassion are not as much a gender issue as they are an individual person issue. Both genders have their share of exceptionally talented and caring veterinarians as well as those who may not display the qualities that the animal owner is looking for in choosing a vet. So as the men are gradually replaced by women and the consumer of veterinary services is choosing replacements, choice should be as it always has. Base choice on the quality of service, personality, ability to relate and communicate and of course compassion, skills and qualifications. In other words, nothing will really change except you will see a prettier face and fewer beards.



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**Sign in Veterinarians Office:  
"Welcome to the TripleA Vet Clinic and Taxidermy Shop - either way  
you get your pet back"**

**Tattoos and  
Microchips  
can save  
your pet's  
life.**

**Tattoo saves  
the day and  
reunites dog  
with owner  
after theft.**



## **Pet Identification, a Vital Part of Responsible Pet Ownership**

Let's face it, pets get lost and occasionally stolen. They are often found by good people who would like nothing more than to return the pet to its home. Sometimes they are turned over to pounds and shelters and given a new home. Sadly, some are euthanized if a home can't be found or if they are deemed "unadoptable" due to age, illness, injury or behavior.

You may think that your home is a safe place for you pet, but accidents happen and pets escape. Sometimes bizarre circumstances like the incident detailed below happen, and you are going to regret not having good identification on your pet.

Here are the options and their pros and cons:

1. ID tags - inexpensive. easily obtained and carry your phone number  
- need a collar which can be removed or fall off
2. Licence tags - same as above but tracked through a municipal registry
3. Tattoos - permanently attached but can fade with time. sometimes hard to read. Tracking done by whichever tattoo scheme employed, Most common are Kennel club registries for purebreds and BCVMA/SPCA joint tattoo registry done at time of spay/neuter.
4. Microchips A high tech solution. They are permanent, last the life of the pet and are registered through a national computer data base. They are not visible so the finder needs to have access to a scanner. Microchips are the ultimate proof of ownership. They cannot be forged or removed. They are the most costly method, averaging around \$60 in most vet hospitals.

We routinely tattoo pets when they are in for neutering, it's an ideal time to do it but you must request it. Microchipping is also becoming increasingly popular. The method chosen is up to you but it's important to do something. It's very frustrating for us to have an injured pet brought to us with no identification and we are left with the dilemma of having to treat an injured pet without knowing if there is an owner.



### **Tattoo returns Patches to owner after bizarre theft.**

Patches was sitting in his owner's truck just minding his own business and watching the world go by when the unthinkable happened. The truck was stolen right out of the parking lot at Wal Mart! Patches' life suddenly took a strange turn and off he went for a ride with the thief.

The truck was never recovered, but Patches miraculously ended up in a shelter in Mission. Patches' owner was thoughtful enough to have us apply the BCVMA/SPCA tattoo in his ear when he was neutered. A phone call to the Sardis Animal Hospital and a quick check of our files re-united Patches with a much relieved owner.



## Heartworm season is around the corner

### Seasonal Issues

#### Heartworm

Heartworm testing starts in April and will continue through the summer months. Here are our current recommendations:

1. If your dog will be visiting the Okanagan valley (Or any other Heartworm area) during the summer months (mosquito season) He needs to be on Heartworm prevention.
2. If your dog has never been on prevention before or has not been tested in the last two years, he should have a blood test before starting preventive therapy. Its vital to identify positive dogs before going on preventing therapy. Positive dogs need additional therapy.
3. A puppy born after October 30 last year can go on preventive without a blood test, but should then be tested the following year and every two years thereafter, providing he regularly visits a Heartworm zone.
4. Dogs born in the Fraser Valley and never leaving the community do not need Heartworm prevention. That may change if naturally aquired cases start appearing here, so stay tuned.

A case of Heartworm was recently diagnosed in Vernon. Vets there believe the disease has moved up the Okanogan Valley, as previous cases were clustered in the South Okanogan.

### Counterfeit Flea prod- ucts



## Who can you trust?

Just about when you think you've heard it all.... The April 2004 news bulletin of our American colleagues contained an article indicating that American consumers are now the victims of bogus and counterfeit flea products being distributed through unethical channels and internet pharmacies. The products in question are Advantage and Frontline (which is not available in Canada). The products are packaged to look like the real thing, but have false EPA registration numbers and packaging that varies slightly from the real thing. The article states that the products apparently originate offshore and the product tubes lack English labelling. Typically labelling is in french or german. The article is unclear as to whether the tubes actually contain the proper active ingredient or something bogus. With counterfeit packaging from questionable sources there is no reason to believe the consumer is getting a useful product.

We've all seen the ads. "Buy your veterinary products online at a fraction of the cost charged by your veterinarian" Its the old story, you get what you pay for. There's no free ride here. At least your veterinarian is selling you the real stuff, obtained directly from the manufacturer. Other sources including retail outlets in the states are being victimized by this scam. To our knowledge the scam has not hit Canadian retailers yet. But if you're buying Advantage from an online pharmacy you may not be getting the real thing. Ethical Canadian marketing channels restricts sales of Advantage only to Veterinarians. If you find it for sale in retail outlets, there is a chance you are not getting the real thing. Be on the lookout! If you suspect you have counterfeit Advantage please bring it in to us.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the USA is cracking down on the sales of these counterfeit products. More information including photos of legitimate product can be found at [www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/petproduct.htm](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/petproduct.htm).



**Questions  
and Answers.**

This is a  
commonly  
asked ques-  
tion at the  
animal hospi-  
tal. -ed.

**Question:** My dog keeps "humping" my leg. I don't like it and its really embarassing when he does it to house guests.

**Answer:** Your dog isn't oversexed, he's just glad to see you!

Mounting and humping behavior is common social behavior in dogs. It is seen in all classes of dogs; males, females, spayed and neutered dogs and sexually immature puppies. Its especially common in situations of excitement and play. In nature, wild dogs and wolves will engage in pawing, jumping and mounting behavior, usually starting at the front and shoulders as part of greeting ceremonies. The submissive one will allow another to place paws then mount, but often it is followed by submissive rolling over and a few growls and kicks from the underdog and then the encounter is over. It rarely proceeds to any real sexual behavior. When a female in heat is involved, the encounter is quite different. There is ear posturing, tail flagging, sniffing and mounting from behind and rapid progression to sexual activity if the bitch is in standing heat.

Mounting is usually preceded by jumping up on the owner, and is often encouraged and triggered by rough-housing. Inconsistencies in training and discipline can also send mixed signals to the dog, for example allowing jumping up or allowing big dogs to place their paws on the owners chest or shoulders, then expecting different behavior with guests. In other words, the problem behavior may be unknowingly taught by the owner who thinks the dog can discriminate between guests who allow dogs to jump up and those who do not. (Or allowing it with old clothes on, but not new or allowing jumping outside but not inside).

Your embarrassment is a result of applying your human values to your pet, whose behavior is dictated by his own instincts. Don't worry, your dog is not some kind of sexual deviant, he or she is simply engaging in greeting and social dominance behavior normal for dogs, but it gets misdirected (and misinterpreted) because the behavior is directed to a species other than his own. Males that are "humping" will sometimes thrust aggressively and have erections.

When dogs became domesticated, their wild instincts survived in varying forms and degrees. So the social, packing behavior of dogs gets directed to members of his "pack" that is, you and your family. Since our pets are living in our world, we "train" them to accept our values. We teach them not to nip our hands, eliminate in the house, bark too much etc. etc. So add humping behavior to the list. But be kind and understanding with this one, your dog is displaying his social status to you so don't be too harsh with discipline. The best approach is to distract the dog, or re-direct the play to another bonding activity or play that will still send your dog the signal that you accept him as a member of your pack and that you genuinely return his attention and social position in a manner that is acceptable to you.





## **Pet Behavior Problems**

### **Ten Tips for Preventing Pet Behavior Problems**

1. Set rules and stick to them
2. Avoid situations that promote inappropriate behavior
3. Observe the pet and provide what it needs to be cared for and attended to.
4. Supervise the new pet diligently through undivided individual attention and training, and restrict the pet's access to a limited area of the house until training is complete.
5. Encourage good behavior with praise and attention.
6. Correct bad behaviors by providing positive alternatives. (a toy for a slipper, a scratching post for the sofa.)
7. Never physically punish or force compliance to commands. This may lead to fear biting or aggression.
8. Don't play rough or encourage aggression or play biting. (or tug-o-war games! -ed)
9. Expose pets to people, animals, and environments where you want them to live.
10. See your veterinarian if serious or unresolved behavior problems exist.

*The above article is from the American Animal Hospital Assoc web site  
[www.healthypet.com](http://www.healthypet.com) an excellent source of reliable information on pets.*

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### **Dog-Wolf Crossbreeding to be Outlawed in Yukon**

A part of Yukon folklore could soon be legislated out of existence as the government is proposing to ban the crossbreeding of wolves and dogs, known as wolf-hybrids. A change in the territory's new Captive Wildlife Act, set to become law in April 2004, will make it illegal to own, trade, or sell wolf-dogs. It will also make it illegal for veterinarians to treat the animals. (*ed note: I have problems with this, there is a humane issue*)

While many people claim their dogs are part wolf, Yukon Environment Minister Dr. Jim Kenyon says he has seen only a couple of genuine wolf-dogs in his lifetime. He reasons that while it is genetically possible to cross a wolf and a dog, he has found that wolves regard dogs solely as prey and that anyone who claims to have a wolf-dog is invariably mistaken.

According to Dr Kenyon, most people who deal in wolf-dogs are defrauding their customers. He says most people who believe they have wolf-hybrids have Malamute or Siberian Husky crosses. Existing wolf-dog owners may be allowed to keep their pets, but decisions will be made on a case-by-case- basis. For more information, visit [www.cbc.ca/stories/2004/02/03/yukon\\_wolf040203](http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2004/02/03/yukon_wolf040203)



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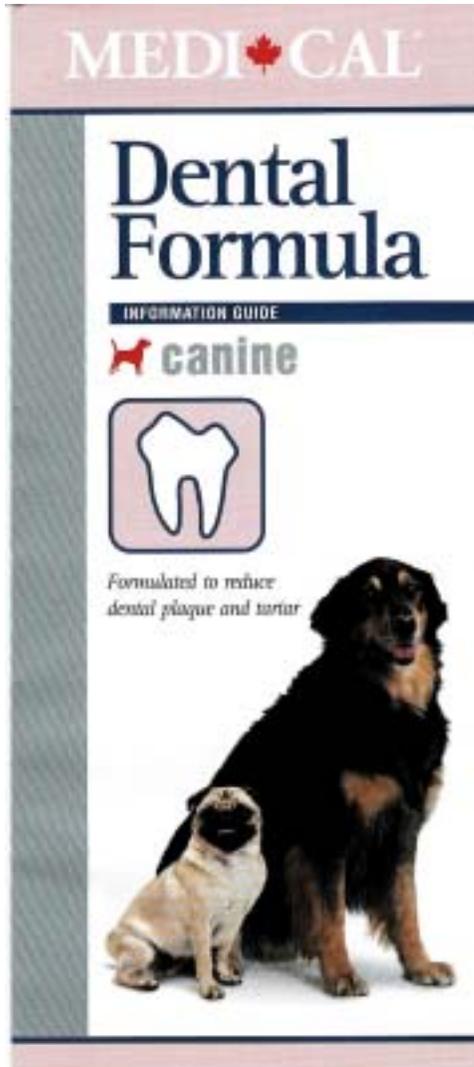
**Sign in Veterinarian's Waiting Room:**  
"Back in Five Minutes. Sit! Stay!"



## Featured Product - Medi-Cal Dental Formula for Dogs

### Featured Product

### Canine Dental Formula



Dental Formula is designed to reduce the accumulation of dental plaque and tartar, while providing a complete and balanced diet for the nutritional needs of adult and mature dogs. A larger kibble size and the addition of sodium hexametaphosphate work together to help reduce dental tartar and plaque.

The larger kibble size increases chewing action to help scrub away the plaque that accumulates on the chewing surfaces of dogs teeth. Sodium Hexametaphosphate (HMP) is the active ingredient that lessens tartar formation by binding the calcium that naturally occurs in dog saliva. Binding the calcium interferes with its ability to combine with plaque, thus preventing it from hardening into tartar. HMP has been demonstrated to be effective in the human oral health care field and is a safe food additive found in many products such as breakfast cereals, granola bars and fruit juices.

Dental formula is suitable for, and well accepted by both large and small breed dogs.

If you would like more information, stop by the office and pick up a copy of the brochure shown here.

### Pet Clones

#### Would you like to clone your pet?

Yes the world is getting more and more crazy. A company named "Genetic Savings and Clone" (really -- I'm not making this up-ed) of Sausalito, California is offering pet cloning as a commercial venture. For a mere \$50,000 (US) you can have your kitty cloned. They guarantee that the clone will be a genetic duplicate of your pet, but personality cannot be duplicated. The procedure is now offered for cats, but dogs will soon follow. Cloning Rover is apparently technically more difficult. Stay tuned for more on this one. Moral and ethical questions abound.

#### Past issues of this newsletter.

Previous editions of "Tails from the Dog House" are posted on the Sardis Animal Hospital Website: [www.sardisvet.com](http://www.sardisvet.com)