

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

EXTENSION DIVISION - VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY - BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA 24061

VIRGINIA-MARYLAND
REGIONAL COLLEGE
OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE

VIRGINIA VETERINARY NOTES



May-June 1982

No. 5

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Kent C. Roberts, D.V.M.,
Extension Specialist

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and September 30, 1977, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. W. R. Van Dresser, Dean, Extension Division, Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061; M. C. Harding, Sr., Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia 23803.

SUCCESS IS NO ACCIDENT

The use of reminder notices to regular clients is an ethical way to effectively serve the public and increase practice income. Notification of annual vaccinations, regular health checkups, dental examinations, heartworm tests, deworming treatments are all used routinely.

Most clients appreciate being reminded of procedures that are due. They know the reminding veterinarian is interested in them and their animal's health.

Are you doing all you can to provide quality health care for your patients? Regular use of reminder notices can help get the job done.

Kent C. Roberts, D.V.M.,
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Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA

PRACTICE TIPS

To check a dog for chyletiella infestation, pick up scales from the coat or skin with a strip of clear cellophane tape which is then placed directly on a microscope slide for examination.

Recurrent pyodermas can be an early sign of Cushing's disease (hyperadrenocorticism) in dogs, particularly the miniature poodle and dachshund breeds.

Pustules on a dog's skin do not always indicate a pyoderma. They also can result from demodex, ringworm, and autoimmune diseases.

Dr. Peter J. Ihrke
Davis, California
Presented at DC Academy
April, 1982
reported by
Kent C. Roberts, D.V.M.,
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CATFISH CULTURE IN MISSISSIPPI

Catfish are BIG in the state of Mississippi and getting bigger all the time. There are approximately 56,000 acres in catfish culture now and the total could go over 60,000 acres before another year is up. Most of the industry is centered in the Delta area, the alluvial flood plain of the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers on the western edge of the state. Here good flat land, feed grains, processing plants, and support services have contributed to the rapid growth of this food producing industry. It is a new industry--there were no commercial catfish operations before 1960. Expansion has been rapid since that time.

Channel catfish account for approximately 99% of the commercial food fish raised in Mississippi. They are a different "breed of cat" from the old bull-heads many fisherman are used to. Fish are kept in ponds ranging in size from 1/4 to 100 acres and fed expensive feed (32-35% protein) which includes a special vitamin package.

The number of fish/lb. per acre of pond has increased steadily from an average 1200 to 5000 over the years. Stocking density can be a critical factor in mortality statistics. Dissolved oxygen in the pond must be checked frequently and aeration started if the oxygen level drops too low. Hatcheries specialize in raising and selling catfish fingerlings for restocking ponds after harvest. Most farmers sell their fish crop when the fish reach an average 1 1/4 lb. size.

Five processing plants serve the industry in Mississippi and several more are being planned as markets expand into all areas of the country.

Kent C. Roberts, D.V.M.,
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from notes taken at
Fish Diseases Course
College of Veterinary Medicine
Mississippi State University
Starkville, Mississippi
May 17 - 28, 1982

THOUGHT FOR THIS MONTH

"He who ceases getting better, ceases being good."

HEARTWORM THERAPY

In recent months, several articles have appeared in lay magazines espousing the use of "new" drugs for heartworm prevention and treatment. Because of the popularity of these magazines and the so-called infallibility of the printed word, I anticipate you may be asked to answer numerous questions on this subject from your clientele.

Not only are these new treatments unreliable, but in some cases they may be injurious to the animal as well. One article recommended the use of piperazine as a heartworm preventative. Since the drug is cheap and safe to use, it could gain some popularity. I suspect this idea arose from the fact that piperazine is one of the breakdown products of diethylcarbamazine. However, research with piperazine has shown that it is not efficacious as a heartworm preventative.

Another article advocated the use of levamisole as a heartworm preventative. The author recommended that levamisole be given ten days out of each month. Because of the possible serious side-effects of this drug, this idea should definitely be discouraged.

It has also been written that a new non-arsenic drug is available for treatments against adult heartworms. At this point in time, I know of no such drug.

The current recommendations for management of heartworm disease are as follows:

- a. Prevention: diethylcarbamazine citrate at 2-3 mg/lb daily from the start of the mosquito season until two months after the first killing frost. In Illinois this is from approximately May 1 through December 15.
- b. Treatment for adult heartworms: sodium caparsolate at 0.1 ml/lb twice a day for two days.
- c. Treatment for microfilaria: With Dizan[®] currently off the market, there is no drug approved for use as a microfilaricidal agent in the dog. Because of this and the potential side effects of the drugs used, it is advisable to get written consent from the owner prior to treatment.

Treatment with any microfilaricide should begin no sooner than six weeks after treatment for the adults. Two drugs are currently being used to treat heartworm microfilaria:

1. Levamisole: 5 mg/lb per os once a day for six days. It should be given shortly after a light meal. A blood sample is then tested for microfilaria. If the test is positive, treatment is continued at three-day intervals until the animal is negative for microfilaria. Treatment should not exceed 15 days.

Vomiting is a common side effect with the use of levamisole. It can usually be controlled with the administration of atropine sulfate at a dose of .02 mg/kg per os given about one hour prior to levamisole administration.

If an animal exhibits any CNS signs such as trembling, restlessness, nervousness, or staggering, treatment should be discontinued immediately. Deaths have been reported with the use of this drug.

2. Fenthion (Spotton[®]): A potent organophosphate that is administered as a pour-on. The dosage is 1 ml per 10 lbs applied topically. The hair should be separated down the dorsal midline and the fenthion applied directly to the skin. The drug should be applied beginning in the tailhead region and extending anteriorly as far as the mid-cervical region. If any drug is left when this point is reached, it should then be applied beginning again in the tailhead region working anteriorly. Gloves should be worn during application.

One week after initial application of fenthion, a blood sample should be tested for microfilaria. If microfilaria are still present, fenthion application may be repeated up to two more times on a weekly basis with microfilaria rechecks following seven days later. No more than three weekly fenthion therapies should be given.

It is advisable to hospitalize the animal for 24 hours after treatment in a well-ventilated area in your clinic. There have been reports of clients suffering ill effects from inhalation of fumes from their dog when the animal was released soon after treatment.

Again, neither drug is approved for use in the dog and every precaution should be taken with their use. Both drugs thus far appear to be quite efficacious against microfilaria and the choice of drugs should be based on personal preference. With either drug, if microfilaria persist after using the maximum dosing regimens, strong consideration should be given to repeating adulticide therapy.

Allan Paul, D.V.M.,
Small Animal Extension Veterinarian
College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Illinois
Veterinary Professional Topics
Vol. 7, #2, 1982

THE BENEFITS OF CLIENT NEWSLETTERS

Client newsletters offer any veterinarian one of the most effective ways of building a practice. Here are several benefits:

1. Give your clients the latest updates on new drugs, procedures, services, etc.
2. Enhance your image and create goodwill by positive doctor-client communications.
3. Gain new clients through client referral and maintain a professional relationship with inactive clients.

4. Educate clients with information appropriate to their needs while extending your services between visits.

Newsletters mailed to clients have mostly been used by small animal practitioners, but an even greater potential exists for the food animal and equine practitioners since management and production knowledge is so economically essential to these clients.

There are several newsletter services veterinarians can subscribe to, or you could always write your own. A combination of these is also a possibility where a practice could add its own information in letter form with any issue.

Bulk rate mailing fees apply (with permit) on any mailing over two hundred pieces, and this is a considerable saving if any quantity is mailed. Your local printer can help you develop a format and assist you in producing mailing labels from your client master list. Any practice with a computer can have the computer print the labels or even print the newsletter itself if word processing capabilities are available. Newsletter services will also take care of the actual mailing for you to your specified client list.

Client newsletters are an ideal method of showing your clients you care about them and their animals. It is an excellent way of increasing their awareness and knowledge and keeping your name in the minds of your clients. This is important to help you keep clients, maintain their loyalty, and gain referrals. A newsletter makes your clients think of you first when they need veterinary services, and this builds practices. Your clients will appreciate your interest and will look forward to receiving this helpful and practical information from you as "something extra."

John P. Arthur, D.V.M.
Linden Heights Animal Hospital
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CANINE ACNE

Also known as muzzle furunculosis or juvenile pyoderma, canine acne can be a chronic, troublesome condition often resistant to treatment. It is a deep pyoderma of puppies involving structures beneath the hair follicles. A cellulitis involving the entire muzzle is not uncommon with this disease.

The first step is to prepare the owner for his or her dog's long-term, intensive therapy, outlining the resistant and chronic nature of canine acne. Emphasis should be placed on using a gentle touch in treating the affected areas. Sloughing and permanent scarring are frequent sequelae even when considerable care is exercised during treatment.

A twice daily use of 2 1/2% benzylperoxide for cleansing the skin and hair follicles is recommended. Gently massage into the affected areas for 5 to 10 minutes and follow with a thorough warm water rinse. The procedure may be used once daily following the first week's treatment. Should irritation due to benzylperoxide develop, switch to a povidoneiodine shampoo (Betadine scrub) or chlorhexidine (Nolvasan).

The use of systemic antibiotics is indicated in the more severe cases. Treatment may be carried out by the owner, but frequent rechecks by the attending veterinarian are recommended.

Most cases of canine acne clear up at puberty. Remember that demodicosis can complicate a case of canine acne.

Dr. Peter J. Ihrke
 Davis, California
 Presented at DC Academy
 April 1, 1982
 reported by
 Kent C. Roberts, D.V.M.,
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GUIDELINES FOR RECOMMENDING EUTHANASIA

The Equine Insurance Committee, with the concurrence of all insurance industry representatives present, recommended that the following criteria be considered in evaluating the immediate necessity of intentional destruction of the horse, to avoid and terminate incurable and excessive suffering:

1. Is the condition chronic and incurable?
2. Has the immediate condition a hopeless prognosis for life?
3. Is the horse a hazard to himself or his handlers?
4. Will the horse require constant pain-relieving medication for the remainder of his life?

The foregoing approved by AAEP last year is restated here at the request of the Committee because it has proven to be a real value in practice.

AAEP Report '82
 as reported in
Veterinary Professional Topics
College of Veterinary Medicine
 University of Illinois
 Vol. 8, #1, 1982

EARLY CASTRATION OF FOALS

We have done early castrations in ponies as early as 10 days of age and feel that this is a good time for them to be done for the following reasons:

1. Less distress and trauma to the animal.
2. Easier to handle at this age.
3. Quicker recovery from the surgery, with much fewer postsurgical complications. (The mare exercises the foal and supplies moral support.)
4. The foal develops into a more cooperative and evenly proportioned animal.

The only disadvantage is that they must always be done by the closed method, as many young foals seem to have very large inguinal rings. We use a tight half-hitch or a lockstich (of No. 1 catgut or No. 1 vicryl or dexon) through the cord to prevent the stitch slipping. We also try to be very careful not to incise into the testicle, as it tends to ooze out like toothpaste, which makes handling the remains difficult. A sterile swab forcep (similar to a whelping forcep) is a useful piece of equipment, to enable a lay helper to grip the testis, while the ligature is being applied.

James R. S. Forbes, M.R.C.V.S., B.V.Sc.
Armadale, Western Australia
as reported in
Veterinary Professional Topics
College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Illinois
Vol. 8, #1, 1982

MEETINGS

The following upcoming meetings may be of interest to veterinarians. If you need further information and programs, please contact Dr. Kent C. Roberts, at 961-6057.

July 6-9, 1982

Agri-Tech Week
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia

September 30-October 1, 1982

Bovine Practitioners Seminar
"Problems in Reproduction"
Frederick, Maryland

October 15, 1982

Equine Practitioners Seminar
Ramada Inn
Charlottesville, Virginia

Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine Extension Staff:

Dr. T. L. Bibb, Extension Specialist - Cattle and Sheep
Dr. C. T. Larsen, Extension Specialist - Avians
Dr. G. A. MacInnis, Extension Specialist - Swine
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Melissa Wade, Managing Editor of Virginia Veterinary Notes

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