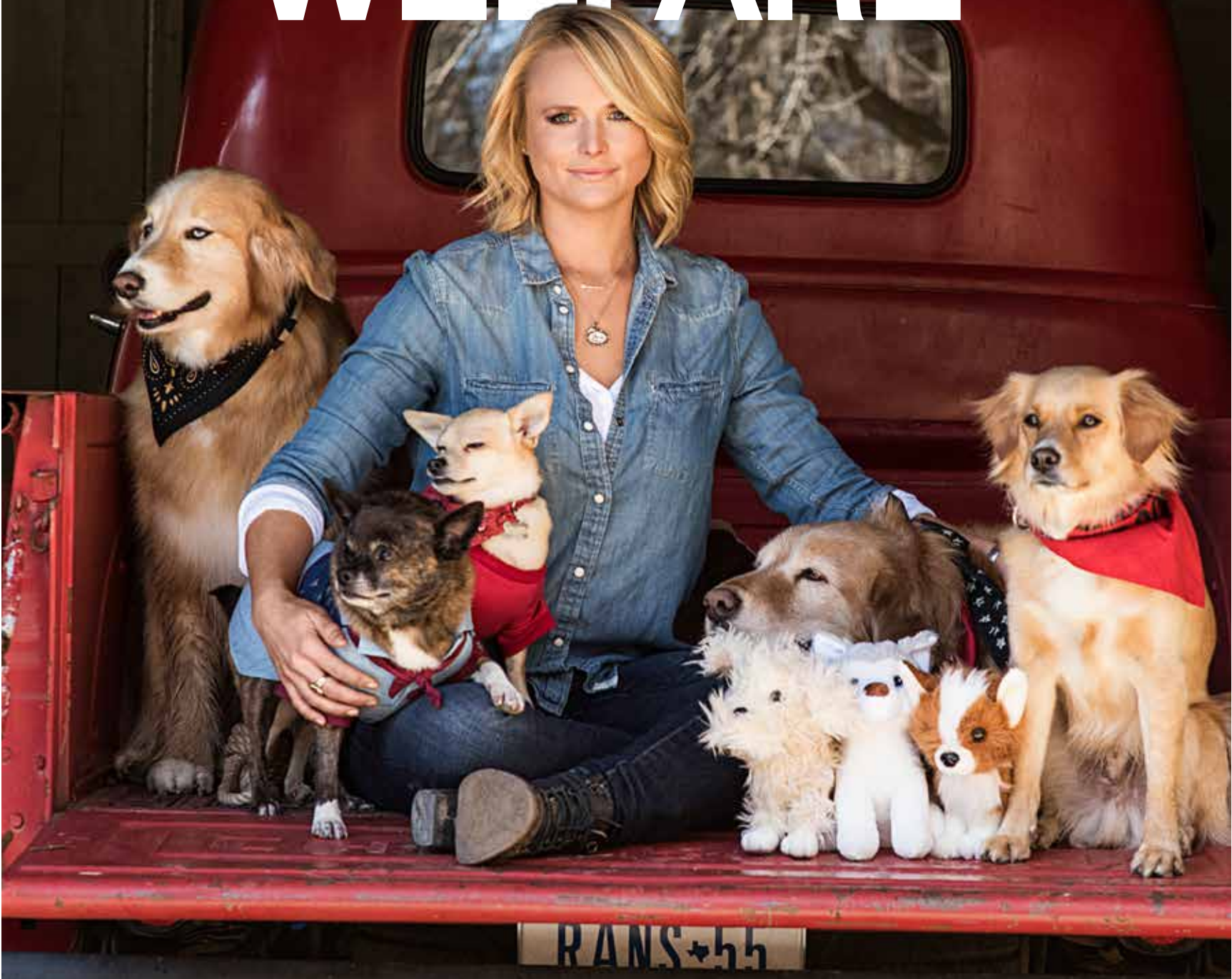


PET & ANIMAL WELFARE



Q&A with

Miranda Lambert

The award-winning country star and founder of the MuttNation Foundation tells us about her passion for pets

Mediaplanet When did you develop your passion and love for pets?

Miranda Lambert When I was a little girl, we always had dogs and stray animals my parents would take in. I grew up in rural Texas, so we always had people dumping all kinds of dogs in our front yard. I was surrounded by animals my whole life and always had a strong connection to dogs. It's a huge part of who I am, and I've never lost my passion for wanting to find homes for all of them.

MP How has being a pet parent brought joy to your life?

ML They love you for you. They always greet you with a smile and honestly, I don't know what I would do without them. It's so rewarding because they

know that you rescued them and gave them a better life, so they will love you unconditionally.

MP Tell us about MuttNation — what inspired you to start such a powerful organization?

ML When I adopted my first shelter dog Delilah, I realized how many amazing pups need homes, so we started a charity to promote adoption and raise money to help shelters. We started small, with just my mom and me, along with a couple of girls who were passionate about helping animals. We didn't want to just focus on one particular organization or shelter. We wanted to improve the lives of as many shelter animals as possible in different ways. I hope we can continue

to do more good across the country and help more dogs find forever homes.

MP What are some common misconceptions about shelter pets and why is supporting them so important?

ML Shelter pets are so grateful. There are rescues in all breeds if you look hard enough you will find your perfect pup, or he or she finds you, which happens most of the time. I want people to know that shelters are not scary places — they're actually really fun to visit. Nothing makes me happier than seeing someone adopt a shelter pet.

MP What does "responsible pet ownership" mean to you?

ML Get pets spayed and neutered. Treat them as a family member and

show them kindness. Also, I think all pets need some activity and sunshine in their life.

MP Describe a typical day with your furry friends. How do you make time to care for them all?

ML I have rescue dogs of all shapes and sizes — they're my best friends. We like to take walks on the farm and play in the pond, and just have fun together. We also cuddle in bed at night where they'll snore and steal the covers!

MP What advice would you give to new, current, or prospective pet owners?

ML Adopt, don't shop. Dogs are the greatest gift and I think you can only get a certain kind of love from the heart of a rescue dog.

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VCA Animal Hospitals

Canine Influenza: Everything You Need to Know



Dr. Jason Stull
VMD, MPVM, PhD, DACVPM
Assistant Professor,
Department of Veterinary
Preventive Medicine,
The Ohio State University

The canine influenza virus — or dog flu — is a serious and sometimes fatal respiratory disease that affects dogs. Although most North American cases have occurred in the U.S., four Ontario cities recently experienced outbreaks which, thanks to some deft public health interventions, were swiftly brought under control.

Symptoms of dog flu are similar to those of human flu - lethargy, fever, cough and, in extreme cases, pneumonia. It is transmitted via dog to dog contact. While humans cannot get the virus from dogs, humans can spread it to other dogs through their hands and clothing, where the virus can live for two days.

Prevention is key

Preventing the spread of infection starts with avoiding contact with sick dogs. “A dog can be infectious for up to three weeks, so dogs with suspected flu virus should be kept away from any canine group settings such as doggie daycare,

boarding kennels, and dog parks until they are fully recovered,” says Dr. Jason Stull, Assistant Professor in the Department of Veterinary Preventive Medicine at The Ohio State University.

If travelling with your dog, there are several things you can do to keep your dog safe from infection. “First, be aware of what’s happening from a disease standpoint, not only in your own area, but the area you’re going to,” says Dr. Stull. “That alone can make a huge impact in preventing the movement of the disease.”

Second, think about what your dog will be doing. “It’s probably not the best idea to bring that dog to a place where it’s going to have contact with lots of other dogs, especially if you’re just moving in and out of the area,” says Dr. Stull.

Finally, consider vaccinating your dog. The canine influenza vaccine is available in Canada, but to be effective it needs to be given two months before a trip, as it requires two doses, with

adequate timing between doses and after the final dose. It also requires a yearly booster.

If your dog is showing flu like symp-

“*Canine influenza can be extremely dangerous to other animals, including your own, so people need to take it seriously.*”

toms, contact your veterinary health care provider. If you are bringing your dog to the clinic, tell the staff you suspect they have the flu, so they can recommend appropriate precautions to avoid spreading the infection. “There have been a number of situations in the US where simply bringing an infected dog into the waiting room of one of these veterinary clinics resulted in an outbreak,” says Dr. Stull.

Healing starts at home

In many cases, a sick dog will recover well at home with a bit of rest, cough suppressants, and some tender loving care. “It’s much as you would do for preventing spread of the human flu,” says Dr. Stull. “Wash your hands frequently, avoid contact with other dogs and wait until your dog has fully recovered before letting them around other dogs again.”

As with any disease, prevention is easier than controlling its spread or treating a severe case. Therefore, it’s important for dog owners throughout Canada, and especially in Ontario, to be aware of this disease, know the risks, and take proper measures to ensure the safety of their pets. “Canine influenza can be extremely dangerous to other animals, including your own, so people need to take it seriously,” says Dr. Stull.

Anne Papmehl



Dog flu has been reported in our area.

IS YOUR DOG AT RISK?

Ask your veterinarian about vaccination that can help protect your dog against canine influenza virus (CIV).

How to Keep Your Cat Parasite-Free this Summer



Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien
DVM, DABVP, Feline
Specialist, The Cat Clinic

Summer has returned, and Canadians are rejoicing at the opportunity to spend more time outdoors. So, too, are their pets.

With a rapidly growing tick population, dog owners are already on high alert. But cat owners are often unaware just how important it is to keep their own furry friends safe from unsavoury critters. “Fleas and ticks on cats are a real public health issue,” says Dr. Elizabeth O’Brien, Feline Specialist at The Cat Clinic in Hamilton. “We see cats with flea allergy dermatitis and skin irritation. I’ve seen kittens die from anemia because of fleas. Fleas carry tapeworms and blood parasites, so your cat can get an internal parasite from an external parasite.”

An invisible problem can still be a big problem

Waiting until you see signs of fleas or ticks before worrying about it is not the

way to protect your cat, your family, or your home. By the time you see that first flea or tick, your cat has already been exposed to a variety of things that could cause serious health problems. Worse, you might never see that flea or tick at all.

“Cats are fastidious,” Dr. O’Brien reminds us. “You may never see a single flea or tick because your cat is cleaning those little monsters off. I’ll see cats with no sign of fleas who are presenting with skin irritation and it turns out that the house is completely infested.”

She also talks about the myth of the indoor cat. Just because your cat isn’t allowed outdoors doesn’t mean they are safe. A brief jaunt to the porch or a visit from a neighbour’s dog can be

enough to expose them. Sometimes owners even bring fleas or ticks into the house on their clothing. “The worst flea infestations I’ve ever seen have been on indoor cats because they’ve often had no prevention,” Dr. O’Brien says.

“*The worst flea infestations I’ve ever seen have been on indoor cats because they’ve often had no prevention.*”

It’s all about prevention

The good news is that easy, safe, and effective prevention options exist to support feline health. “There is one product out there that prevents both fleas and ticks,” says Dr. O’Brien. “It’s a liquid that goes on the back of the cat’s neck, and the huge majority of cats tol-

erate it very well.”

Be sure to ask your veterinarian about preventative medicine, as they can help you determine the best course of action for your cat. It’s especially important not to use products — particularly those designed for dogs — without a consultation. “Some of the dog products can cause problems in cats or even kill them,” says Dr. O’Brien. “Also, it needs to be dosed appropriately. These medications are prescribed for a reason.”

This summer, be proactive about your cat’s health. If you put a diagnosis off until you see signs of a problem, that problem could be very large indeed. “It’s all about prevention, prevention, prevention,” says Dr. O’Brien. “Prevention for the health of the cat and prevention for the health of the owner.”

D.F. McCourt



TIME TO TALK TO YOUR VETERINARIAN ABOUT FLEA AND TICK CONTROL.

The Scoop on Supplements

If your pet is incessantly scratching hot spots, suffering from runny eyes, or sporting a dull, greasy coat, you should take a good hard look at what your pet is eating.

“Feeding your dog or cat high-quality fresh food without chemical additives, preservatives, or by-products is the surest way to achieve optimum health,” says Dr. Christina Chambreau, a homeopathic veterinarian based in Maryland.

The problem is that most domestic canine and feline diets consist of processed food. When pet food is processed at a high temperature — like most kibble is — much of the food’s natural vitamins, minerals, enzymes and amino acids are compromised.

But the main issue for those who are concerned with pet nutrition is the high level of carbohydrates in processed kibble. An overly high carb intake — coupled with a low intake of other necessary nutrients — can cause a nutritional imbalance in pets leading to several chronic health issues.

Health starts on the inside

Incorporating dietary supplements into a pet’s nutritional regimen is a great way to address this imbalance and improve chronic health problems like hot spots, allergies, and greasy skin. But make sure the supplements are approved — with a Veterinary Health Product number from Health Canada — and that they only contain Health Canada-approved ingredients.

Many pet supplements do not include both omega-3 and omega-6, which are the two essential fatty acids that pets must obtain through their

diet. Those on a processed food diet get more than enough omega-6, but not nearly enough omega-3 or a-linolenic acid, which can ultimately result in skin problems.

The best fatty acid supplements for the vast majority of dogs and cats are omega-3, -6 and -9 blends made from a combination of fish oils — such as salmon, sardine, or herring — and vegetable-derived oils like flax that have a-linolenic acid. There are several supplements on the market — such as Canadian brand BiologicVET — that contain the right fatty acids to support your pet’s overall health.

“BiologicVET supplements are carefully formulated to work to maximize the nutritional content of your pet’s diet,” says Ken Cowan, the company’s National Sales Manager.

For healthier skin and coats, for example, Cowan suggests Bio-SKIN&COAT — a prebiotic powder that

can be easily mixed into any food and contains a natural, bioflavonoid-based antihistamine. Regular use alongside a balanced fatty acid supplement helps to alleviate allergies, supports healthy immune and hormone function, and keeps your pet’s coat shiny.

When it comes to your four-legged friend, it’s important to keep the same eye on their diet in the way you would your own. “Pet owners appreciate the nutritional value from organic, wholesome, and fresh produce when it comes to their health,” says Dr. Chambreau. “Yet, amazingly, when it comes to feeding their pets and their pets’ health, they ignore all that they believe to be true.”

Catherine Roberts

“When it comes to feeding their pets and their pets’ health, pet owners ignore all that they believe to be true.”



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Helping Pets Thrive with Whole Foods



Maria Ringo
Co-Founder & Director of Health care, Carna4



Dr. Bianca Ferenczy, DVM
Owner, Park Avenue Veterinary Services

With a growing awareness of the importance of dietary changes for optimal health in pets, many owners have tried to make the switch from store-bought, mass-produced extruded kibble to the raw diet now seen as the most species-appropriate way to nurture the beloved, furry members of the family. But on busy weeknights, chopping extra broccoli and scouring markets for meaty bones is simply too much, even if a diet of meats, grains, fruit, and vegetables is an all-natural route to improved pet health.

Try whole foods

Maria Ringo, Co-Founder and Director of Healthcare for Carna4 Handcrafted Pet Food, has heard that lament time and again. A lifelong “health food nut,” she

started one of North America’s first raw pet food brands in the 1980s while raising bull mastiffs and working at a health food co-op. She wanted to feed her dogs the same quality food she desired for herself and saw raw feeding as the answer. A few decades later, Ringo now realizes that although many people believe raw feeding is ideal, it’s also expensive, complex, and time-consuming.

“We came up with Carna4, a perfect solution for busy people who want whole foods that are synthetic-free and real, natural diets for their dogs and cats,” she says. Carna4 pet foods are quick-baked

and air-dried to preserve nutrients, and contain no animal by-products, “meat meals” or powdered vitamin-mineral mixes that are made in labs overseas.

“Our ingredients are 100 percent real food you’d recognize,” Ringo says. For example, a bag of Carna4 Grain-Free Duck dog food contains duck, pork liver, eggs, organic sprouted seed, herring, fava beans, kelp, sweet potato, and organic sprouted flax seed, among other produce, all grown in North America. Because anything can be labelled

“natural,” it’s important for owners to read the list of ingredients and look for chemicals, additives, and synthetics.

Read the ingredients

At her clinic in Guelph, holistic veterinarian Dr. Bianca Ferenczy often sees patients who want to start or continue raw or whole-foods based diets for their pets. After making the switch from an overly-processed diet to a whole foods-based diet, she sees improvement in coat lustre, energy, and overall fat and muscle distribution. Anecdotally, she sees animals with a whole foods diet thrive into old age.

“It’s like the difference between eating fast food or boxed food, or going to the market and buying fresh fruit and vegetables and meats,” Dr. Ferenczy says. Where appropriate and feasible, she recommends a raw or slightly-cooked whole foods diet “made from wholesome ingredients and properly prepared.”

With many so-called natural products on the market, consumers need to be savvy.

Fortunately, companies like Carna4 are able to provide convenience in addition to ingredients that are recognizable and minimally-processed, meaning animals can absorb the available nutrition for optimal pet health and improved bodily function, just like their human companions.

“I love seeing people and animals thrive through proper nutrition,” Ringo says.

Zoe Davey

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Is Your Pet in Pain?



Dr. Walt Ingwersen
President, WSAVA

Untreated pain can have a negative impact on our pets’ lives — just as it would on our own.

While pain in dogs and cats is as prevalent today as it was in past decades, advances in veterinary medicine are making it easier to assess, identify and treat animals in pain to ensure good long-term pet health and quality of life. Pet owners can help by learning to read the signs of pain in their dogs and cats.

Watch for behavioural changes

“The most common indicators of pain in dogs and cats are loss of normal behaviours and gaining of abnormal behaviours,” says Dr. Walt Ingwersen, President of The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA). “There are also nuances in how animals respond to pain that are important

for people to recognize,” he says. For example, “Animals will respond differently to acute pain, like an injury or surgery, than they will to chronic pain — and dogs respond differently than cats.” Because dogs tend to be more emotionally attached to their owners, and to do more physical activities like walking, hiking and playing fetch, the subtle signs of pain are usually more obvious.

Cats, on the other hand, tend to be more sedentary, individual and agile, making it easier for them to hide their pain and harder for their owners to recognize it.

A common cause of chronic pain in dogs and cats is osteoarthritis, which progresses as the animal ages. “The dog may become a bit grumpier and less tolerant around rambunctious children, who may interact with the dog through hugging, holding, and grabbing,” says Dr. Ingwersen. Or the dog may repeatedly lick a sore joint area in an attempt to relieve the discomfort. Other signs are holding a leg up, not running as fast, or losing that zest for chasing a ball.

A cat with chronic pain may no longer jump directly onto the kitchen table or counter, but climb with the aid of a stool or chair. The cat may groom more often, trying to alleviate pain in a certain area or less often to avoid an area that’s now painful to reach. Changes in litter box behaviour are another indicator.

“Cats like to keep their environment clean,” says Dr. Ingwersen, “so if the cat’s not using the box, it may be that it’s now painful for him or her

to go down a flight of stairs if the litterbox is in the basement or the box itself may be too high to jump into.”

By recognizing these behavioural changes, owners can help their veterinarian accurately assess the animal’s pain and its origin, and design an appropriate treatment plan. For example, telling the vet that your dog is eating on one side of its mouth would signal to the vet to check for a possible dental problem.

Response to treatment — the gold standard

There are many veterinary pharmaceutical options that are available as well as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs that offer effective pain management in animals. Determining the appropriate choice and dose should be done in consultation with the vet.

Gauging treatment effectiveness comes down to answering one simple question: does the animal respond? If your dog’s enthusiasm for his fetch game returns or your cat is starting to annoy you again by jumping on the kitchen counter as you make dinner, chances are your pet’s pain is under control.

Our ability to read our pets’ behaviour empowers us to be better advocates for them. So if you see changes in their behaviour, don’t ignore it — explore it.

Anne Papmehl



Good Dental Hygiene Makes for Happy, Healthy Pets

80 percent of dogs and cats will require some form of dental treatment by age two

When it comes to our pets, dental health care is one area that’s often overlooked. While we take care of our four-legged friends in many ways — ensuring they’re vaccinated, getting enough exercise, and eating well — we don’t pay the same attention to their dental care.

Yet dental disease is one of the most common health issues in dogs and cats. If left undetected and untreated, it can lead to an array of problems that can go beyond the mouth. Not only can your pet suffer from swollen gums, loose teeth, and tooth loss but the bacteria in their mouth can also have significant health impacts on the rest of their body, including their heart, liver, and kidneys.

Dental health care begins with prevention

Early signs of periodontal disease can include inflamed gums, bad breath, changes in eating habits such as avoiding hard food, difficulty eating, excessive drooling, and behavioural changes.

Dr. Lorraine Hiscox is the Owner of the Derry Road Animal Hospital in Mississauga and specializes in veterinary dentistry for dogs and cats. She wants pet-owners to take a more proactive approach with dental health.

“Prevention is key to keeping our pets’ oral health in check and it’s far more effective than treatment,” says Dr. Hiscox.

“But most people overlook this important part of their pet’s care

“**Prevention is key to keeping our pets’ oral health in check and it’s far more effective than treatment.**”

Dr. Lorraine Hiscox, DVM

and tend to think of dental health as something reserved for humans, and humans alone.”

How to keep oral disease at bay

Fortunately, periodontal disease is preventable and it starts at home with regular dental care. One of the most effective ways to fight plaque build-up at home is brushing, notes Dr. Hiscox. Three to four times a week with pet-

friendly toothpaste should do the trick.

“Dental wipes are an easy way to clean the sensitive area where the gum meets the tooth,” recommends Dr. Hiscox. “Water additives and dental spray also help fight plaque, tartar, and freshen their breath.”


80 percent of dogs and cats will require some form of dental treatment by the age of two. Beyond at-home dental care, it’s important to schedule a professional cleaning with your family vet at least once a year. “Ensure your vet will perform oral radiography during the cleaning,” recommends Dr. Hiscox.

“It’s the only way to properly examine each tooth and assess for early signs of disease.”


It’s easy to help our furry friends avoid the pain, discomfort, and long-term health implications caused by periodontal diseases. We simply have to give the same care and attention to our pets’ dental health care as we do our own.

Melissa Vekil


EFFECTIVE DENTAL HEALTH OPTIONS




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Ontario SPCA Kicks Off No Hot Pets Campaign



Connie Mallory
Chief Inspector,
Ontario SPCA

“I left the window down for him.”
“I wasn’t going to be gone long.” We’ve heard it all. The issue of owners leaving their pets in their vehicles during the hot summer months, putting animals’ safety at risk and even causing death, is an ongoing problem across Ontario. There is no excuse for leaving a pet unattended in a vehicle

and this summer the public’s help is needed to share this important message.

The Ontario SPCA launched its 2018 No Hot Pets campaign on June 21 in partnership with SPCAs and humane societies across Canada, to remind the public about the danger of leaving pets unattended in vehicles.

Parked cars can quickly reach deadly temperatures, even on relatively mild days with the car parked in the shade and the windows slightly open. Dogs, in particular, have a limited ability to sweat, so even a short time in a hot environment can be life-threatening.

“People still aren’t getting the message about how dangerous it is to leave your pet unattended in a vehicle,” says Connie Mallory, Chief Inspector at the Ontario SPCA. “It’s completely unacceptable. Leave your pet at

home and if you must take your pet, make sure that someone is with it at all times.”

“There is a zero-tolerance policy for anyone who puts an animal in distress by leaving them unattended in a vehicle. If the Ontario SPCA responds to a dog-in-car call and the dog is deemed to be in distress, the owner will be charged under the *Ontario SPCA Act* for permitting distress,” says Mallory.

Businesses across the province are also getting on board with the No Hot Pets campaign and are welcoming animals into their place of business while pet owners shop. For a complete list of participating businesses, as well as information on how to register, visit nohotpets.ca.

If you observe an animal suffering in the heat, call 310-SPCA (7722) or your local police.



HERE’S HOW YOU CAN HELP

–1–

Share the dangers of leaving pets in vehicles using the hashtag **#nohotpets** on social media.

–2–

Ask your municipality to enact a bylaw relating to dogs in cars.

–3–

Take the pledge at nohotpets.ca to never leave an animal in a vehicle and to report it if you see it happen.

I LEFT THE WINDOW DOWN FOR HIM

NO EXCUSES
NO HOT PETS

A PROGRAM OF THE ONTARIO SPCA

Hot cars can kill. Even with the window down your pet can overheat in a matter of minutes.

If you find a pet in a hot car, call **310-SPCA** or your local police department. Learn more and take the pledge at: nohotpets.ca

The Importance of Preventative Medicine in Agriculture



Dr. Troye McPherson
President, CVMA

According to the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), about 75 percent of infectious diseases affecting humans have historically originated in animals. This is why the concept of One Health — in which the health of humans, animals, and the environment are inherently interdependent — is critically important.

“You can’t separate the three. They are interconnected,” says Dr. Troye McPherson, a veterinarian for 30 years and current President of the CVMA. “We have been working to create a

to treat,” says Dr. McPherson. “Vaccines are safe, effective, and play an important role in preventing disease outbreak and illness.” Healthy livestock also means Canadian farmers have a sustainable market for their products, contributing to healthy communities across the country.

The role of antibiotics

You may have heard your doctor talk about the appropriate use of antibiotics — the same is true for animals.

“While antibiotics are important for the health of animals, we’ve

“*We have been working to create a greater awareness that the protection of animal and environmental health is good for human health.*”

greater awareness that the protection of animal and environmental health is good for human health.” The One Health framework has gained widespread adoption by governments, academics, the medical community, and non-profit organizations.

Healthy herds, healthy communities

Herd health is an important component of farm management, so to ensure the health of their animals, farmers collaborate frequently with veterinarians. The same conversations society has about vaccines for people are being had in the agricultural and veterinary community.

The spread of communicable disease is a concern for human and animal populations alike. “Preventative medicine is critical because some animals can hide illness and when symptoms do show up it can be harder

developed a framework for veterinarians to ensure that antibiotics are only used when medically necessary,” says Dr. McPherson. “Testing procedures are in place when they are used for dairy cows and livestock to ensure human safety.”

The CVMA is developing a system that will allow veterinarians to begin tracking the use of antibiotics.

Dr. McPherson notes that some European countries have shown that tracking leads to significant declines in the administration of antibiotics, which can be good for overall health as animals are less likely to build resistance.

“Farmers are proud of what they do and care very much for their animals,” she says, “but they also want to ensure the health of those who consume their products.”

Ken Donohue



Is Antibiotic Use in Livestock a Threat to Human Health?



Michel Fortin
President & CEO,
Pevtec Microbia

Over the past decade, there has been a growing concern worldwide about the overuse of antibiotics and the effect it has on creating antimicrobial resistance (AMR). This phenomenon occurs when bacteria become resistant to antibiotics. The overuse of antibiotics in both medicine and animal farming is thought to contribute to this resistance. It’s an issue of growing concern because the fear is that bacteria will become increasingly difficult to combat and could evolve into “super bugs” — powerful bacteria that cause severe, life-threatening illness.

Even the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that AMR is a serious global threat. While there is some debate among scientists, many feel that antibiotic use in farm animals raised for human consumption plays a key role in increasing antimicrobial resistance in humans. In fact, in 2017 the WHO recommended that “farmers and the food industry [should] stop using antibiotics routinely to promote growth and prevent disease in healthy animals.”

Increasing food and animal safety

Pevtec Microbia, a Canadian biotechnology company that develops vaccines and other technologies for livestock health, also takes the threat of AMR seriously and hopes to lessen the farming industry’s reliance on antibiotics.

“The vaccines we make for farm animals rely on biological technologies rather than antibiotics,” explains Michel Fortin, President and CEO of

Pevtec Microbia. “I totally support the WHO recommendation, considering antibiotic resistance is a risk for humans. It’s the right thing to do for the planet.”

Many meat producers and government organizations see the value of an antibiotic-free solution to meat management. Approximately 20 to 25 percent of pigs in Canada are vaccinated with Pevtec Microbia vaccines, and the company has just announced that five million doses of its vaccine Coliprotec® F4/F18 have been sold to the European Union for use in pig farming. “What also makes Coliprotec special is that the vaccine is administered to the piglets through drinking water. So, it’s not an injection, which is less stressful for the animals and better for animal health overall,” says Fortin. “It’s part of a growing trend that supports food safety and animal wellness.”

Pevtec Microbia’s overall goal is to prevent disease in livestock, contributing to a reduction in the farming industry’s reliance on antibiotics. “By working with veterinarians, producers, and regulatory authorities,” he says, “we want to contribute to the availability of safe, good quality products that are affordable and sustainable.”

Sandra MacGregor

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Maximizing Support for Animal Welfare



Leanne McConnachie
Board President,
AWFC

Helping animals can create a more compassionate society, but it can be tough for animal lovers to know where their donation dollars can best serve the wild and woolly creatures they wish to protect.

The Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada (AWFC) helps donors maximize their charitable gifts. The foundation is run by a volunteer panel of animal welfare experts whose primary goal is to ensure that the animal welfare charities they support are truly fulfilling their objectives.

“We support organizations we think will have the most impact on animals,” says AWFC Board President Leanne McConnachie. “People who love animals can sometimes be overwhelmed by these decisions. They’re not sure who to give to, and they can get misled simply because a group sent them an evocative picture that pulls at the heartstrings.”

Since 1965, the AWFC’s grant programs have funded dozens of projects across Canada that support the welfare of all animals — at home, on farms, in research laboratories, in zoos, and in

the wild — through research, public outreach, and education.

Recent projects include a program run by Wolf Awareness to educate Ontario’s farming community about non-lethal coexistence between livestock and predators, and a grant to Sierra Club Canada’s Atlantic chapter supporting their Watch for Wildlife

“*How we treat animals says a lot about our own empathy and compassion as human beings, not only toward animals but toward each other.*”

campaign to reduce road collisions with animals. The AWFC partially funded Humane Canada’s participation in the creation of *Codes of Practice* for farm animals, as well as many programs benefitting companion animals.

The AWFC receives small, individual donations as well as substantial legacy gifts through estates, and awards about

\$35,000 per year to registered Canadian charities. Applicants must submit a letter of intent to the AWFC and short-listed groups are invited to submit a full proposal in the following months. The board reviews all proposals based on outcomes, assessing the impact of the program on animal welfare, without advocating for one perspective over another.

“We are able to support a wide variety of groups, and we are constantly changing who gets support depending on the worthiness of the project,” says McConnachie.

For donors wanting to explore other options, McConnachie recommends looking into an organization’s philosophy. It is important to consider the proportion of donations dedicated to fundraising and salaries, but McConnachie believes it’s more important to ensure the organization aligns with the donor’s values.

“Once you know what a charity stands for and what it stands against,

you’re in a better position to know whether you share a common vision,” she says. Donors can also review the management team and determine whether the charity has delivered meaningful results, such as influencing regulatory changes or eliminating a harmful practice.

If that seems time-consuming, consider donating through the AWFC, whose passionate team of animal welfare professionals has already done the legwork.

“How we treat animals says a lot about our own empathy and compassion as human beings, not only toward animals but toward each other,” McConnachie says. “Helping animals is about looking beyond ourselves.”

Learn more at awfc.ca.

Zoe Davey

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