

Yass Veterinary Hospital

Caring for all creatures great and small

Spring 2009 Newsletter

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Staff Goings On!

There has been much activity amongst the staff since our last newsletter in May. Our congratulations go to Tim and Leanne Smith after Leanne (one of our long standing practise nurses and groomers) delivered a bouncing baby boy, named Tyler, in August. Louise Hill (one of our receptionists) and her partner Peter are expecting a baby in October and we wish them all the best for the birth of their 2nd child.

Due to the fecundity of our staff we welcome new staff members Debbie Frew to reception, Louise Duncan and Tessa Ivison as practice nurses and Viv Raine to the grooming parlour.

Congratulations also to Karishma & Tim who announced their engagement in May. We wish them a long, happy and healthy life together.

Our staff has been busy attending conferences to further their knowledge and disseminate new ideas through the hospital. Peter and Stuart attended the Australian Veterinary Association Annual Conference in Darwin in May where Peter was awarded a prestigious Meritorious Service Medal for his long and dedicated service to the Australian Veterinary Association. Stuart attended the Australian Alpaca Vets Conference in July, Peter attended the Australian Small Animal Vets Conference in August and Petrea is due to attend a Cat Conference in September in Queensland. Alisha & Anita (two of our nurses) attended the Australian Veterinary Nurse Conference in Melbourne in June.

A Note from Peter...

After 37 years in veterinary practice, 31.5 of those in Yass, I have decided to "call it a day" as far as full time work, after hours duties and weekends are concerned. This decision has not been taken lightly and was made one wet, cold July Sunday night (whilst my dinner sat on the table and it was bleak and cold outside) in 2007!!

But I am not retiring. Far from it; I still hope to work 3 days per week at Yass. This, combined with my Australian Veterinary Association involvement will keep me busy. Trish and I will also travel in Australia and overseas. I will also do locum work as needed and will, through my ancestry, be able to work in the UK without any problem. A stint in "Herriot Country" will be most welcome I can assure you.

I have greatly enjoyed every minute of my time in Yass, my home, firstly as an employee then partner, sole owner and the last 14 years in partnership with Stuart. I have seen the practice grow from 4 employees, (2 vets and 2 ancillary staff) to over 15, now employing 4 full time equivalent veterinarians.

So, you are not rid of me yet!! Thanks to all our clients, past and present. It has been an honour to have looked after your pets, companions and livestock.

All the best to Stuart and Cath; however I will be in the background to support the new team and watch it develop.

GROOMING PARLOUR

IN FULL SWING

Our Grooming Parlour is in full swing as we enter summer with our experienced, caring and dedicated team of Viv Raine and our nurses clipping, grooming and bathing dogs and cats every day.

If you have not had your pet groomed at our Grooming Parlour before, we recommend you have a brief consultation with one of the team to explain how you would like to have your pet groomed.

At the same time one of our vets can examine your pet, if it has a medical condition requiring attention.

They are also able to administer sedation if your pet is nervous or anxious about being clipped, making it easier for everybody

Call us today
6226 4444
for an appointment



Cat Fight Abscesses

Infected wounds and abscesses from cat fights are one of the most common reasons we see cats at the Yass Veterinary Hospital. Cats are very territorial, and defend themselves with teeth & claws. When these claws & teeth break the skin of other cats (or humans), germs are deposited from the teeth & claws into the traumatised tissue and develop into a painful infection. Left unresolved these infections then develop into abscess (collection of pus under the skin) in a few days.

Cats initially are sore around the wound and if on a limb will be lame on that leg. They develop a high temperature, go off their food & become less active.

With large wounds and nasty generalised infections the cat can become very toxic & dehydrated. Initially a break in the skin is seen usually with a small amount of discharge. As the infection develops, over a few days, the small wounds close

over and a firm painful fluid swelling develops (an abscess). The abscess usually ruptures and a lot of moist, yellow, smelly pus is discharged from the wound and an area of devitalised skin may fall out revealing a pocket of deeper infected reddened tissues. Left untreated the wound heals and another abscess develops and breaks out again. The cat becomes chronically ill, loses weight and may develop associated diseases eg potentially fatal kidney disease or chest infections.

Early intervention is the most successful treatment and stops infections developing into abscesses. The wounds are clipped and the cat is started on a course of antibiotics. Abscesses need to be drained under a general anaesthetic often with supportive intravenous fluids. A hole is placed in the bottom of the abscess to allow drainage and sometimes a piece of rubber tubing is inserted to keep the hole open & draining. Devitalised tissue is surgically removed opening up the abscess. Most abscesses resolve with no untoward effects.

Having your cats de-sexed, keeping them inside at night or housing them in a specially designed cat house will dramatically reduce the incidence of cat fight injuries.

Poisonings and Intoxications

Unfortunately, we are commonly presented with various poisonings and intoxications in our small animals.

1080 Fox Baits Ingestion of a fox bait is a medical emergency. Dogs quickly develop twitching, difficult breathing, start vomiting, defecating and urinating. They may begin to run around uncontrollably and bark wildly. This phase quickly develops to convulsions, muscular tremors, coma and death. Often dogs are too severely affected to make them vomit in order to remove the poison and subsequently most dogs die despite instigation of treatment. However of late, with the use of large doses of bicarbonate intravenously long acting anaesthetic more are surviving.

Snail Baits These poisonings are relatively common especially in the spring. Snail baits can be palatable to some inquisitive dogs. Dogs present with numerous signs including vomiting, in coordination, salivation, muscle twitching and tremors, vomiting, mucousy diarrhoea, difficult breathing, convulsions, coma and death. Treatment of these dogs involves making them vomit, starting iv fluids, anaesthetising them to control the convulsions and hospitalisation. There are 2 types of poisons used in snail

baits and affected dogs present almost identically. With the blue types of baits (eg Baysol), we are able to administer an antidote. There is however, no antidote to the green types of baits (eg Defender). Multiguard (red, brown or yellow) is safer but can cause vomiting and diarrhoea.

Mice & Rat Baits The chemicals in these preparations cause internal bleeding by interrupting the natural clotting of blood. This eventually leads to anaemia (lack of red blood cells). This condition does not happen immediately but develops over a week. Dogs are most commonly affected as the baits contain grain that may be palatable. Dogs can lose blood from any area, some dogs cough up blood from the lungs, others lose blood from the gums and fresh blood will be seen in water bowls or around the mouth. Some develop bloody swellings under the skin or in a joint. Regardless of where the blood is lost from, the animal eventually ends up with very pale gums and becomes very weak and listless. If the blood loss is severe the dog may require a blood transfusion and hospitalisation and the most severely affected dogs die. If your dog is seen ingesting rat/mice baits it is important to get the dog to vomit so the poison is not absorbed into the system. Ideally this should occur within 2 hours. Treatment is relatively expensive, especially for large dogs as the newer baits last in the system for a long time and require long courses of Vitamin K and numerous blood tests to check clotting times. The older baits contain warfarin (eg Ratsak), which do not last as long in the animal's system.

Chocolate Small dogs during holiday times (Christmas and Easter) may consume enough chocolate to make them quite ill. Chocolate contains chemicals that in high enough concentrations are toxic to dogs. Initially vomiting and diarrhoea are seen but this may progress to stiffness, excitement, heart failure, seizures and death. Treatment involves making them vomit to get rid of excessive poison and starting symptomatic treatment (iv fluids and control of seizures).

**Spring/
Summer
Warning**

*Do not
leave pets
in hot cars.*

It can kill.

Fleas and Ticks

Summer is just around the corner, and for many of us, that means time for holidays! Summer can be a great time of the year for us, but sometimes it is not so pleasant for our pets. Fleas can become a real problem, and if you take your dog or cat down to the coast this summer, the deadly threat of paralysis ticks exists.

However, there are several steps you can take to make summer more comfortable and safe for your pet.

A regular flea treatment such as *Frontline Plus* can help break the flea lifecycle and keep fleas numbers at very low levels. *Frontline Plus* also protects against the deadly paralysis tick, and is a must if you intend on taking you dog or cat to the coast with you these holidays.

Some tips for Flea treatment:

- All dogs and cats in your care should be treated with a flea product, such as *Frontline Plus*, every 4 weeks.
- Removal of flea eggs can be achieved by regular vacuuming, and this will encourage emergence of any eggs that are missed.
- Don't let untreated animals into your home.
- Wash animal bedding regularly.
- Limit areas pets can access that may harbor fleas, such as under the house.

If you do take your pet to the coast these holidays, several steps can be taken to limit the chance of them picking up a paralysis tick.

Firstly, a product such as *Frontline Plus*, if applied every 2 weeks, will protect against fleas and greatly reduce the risk of tick paralysis. It is important to start treatment with frontline at least 2 days prior to heading to the coast.

Secondly, whilst on holidays, check your pet for ticks EVERY DAY even if you are using a tick treatment product.



We just got better...

So that we can provide you with the best possible service (and thanks to the government's attractive stimulus package) we have lashed out and installed the latest digital x-ray technology.

Our Kodak digital x-ray cart removes special screens from our new x-ray plates and 'develops' them to be viewed on a computer screen as a digital image. Once the image is digitalised it is able to be enhanced, magnified, viewed with improved clarity, easily stored on a hard drive, backed up, emailed or burned onto a CD for referral to specialists.



No longer will there be traditional x-ray films with the associated messy developing chemicals, misplaced x-rays and space occupying x ray file draws.

While a tick product will reduce the chance of ticks, it doesn't kill ticks on contact. Thoroughly searching your pet's skin for ticks is the most effective way of preventing paralysis from occurring. Don't stop if you find one tick, remove it and keep searching, as there may be more.

For more information don't hesitate to make an appointment with one of our vets, who can give your pet a thorough health check and design an effective tick and flea treatment plan for your pets this summer.



Equine Dentistry

Why have your horse's teeth done at the Yass Veterinary Hospital?...Because our Vets

1. Look at the horse's overall health and not just the mouth
2. Have a scientific background and have undergone intensive practical training
3. Will sedate the horse to relieve anxiety and to ensure a full examination and thorough job
4. Are assisted by trained vet nurses experienced in handling horses
5. Remove wolf teeth correctly using sedation & local anaesthetic not brute force
6. Will refer complex cases if warranted and can contact veterinary specialists for advice
7. Examine the horse's mouth by feeling, looking and discussing the various options with you.



8. Have the latest equipment and aids to ensure a thorough efficient procedure
9. Complete a dental chart for each procedure.
10. Are accountable for their work & actions and are backed by a professional association (Australian Veterinarian Association) and Veterinary Special Interest Group.
11. Issue tax invoices.
12. Have insurance to cover you and your horse

We can do the best job on your horse's mouth when we use the facilities at the Yass Veterinary Hospital. We have an indoor crush and are able to use a special dental halter which significantly improves the ease and efficiency of doing horse dentals.

Our preference is for you to drop off your horses and leave them in the yards at the Yass Veterinary Hospital for the day. You can also leave your horse trailer safely and easily in the parking area beside the drive through driveway.

Triennial Dog Vaccinations

Advancements in technology have lead to the development of new vaccines that will now reliably provide three (3) years protection against canine distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus. However, vaccination is still required yearly to protect against kennel cough. Dogs that go to boarding kennels or are in contact with a lot of other dogs (show dogs, agility & obedience dogs) need to be vaccinated against kennel cough (C5 Vaccination). Farm dogs and dogs not mixing with a lot of other dogs (sedentary town dogs) only require a C3 vaccination. It has been common practise to vaccinate companion animals every year since the development of these vaccines in the middle of the last century. The new 'C3' vaccines have been specially formulated to provide a longer duration of immunity than currently available vaccines that are registered for 1 year of protection.

We still recommend that your dog returns annually to allow us to conduct a careful physical examination and to provide the latest advice on preventative health care for your pet. This is especially important for dogs 8 years old and over. Many conditions are only obvious on a complete veterinary examination. We hope not to find anything, but if we do, we will be able to manage or treat their condition earlier, improving the quality of life, extending their life & keeping them healthier, happier & more comfortable. Such conditions include heart disease and abdominal cancers.

What does this mean for the dog owners? When you bring your dog in for its annual health check, your veterinarian will assess, discuss the available options and prescribe the most appropriate vaccination schedule for your dog.

Call us now to book your dog in for its annual health check.



Who's Who within the practice.....

Partners:

Peter Gibbs, *BVSc, MACVSc, CMAVA*
Stuart Williams, *BVSc*

Associates:

Petrea Wait, *BSc BVMS (Hons)*
Karishma Nandha *BVSc (Hons)*
Claire Scarlett, *BVSc (Hons)*

Practice Manager:

Terry Butler, *APM FAIM*

Vet Nurses:

Heidi Broers
Anita Eccleston
Brooke Bush
Alicia Percival
Louise Duncan
Tessa Ivison
Viv Raine
Joanne Makin

Accounts

Gail Battye

Receptionists:

Glynese Evans
Debbie Frew

All are highly qualified professionals in their field and eager to assist you wherever possible.



Dog Training and Socialisation

We conduct regularly Puppy Preschool Classes, Dog Socialisation and Dog Training classes.

Puppy Preschool

These classes run on Tuesday evenings from 6.30 until 8pm, for a five week period. They encompass socialisation with other dogs, animals and people, health care, behaviour and training. They are designed for puppies from 6wks of age and are open to dogs up to 6mths depending on their size.

Walking Group

As a progression from puppy classes and for those with older dogs we walk about Yass town each Monday evening from 6.30pm. Everyone is welcome to join our social group for a bit of light exercise and a chat. The location alternates each week for a bit of variety so please contact the YVH for locations or download an information sheet. We are hoping to start the walking group in Murrumbateman shortly.

Dog Socialisation

Now that the YVH has an outside paddock for dogs to play we can provide a 'doggy park' for your four legged friends to have a romp about and socialise with other suitable dogs. Socialisation times are on Saturday mornings between 9am and 11am.

Dog Obedience

We also run dog training sessions in basic obedience and behaviour problems. We are starting weeknight training times. These classes will run for 8 weeks and cover basic obedience with the opportunity to continue to more advanced training.

For more information please see our website www.yassvet.com.au or contact Claire either at the hospital or by email to claire@yassvet.com.au

Contacting us.....

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