

FDA Approves New Drug For Heart Failure In Dogs

May 19, 2007. The Food and Drug Administration announced today the approval of Vetmedin (pimobendan), a new drug for the management of the signs of mild, moderate, or severe (modified New York Heart Association Class II, III, or IV) congestive heart failure in dogs due to atrioventricular valvular insufficiency or dilated cardiomyopathy. Vetmedin, a new molecular entity, is the first drug approved to treat congestive heart failure in dogs, in over ten years. Vetmedin is indicated for use with concurrent therapy for congestive heart failure (e.g., furosemide, etc.) as appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

Congestive heart failure is one of the more common heart problems seen in dogs, especially older smaller breeds. It is a complex and serious condition defined as the heart's inability to function normally, leading to excessive retention of water and salt causing fluid build-up in the lungs. Signs of congestive heart failure include fatigue and weakness, decreased ability to exercise, shortness of breath (fluid build up in the chest), increased respiratory rate, coughing, weak or irregular pulses, rapid or irregular heart beats and distended abdomen (fluid build up in the abdomen).

Vetmedin helps alleviate signs of heart failure by increasing contractility (the force of heart muscle contraction) and by dilating blood vessels (decreasing resistance to blood flow).

The effectiveness and safety of Vetmedin were evaluated in a 56-day, multi-site, active controlled field study with pivotal success determined at Day 29. Three hundred fifty-five (355) dogs with modified New York Heart Association Class II, III, or IV congestive heart failure in dogs due to atrioventricular valvular insufficiency or dilated cardiomyopathy were randomly assigned to either the Vetmedin treatment group or the active control Enacard (enalapril maleate) treatment group. Treatment success at Day 29 in the Vetmedin group (80.7%) was determined to be non-inferior to the treatment success in the Enacard group (76.1%).

Adverse reactions associated with Vetmedin (and Enacard) were potentially related to congestive heart failure, the therapy of congestive heart failure, or both and included poor appetite, lethargy, diarrhea, worsening signs of heart failure, heart failure death, azotemia (increase in the blood urea nitrogen), and mild increases in serum liver enzymes. www.fda.gov/cvm

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Pet Nutrition Service Now Available Through NC State's Veterinary Teaching Hospital

May 15, 2007. The Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) at North Carolina State University's College of Veterinary Medicine has added a nutrition service to its list of 16 clinical specialties that are available to referring veterinarians and their patients.

Nutrition specialist Dr. Korinn Saker has joined the staff to direct the new offering. She will consult with referring veterinarians and with VTH clinicians on the nutritional requirements of both critical and non-critical care patients in the hospital, will be available to consult with referring veterinarians on various nutrition-related issues involving their non-hospitalized clients, and will be available to support individual owners in creating appropriate diets for their animals.

The integration of a formal nutrition service within the VTH is a planned addition to hospital services and comes in the aftermath of the national concern over the safety of pet food. Regarding the pet food recall, Saker advises pet owners to be attentive to the issue but not to overreact.

“A primary reason major pet food companies formulate and market commercial pet foods is that they want to ensure a complete and balanced diet for your pet,” Saker says. “As long as the food is designated for your pet’s life stage and/or identified disease state, you can be reasonably reassured that it is all you need to feed the pet every day. The mainstream pet food companies spend a great deal of research, time, and expertise in formulating healthy, safe diets.”

Saker is not opposed to owners who want to prepare their own pet food; she will consult with the local veterinarian to understand the pet’s nutritional needs and then will advise the owner on how to create a safe and nutritious diet at home. She added a word of caution, however.

“Owners who want to prepare their own pet food cannot just provide pets with people food,” Saker says. “It is very difficult to ensure that the pet’s diet is nutritionally balanced if the recipe has not been appropriately evaluated. The Internet, articles, or self-help books cannot be relied upon for this information because your individual pet has specific requirements for protein, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, and vitamins. The wrong combination of human foodstuffs fed to your pet can create nutritional deficiencies or excesses that result in disease. If the animal is young and growing, the wrong diet can negatively influence musculoskeletal development.”

Another issue is food preparation and storage. Ingredients should be thoroughly cooked to keep bacteria from forming and creating concerns such as Salmonella or *E.coli*. Unless food is prepared fresh for each meal, appropriate freezing followed by proper thawing, heating, and then serving at room temperature are other steps that must be followed.

While the majority of her consults are expected to involve companion animals, Saker’s nutritional expertise includes horses, pigmy goats, sheep, potbelly pigs, llamas, alpacas, and other animals. As an associate professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine’s Department of Molecular Biomedical Sciences, her nutrition research will include obesity, cancer, and critical care with emphasis on the relationship between oxidative stress and disease.

Saker is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Nutrition who comes to NC State after serving at Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine as clinical nutritionist and associate professor. She completed her residency in clinical nutrition and her post-doctoral work in nutritional immunology at Virginia-Maryland.

A small- and mixed-animal private practice veterinarian for five years, Saker has a master’s degree in animal nutrition with a focus on equine nutrition from Clemson University, a DVM degree from the University of Georgia, and a doctorate in nutrition from Virginia Tech.

Veterinarians and owners who are interested in more information on the VTH nutrition service, including private consultations, can contact [Saker](#), 919/513-6488.

The VTH was established in 1983 to provide state-of-the-art veterinary medical services for veterinarians and the animal-owning public. Some 19,000 patients – primarily companion animals and horses – are examined in the VTH small- and large-animal clinics each year.

The VTH partners with veterinarians and animal organizations that refer difficult cases to hospital specialists for consults, diagnosis and treatment. This partnership is designed to provide seamless health care for patients who benefit from the combined expertise of multiple specialists functioning in a team approach to health care. **Media Contact:** [Dave Green](#), 919/513-6662

In Their Own Words: From leaders in the animal rights movement.

Do you know the difference between animal rights and animal welfare?

With the massive funding and lobbying force behind animal rights groups, teams of attorneys, campaign contributions to sympathetic legislators, the ability to entrench their animal rights ideology in universities across America, and enormous outpouring of propaganda to the public through the media - it is imperative that animal owners learn to understand the animal rights agenda and tactics.

"The pet overpopulation problem isn't going to fix itself, and neither is your pet. ... Support Assembly Bill 1634," **says the host of HBO's *Real Time with Bill Maher*. PETA website www.peta.org**

"Well, first off, I just...it's inexcusable if there's any breeding of any breed of animal." "So anything to have some kind of sterilization mandate put in place, we are definitely in support of that." **Laura Brown-PETA Spokesperson, Justice Talking Radio Transcript-Protecting People and Their Pets-Air Date 8/15/06.**

"...if you work in the animal protection community, know that rabbits are suffering just as much as (and sometimes more than) cats and dogs, and that any new legislation being written to protect companion animals in New Mexico—such as mandatory spay/neuter laws, laws governing pet stores, dealers and breeders, and legislation aimed at animal shelters—MUST include rabbits. It's time to stop treating rabbits as third class citizens." **Margo DeMello-director of House Rabbit Society; Petroglyphs 2004 - The Plight of Pet Rabbits <http://petroglyphsnm.org/rabbits/plight.html>**

"In other words, rodeo is ranch-style animal bondage and cruelty transported to the public arena for titillation and profit." **Ardeth Baxter, writer, animal rights advocate and ethical vegan; Petroglyphs 2006-Just Say No To Rodeo Porn!**

Framing Humane Issues. "There is no escaping framing—it is how the human brain works. Framing is more than finding 'better' words. It is communicating the ways you think about the world. Good framing reflects your values and your beliefs, and connects others to your issues in ways that have self-contained arguments built in. Once a frame is set, people no longer listen to facts that contradict it. Facts just bounce off. Facts are important, but they come after framing an issue, not instead of it." **Lawrence Carter-Long-In Defense of Animals; AR 2005**

Coke, PepsiCo to halt animal testing

By Nicci Pugh

June 1, 2007. Following pressure from animal rights activists, soft drink giants Coca-Cola and PepsiCo have agreed to stop directly financing research that uses animals to test or develop their products, except where such testing is required by law.

Researchers at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals sought the assurances after discovering studies financed by the companies that used animals like rats and chimpanzees to test taste perception and, in some cases, to bolster support for promotional health claims.

PepsiCo said that it would stop directly financing animal experiments, including some it had financed through grants given to graduate students through its Gatorade Sports Science Institute.

Elaine Palmer, a spokeswoman for PepsiCo, said that while the company had never supported the idea of animal testing, "We had not been policing it, so that part is new."

Coca-Cola also said that it would discontinue a grant given to a researcher at Virginia Commonwealth University who has been studying taste perception in rats, which share certain taste pathways with humans. Representatives of Coca-Cola and the university declined to say how much financing the company was providing or to elaborate on what the ultimate application of the research might be.

A research associate at PETA, Shalin Gala, said: "We see these statements from Coke and Pepsi, massive global conglomerates, as the beginning of the end of all animal tests on food."

Scientists conducting basic research in animal models have cautioned against PETA's hard line, saying their work, which may have medical benefits, would not be possible in many cases without help from corporate sponsors.

Drinks Business Review

http://www.drinks-business-review.com/article_news.asp?guid=835ADF8C-92FC-4DB6-8779-1008C9790E2F

Vaccine Reaction Study

The Pug Dog Club of America is helping fund a 2-year study on vaccine reactions being conducted at Purdue University. The lead researcher, Dr. George Moore, has asked for help obtaining blood samples from both normal Pugs and Pugs who have a vaccine reaction. If your Pug has an allergic reaction consisting of facial or eyelid swelling, hives, generalized itching or vomiting, he would be eligible for the study. A blood sample would need to be collected by your veterinarian within 3 weeks of the vaccine. Dr. Moore also needs blood samples from dogs that do not have reactions. The ideal situation would be to get blood from a sibling to the reactor, again, within 3 weeks of a vaccine. Dr. Moore's lab will study the serum antibody concentrations from the allergic vs. the normal Pugs, hoping to identify the vaccine components that stimulate allergic reactions. If your dog is a Dachshund, Pug, Chihuahua, Miniature Pinscher, Boston Terrier, Boxer, Australian Terrier, or Kerry Blue Terrier, and was vaccinated in the last 3 weeks, it can participate in the study.

Information on the study and client consent forms are available at <http://www.vet.purdue.edu/k9vaxrxn/>

Samples will be collected through 2007. This study is supported by the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation. Owners may choose to receive the results of their dog's test. Veterinarians can email investigators to get postage-paid mailers at k9vaxrxn@purdue.edu.

Dogs Who Teach

By Barbara Axel and Ashley Gould

Registered Therapy Dogs and their owners volunteer for a number of different activities. Most people think of Therapy Dogs visiting nursing homes and hospitals to bring cheer. But Therapy Dogs are also utilized in other ways not as well publicized. One such nation-wide program is “Reading to Dogs.” This program has been initiated to help children enhance their reading skills in an environment that is safe and



Brevard Elementary School third grader, nine year old Roxana Jose Antonio, reads to a dachshund.

conducive to self-esteem. Children who are hesitant to read aloud before a group of their peers and adults become more responsive and skillful as each individualized dog-read session progresses.

A “Read to Dog” pilot program has started this school year in a Western North Carolina community sponsored by 21st Century Community Learning Center, a program of Communities in Schools of Transylvania County, at their Brevard Elementary School location. 21st Century Community Learning Center offers children in grades two through eight an opportunity to learn the skills needed to be successful students. The organization helps boys and girls discover new ways to explore the arts,

science, math, reading, life skills, and culture through fun and educational activities. The program selects students whose needs are greatest, and can be met by offering them intensive tutoring and homework help.

Only well-groomed, veterinary checked, healthy dogs of the most stable temperaments should be active in these endeavors. The dogs must go through rigorous training, then are tested by experienced evaluators before being registered with one of three national registries. The dogs are rechecked annually. Dogs people smile at and can't resist approaching are the same ones who inspire the confidence and trust children need to enhance their read-aloud skills. Small dogs are cuddled, and large ones are often used as pillows when children read.

Before the reading program began in Transylvania County, dogs and students were introduced to one another at a preliminary group program. The students learned about care, training, and the way to approach and pet a dog at home and away, always under the supervision of an adult.



Therapy dogs are required to be on leash and wear these ID tags while working.



Center: Ch Summer, CGC, ROM, with daughter Ch. Music on left, and daughter Ch. Mischief on right

Barbara and Joel Axel, and three of their longhaired dachshunds are volunteers in the current 21st Century Community Learning Center program. The Axels, grandparents who have presented programs with dogs of their breeding to children since their own daughter and son were in elementary school, are well qualified. They have taught obedience classes, given seminars, and written articles concerning dogs that have been published in local, national, and international magazines. They have handled twelve generations of their own dachshunds to conformation and performance titles here and abroad.

Transylvania County Library Children's Department is planning to continue the Read to Dogs program during summer vacation.

Pet Data ~ Animal License Outsourcing

Town of Matthews Commissioners voted in April to contract with PetData for animal licensing services for the town. PetData is a Texas company that handles animal licensing in many cities across the United States, including Charlotte. Each time a veterinarian administers a rabies vaccine to a pet, the animal's address and vaccination information are forwarded to PetData. If the pet lives at a Matthews address, PetData will automatically issue an annual license bill to the owner. The owner can pay the fee online, by mail or in person at Town Hall. Failure to license a pet can result in a \$50 citation.

As in Charlotte, the license fee is differential – based on whether the animal is intact or altered. The concept of differential licensing is to punish those with intact animals by charging a higher fee for the license. Historically this practice has not met with success regardless of where it has been enacted.

Tying licensing and rabies vaccinations together is often suggested as a means to sell licenses and generate revenue. There are many reasons why licensing has an overall negative effect. Lower or fixed income people simply do not license their pets and as a result they avoid authority. They are afraid to make use of any services that will expose them to law enforcement. They do not visit veterinarians, participate in shot clinics, or seek health assistance for injured or suffering pets. Legislators should carefully consider the negative issues of licensing before placing rabies vaccination compliance at risk.

There are other areas of concern for this outsourcing beside the fact that improvement in compliance is questionable. Owner information – name, address, contact info - and pet reproductive status is being held in a privately controlled data base. Owners should be aware of this and know that PetData has no listed privacy policy listed. Additionally, veterinarians are now by ordinance complicit in providing this personal information about their clients. ■

North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance, Inc. (NCRAOA) is a statewide organization of animal owners and professionals dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of responsible citizens to breed and own animals. NCRAOA, a 501(c)3 organization, provides education and information to the public and supports reasonable and humane animal welfare laws.

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