

## **Pet Blood Donation: Pets Saving Pets**

Sarah Dowling

Information Specialist, Office of Public Engagement, University of Illinois, College of Veterinary Medicine

Pet blood donation, while not as widely known as its human counterpart, is an essential resource for veterinarians and their patients. Blood transfusions are used by veterinarians to treat a wide variety of ailments ranging from acute trauma to life-threatening autoimmune diseases.

According to Dr. Rachael Carpenter, a veterinary anesthesiologist director of the Transfusion Medicine Program at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital in Urbana, blood donations can be used either as whole blood, packed red blood cells, plasma, or platelets. The most common use for donated blood is as packed red blood cells, which contains the red blood cells necessary for transporting oxygen throughout the body.

Internal and external bleeding caused by trauma, hemorrhaging during surgery, ingestion of toxins, and many diseases can cause a pet to lose red blood cells and develop life-threatening anemia that requires a transfusion.

The College of Veterinary Medicine's Veterinary Teaching Hospital, like most large veterinary referral clinics, utilizes national blood banks as well as a volunteer donor system to supply its patients with the blood they need to survive.

"Students, faculty and staff associated with the College are able to volunteer their pets to be blood donors," explains Dr. Carpenter. "These pets are essentially on call, and will only donate blood if the need for it arises. Right now we have a list of about 20 to 30 cats and dogs that are on our blood donor list."

The donation process is similar to that used for human blood donors where animals are only eligible to donate blood if they pass the screening process. Donor animals should be young adults in good general health that are negative for any diseases, current on vaccines, and have normal blood work. As long as the animal passes these requirements and is a dog weighing more than 50 pounds or a cat weighing more than 10 pounds, the animal is cleared to donate blood.

Cats and dogs that are eligible to donate blood are tested to determine blood type, a piece of information that will determine which recipients are able to receive the donated blood. Just as with humans, blood typing the recipient animal is also important since complications can result if the blood types do not match and the animal rejects the donor blood.

"For cats, blood typing is a critical step in the transfusion process in order to prevent dangerous and possibly fatal reactions to the donor blood," says Dr. Carpenter. "Here dogs have the upper hand, since they can receive any blood type the first time they are transfused, however this would only be done in an emergency situation where an immediate transfusion is needed."

Dr. Carpenter explains that the donation process is relatively simple. When a volunteer pet is brought into the clinic to donate blood the animal is given a general physical exam and survey blood work may be done to ensure the health of the donor.

Since most pets are reluctant to hold still for the length of time required to collect a donation, the pet is usually sedated while the blood is drawn. Once the animal has recovered from the sedation they are fed a small meal and sent home to be pampered by their owners.

While the College only currently accepts volunteer animals that are owned by students, faculty, and staff, some private practice veterinary hospitals may also have a list of donors they can call on for fresh blood donations when the need arises.

For more information about pet blood transfusions or blood donation, contact your local veterinarian.

<http://www.cvm.uiuc.edu/petcolumns/index.cfm?function=showarticle&id=561>

## **Grand Jury Indicts Companies For Melamine Contamination Of Pet Food**

A federal grand jury in Kansas City has indicted two Chinese companies and a U.S. company for their roles in manufacturing and importing an adulterated ingredient for use in pet food. Illness and deaths of animals that ate the food led to a massive recall of products last year and the discovery that the ingredient in question contained the contaminants melamine and cyanuric acid. The Food and Drug Administration later determined that the ingredient, which bore the label "wheat gluten," was actually wheat flour.

Following a federal investigation, the grand jury in Kansas City returned a 26-count indictment against two Chinese companies—Xuzhou Anying Biologic Technology Development Co. Ltd., a processor of plant proteins, and export broker Suzhou Textiles, Silk, Light Industrial Products, Arts and Crafts I/E Co. Ltd.—and against the companies' top executives.

The jury returned a 27-count indictment against ChemNutra Inc. of Las Vegas, which imports food and food components from China for sale to companies in the U.S. food industry, and against owners and spouses Sally Qing Miller and Stephen S. Miller.

The indictments allege that more than 800 metric tons of "wheat gluten" was exported from China to the United States in at least 13 shipments, with invoices totaling nearly \$850,000, between Nov. 6, 2006, and Feb. 21, 2007. According to the indictments, ChemNutra received the product at a Kansas City port of entry and sold the ingredient to manufacturers of various brands of pet food.

More specifically, the indictments allege that ChemNutra contracted with Suzhou to supply wheat gluten with a minimum protein content of 75 percent. Suzhou then contracted separately with Xuzhou Anying to supply the ingredient. The indictments allege that melamine was added to the "wheat gluten" to make the ingredient appear, in tests, to meet the minimum protein content.

The indictments allege that Suzhou labeled the "wheat gluten" with an inaccurate product code, using a code for products that are not subject to mandatory inspection before leaving China. According to the Chinese government, Xuzhou Anying did not declare the ingredient as a raw material for feed or as food. The indictments further allege that Sally Qing Miller had the training and experience to know from the product code that the ingredient would not be subject to mandatory inspection in China, but ChemNutra and the Millers did not disclose this information to customers.

<http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/mar08/080315g.asp>

## California Bill Proposes New Pet Food Label Requirements

During the first week of April, a California Senate committee will consider a proposal that would require pet food labels to include the product's country of origin.

Often at the forefront of legislation that other states follow, the California Senate Bill 1773 is the first of its kind, according to Marshall Meyers, executive vice president of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC). "That's the only one right now," he said.

PIJAC, however, deferred to the Pet Food Institute for further information. The Pet Food Institute was not immediately available for comment.

The legislation was introduced in February by Senator Ellen Corbett from the East Bay's San Leandro, but a hearing date was only set this week. The Committee on Health will hold a hearing on the proposal April 2 at 1:30 p.m. in room 4203 at the State Capitol in Sacramento

The bill was also referred to the Senate Judiciary, which Corbett chairs. It has not set a hearing.

The proposal also requires manufacturers to post the brand owner's telephone number on the label.

*Source: Veterinary Practice News*

## Equine Association Updates Vaccination Guidelines

The Infectious Disease Committee of the American Association of Equine Practitioners in January issued revised guidelines for the administration of vaccines to horses. The recommendations are based on the age of the horse and its previous vaccination history, and are meant to serve as a reference for veterinarians.

Highlights of "Guidelines for the Vaccination of Horses" include the following:

- identification of tetanus, eastern/western equine encephalomyelitis, West Nile virus, and rabies as "core" vaccines. Core vaccines have clearly demonstrated efficacy and safety, and exhibit a high enough degree of patient benefit and low enough degree of risk to justify their use in most patients
- addition of a vaccination protocol for anthrax
- recommendations for the storage and handling of vaccines, as well as information on vaccine labeling and adverse reactions
- inclusion of the AAEP's Infectious Disease Control Guidelines, which provide an action plan for the containment of infectious disease during an outbreak

The complete document, along with easy reference charts, is available on the AAEP Web site at [www.aaep.org/vaccination\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.aaep.org/vaccination_guidelines.htm).



## **Animal Rights Activist Has Been Found Guilty**

PENDER COUNTY, NC. Author Jim Willis was found guilty of dog larceny, a case that began in Pender County. Willis is well known among pet lovers for his popular book titled *Pieces of My Heart*. The book is about his compassion for animals.

The Rocky Point man was convicted of stealing a neighbor's dog, because he didn't think it was being adequately cared for, and then not returning it.

Willis was sentenced to two years probation, 75 hours of community service, and will be only allowed to own one pet.

[http://www.wect.com/Global/story.asp?S=8047713&nav=menu157\\_2](http://www.wect.com/Global/story.asp?S=8047713&nav=menu157_2)

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

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

When asked if he envisioned a future without pets: "If I had my personal view, perhaps that might take hold. In fact, I don't want to see another dog or cat born." *Wayne Pacelle quoted in Bloodties: Nature, Culture and the Hunt by Ted Kerasote, 1993, p. 266.*

"The smallest form of life, even an ant or a clam, is equal to a human being." *Ingrid Newkirk, founder of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) (Quoted by Charles Oliver, "Liberation Zoology," Reason, June 1990).*

"For me, the interesting question is not whether a cow should have standing to sue a farmer for cruelty but rather why do we have the cow here in the first place." *Professor Gary L. Francione, Rutgers School of Law, September 2005 Interview in Voiceless.*

When asked if the institution of pet ownership violates animals' basic right not to be regarded as things: "Answer: Yes. Pets are our property. Pets are marketed in exactly the same way as other commodities. We should, of course, care for all those domestic animals that are presently alive, but we should not continue to bring more animals into existence so that we may own them as pets." *Professor Gary L. Francione, the Abolitionist Approach FAQ*

"PETA favors horse rescue and opposes horse breeding. Horse breeding has caused the same overpopulation problem that plagues dogs and cats, and sometimes "pet" horses end up at slaughterhouses." *PETA Factsheet- Doing What's Best for Our Companion Animals*

"Animal rights is a simple idea because, at the most basic level, it means only that animals have a right to be treated with respect. It is a profound idea because its implications are far reaching. How far reaching? Here are a few examples of how the world will have to change once we learn to treat animals with respect.

- 1-We will have to stop raising them for their flesh.
- 2-We will have to stop trapping them for their fur.
- 3-We will have to stop training them to entertain us.
- 4-We will have to stop using them in scientific research."

*Tom Regan, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, NCSU, Empty Cages, Chapter 1*

# NCSU Clinical Trials - Cardiology

## Does your dog have a heart murmur?

If so, he may be eligible for a new study of heart disease! We are enrolling dogs with early heart disease into a clinical trial to measure their activity at home. We will record their activity with a small device (the size of a quarter) that is attached to their collar. Activity will be recorded before, and during treatment with a medication used to treat heart disease.

Requirements: The study will require an outpatient appointment with the cardiology service at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Your dog will then wear the collar/activity recording device for two weeks, then for another two weeks after twice-daily medication is started.

- Description: Study evaluating early heart disease in dogs that will measure activity levels at home. Activity will be recorded using a small device attached to the dog's collar.
- Eligibility: Dogs with moderate intensity or louder murmur, but in otherwise good health and not affected by mobility-limiting pain from osteoarthritis or other chronic conditions. Dogs should not be on nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications
- Financial Incentive: The study will pay \$300 towards the cost of evaluation by the cardiology service. This evaluation includes an extensive health screening
- Who to contact: Andrea Thompson, RVT, [cvm\\_cpri@ncsu.edu](mailto:cvm_cpri@ncsu.edu) or 919.513.6854

## New on the NCRAOA Website

Visit our Multi-Media Corner to view "Congratulations New Pet Owner". The CD contains an introductory message in both PDF and the .wmv format displayed on our website.

A sample of the support documents included on the CD are:

- A new beginning: rescue dogs from an obedience instructors viewpoint
- Puppy training checklist
- Where do I start when I need help?
- How do I play with my dog?
- Bringing home your new cat or kitten
- Providing a safe environment for your cat

### Resources



Never be afraid to reach out for help. If the problem or question is important to you, then it needs to be answered.



### Building a relationship

Inside this package you will find some helpful information for your dog or cat – keys to success – for building a lasting relationship with your newly chosen companion.



We are extremely pleased that Henderson County Animal Services will be distributing our CD to adopters as part of their pet education / pet retention program. For more information email [ncraoa@yahoo.com](mailto:ncraoa@yahoo.com).

# **Winn Feline Foundation Newsroom**

## ***from Winn Feline Foundation President, Dr. Susan Little***

The domestic cat has been closely associated with mankind for centuries, enriching the lives of those who appreciate their affectionate and dignified nature. It seems only proper that we address the illnesses that many cats suffer, particularly those for which there are few or no treatments available today. The goal of the Winn Feline Foundation is to help cats live longer and healthier lives.

Winn was founded by the Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA) in 1968 to create a source of funding for medical studies to improve the health and well-being of cats. The Foundation was named in honor of CFA's long-time attorney, Robert H. Winn.

Over the years, Winn Foundation grants have helped advance veterinary knowledge in all areas of feline health. Since its inception, about \$3 million dollars has been awarded by the Foundation for scientific studies, encouraging veterinarians to focus their attention on the needs of cats. Through an annual symposium, written publications, a website, veterinary conferences, and close association with cat fanciers, the Foundation has promoted awareness of feline health issues and has provided an opportunity for the exchange of information about feline health.

All members of the Winn Foundation's Board of Directors are cat owners who are interested in feline health issues. Board members receive no compensation for their time and efforts. Winn is fortunate to have operational support from The Cat Fanciers' Association.

Proposals for feline health studies are accepted twice a year. Winn's grant review panel selects projects for funding based on criteria that include scientific merit, value to cats, clinical relevancy, and soundness of the design and budget. Humane treatment of any participating animals is paramount. Technical advisers who assist in the proposal selection process are prominent veterinarians drawn from a broad spectrum of the scientific community, including both clinicians and researchers.

Funds provided by the Winn Foundation have allowed veterinarians to prevent and/or treat diseases such as kidney and liver disease, a variety of cancers, toxoplasmosis, feline leukemia virus, fungal infections, hyperthyroidism, urinary tract disease, orthopedic conditions, diabetes, and periodontal disease. In addition, as veterinarians learn more about the nutritional requirements of cats, new foods are being developed to meet their specific needs. Winn helped demonstrate that early age altering of kittens is both safe and effective.

Donations to the Winn Feline Foundation may be designated for one of the following areas:

- General donation – for any health project approved by the Board of Directors; these donations may be made simply for the love of cats, or they may be:
  1. A Memorial in the name of a deceased cat or individual;
  2. In Honor of a living cat, individual, or judges at a club's show;
- Stipulated donation – for use in a specific disease area or for a specific project;
- Endowment fund donation – maintained as a perpetual remembrance that generates ongoing support for the Foundation;
- Bequests – in a will or trust to The Winn Feline Foundation - ensuring continuing contributions to the health of cats.

*The Winn Feline Foundation is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue*

## **Man Wins Dog Back**

### **After DNA Test Proves Dog Isn't Pit Bull**

Feb. 2008 Chalk a victory up for man's best friend in Kansas City, Kansas. A man just won his eight month legal battle with the city to keep his dog after proving it wasn't a pit bull. For the last eight months, Niko has been living in the KCK Animal Control Kennels while his owners fought with the city. Animal Control said the dog violated the pit bull ban, but the dog's owner has said all along the dog is actually a boxer mix. Niko has only been a free dog for a couple of days. Mike Johnson said it's obvious that eight months in the pound was tough on Niko. "He lost some fur and has quite a bit of a cough," Johnson said. "He lost about 10-15 pounds."

This all started because the family put up an ad trying to find Niko a new home. Animal Control saw the ad and confiscated the dog, calling it a pit bull, even though paperwork called the dog a boxer.

After months of legal wrangling and a DNA test, all charges have been dropped and now they plan on keeping Niko for good.

"I don't feel it's fair at all," Johnson said. "For one they took our dog. We had documentation what type of dog it was but they wouldn't even look at that."

"People like Mike and Amy get caught in this loop, they actually had criminal charges brought up against them," Cheryl Buell with KC Dog Advocates said. Buell said this shows pit bull bans are hard to enforce and that's exactly why other cities are changing laws, like Edwardsville, which just changed its ordinance Monday night, removing the pit bull ban.

"Beefing up their dangerous dog ordinance, make sure the people with dangerous dogs are held accountable, those are the people you want to punish fine," Buell said. Buell wants KCK to re-examine its ordinance.

"It was hard on the dog and the people involved and a huge waste of tax money and it didn't accomplish anything because it wasn't a vicious dog to begin with," she said.

<http://www.myfoxkc.com/myfox/>

## **How to Have Meaningful Communication with Your Veterinarian**

**By Myrna Milani, BS, DVM**

When Mary Harris arrived home after leaving her beloved Max at the veterinary hospital, she felt totally lost and more than a little anxious. Although Max's veterinarian was kind enough, his jargon-filled description of Max's problem and the tests he wanted to conduct overwhelmed her.

"Even if I understood what all those words meant, I still wouldn't know what I want to know," Mary explained later. "I don't care what the problem means to Dr. Jones. I want to know what it means to Max and me."

In an ideal world, all veterinarians would receive training that would enable them to communicate in a meaningful way with pet owners. Until then, however, owners who share Mary's views need to take the initiative. One easy way to ensure that you cover all the bases regarding how a particular medical problem or procedure will affect your pet involves focusing on two areas:

- Your pet's physical health
- Your pet's behavior

Chances are your veterinarian automatically will give you information regarding any physical effects of the problem because that's the focus of his or her training. However, if that person provides this information in a manner you don't understand, say so. Most veterinarians don't deliberately try to confuse owners. They just forget that owners don't speak the same language they do. Consequently, it's up to you to remind them. If you find it difficult to concentrate in a busy veterinary setting, don't feel embarrassed to ask the veterinarian to write down any critical points for you. Many veterinarians also will provide pre-printed hand-outs describing many problems in simple language that you can read at home.

Because veterinarians often don't think about how a certain medical problem may affect a pet's behavior, you may need to remind them about this. Will Snoopy's surgery make him groggy? Will her sore leg make Daisy snappy? Will Misty's medication cause her to break her house-training? By knowing about any behavioral effects in advance, you can make preparations to avoid or cope with these if and when they arise.

Coping with the behavioral changes associated with pet medical problems brings us to the second half of your fact-finding mission: How will your pet's problem affect you? One convenient way to simplify this for both yourself and your veterinarian is to view the problem in terms of the four kinds of limits that underlie practically all human-animal relationships:

- Financial
- Time
- Emotional
- Physical

Some owners feel incredibly guilty asking about the cost of any proposed medical treatment, but that's foolish. Most of us need to budget our money and knowing how much FiFi's surgery or medication will cost allows us to do this. Knowing the cost beforehand also enables us to discuss time payments or other financial arrangements to pay for the care, if necessary. Sometimes veterinarians only will suggest what they consider the optimal treatment which also may be the most expensive, but they'll propose other, less costly but equally viable options if they know owners can't afford this. However, if the owner doesn't bring this up, the veterinarian probably won't either.

Does this mean you're putting a dollar value on your pet? Not at all! Knowing how much Dizzy's treatment is going to cost and how you're going to pay for it relieves you of all the worries associated with that part of his medical problem. That, in turn, keeps you and your veterinarian from becoming involved in negative fee-related discussions later than might undermine your relationship and your pet's well-being. It also frees you to focus all of your energy on helping your pet get well.

Additionally, pet owners need to address any time limits they may have. If you work a 12- hour day and your veterinarian wants you to give Eggbert one pill every 8 hours, you need to discuss this. Even the very best medication won't work if it's not given as directed. Worse, failure to do so could make your pet's problem worse.

Even though most of us like to say that we'd do anything for our pets, the fact remains that most of us do apply certain emotional limits to our animal companions. Some people fear to open their pets' mouths to stuff a pill in. Others find the smell of that icky ear or the sight of that swollen eye enough to make their stomachs churn. As far as that pus around Frankie's "private parts" goes, well, forget about that! If you feel that way about anything associated with your pet's medical condition, admit it. Sometimes the veterinarian or a helpful technician will show you some tricks that will enable you get over those negative feelings. If you can't, more and more veterinary clinics offer daycare service during which staff members do all the medicating, bandage-changing, or other tasks some owners find emotionally trying. However, once again you may not know about these options unless you ask.

Most of us also have physical limits that affect our response when our pets experience medical problems. Giving weekly baths to exuberant golden retrievers with skin problems can exhaust a physically fit twenty-something. If you're a senior citizen with arthritis it can be downright painful. Even the most placid animal may prove impossible to medicate if owners' eyesight or coordination makes it impossible for them to get the medication where it needs to go. Treating pet problems that pose little threat for the average owner may be downright hazardous for those with suppressed immune responses. If your veterinarian doesn't bring up these issues, bring them up yourself for the sake of your own health as well as your pet's.

Admittedly, the idea of asking your veterinarian to supply this information may seem a bit daunting at first. On the other hand, addressing all of these behavioral and owner-related factors can have as much or more influence on your pet's recovery as the most sophisticated surgery or drug. The nature of the human-animal bond guarantees that our pets *will* pick up on our anxiety and confusion and it *will* effect them both physically and behaviorally, and almost invariably negatively so. To avoid that, take a few minutes and think about your pet's behavior and what kinds of changes would bother you most and how you would handle them. Think about any financial, time, emotional, and physical limits that could come into play if your pet developed medical problems. That way when those problems arise, asking your veterinarian for that information won't cause you any embarrassment. It will seem like the most natural thing any loving pet owner could do.

©2001-2006 [Myrna Milani](#), DVM  
TippingPoint, Inc.  
Reprinted by NCRAOA with permission

*Myrna Milani earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Capital University (Columbus, Ohio ) and a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from the Ohio State University, College of Veterinary Medicine. Following a year as a full-time academic advisor to pre-veterinary students at the university, Dr. Milani entered private veterinary practice in New Hampshire. Her interest in and study of the relationship between humans and animals as it affects the health and behavior of both led her to write seven books for the general public.*

## ***Protecting your right to responsibly own and breed animals.***

**Join NCRAOA. See our home page for membership information and application**

*For more information on animal health, training, reports on pet issues, animal sheltering, or to learn the difference between animal welfare and animal rights – visit our website at [www.ncraoa.com](http://www.ncraoa.com)*

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.

Permission granted to copy and distribute NCRAOA News and Views in its entirety as is.