



WHI Newsletter

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The members of the WHI steering group have been looking towards the end of the Longitudinal Study and considering how we might acknowledge the selfless contribution made by the participants, in a memorable way.

Their service to the breed deserves recognition.

Look out for further details in future Newsletters.

Issue Eighteen

September 2009

From the Editor's Desk

I am not entirely sure how I found myself rashly volunteering to produce this edition of the newsletter. (Most likely it was due to "post-natal exhaustion" following the birth of our recent litter!)

However, to try to follow in the footsteps of our previous Editor, Barbie Penney, with all her wealth of experience, enthusiasm and dedication is an impossible task. (More of Barbie's retirement later.)

So in order to minimize the chances of this edition being compared, with previous newsletters and found wanting, I decided to try and make it different!

I hope you will find the new format "user-friendly" and the contents of interest.



Though we can't promise to achieve Barbie's attention to detail – we can promise you variety in future newsletters, as we will probably share in the task, with each newsletter having a "guest" Editor, rather than a single person taking the job on permanently.

We hope this will give a distinctly fresh and varied approach, although, of course, the health and well-being of the Soft-Coated Wheaten terrier will continue to be at the heart of our publications.

We would really appreciate your feedback and we would also welcome contributions from you for future newsletters. Is there an issue you are concerned about (see my editorial later in this issue), or an experience you would like to share?

We can all learn from each other and best of all, our dogs reap the benefit.

Lynn Carter

The pANCA Research Project

Many of you may have already booked your place in the next round of sampling sessions for the Longitudinal Study. (Details and booking procedure on page 2)

The results from the last round of sampling were sent out in August and should now have been received by all participants.

If there are any queries, please address them to Dr Allenspach's team at the Royal Veterinary College. If you have not yet booked your place at one of the sessions, please do so right now!



It is really vital that we continue to support Dr Allenspach's research. We have come so far but without continued commitment, we will not gather the data which the RVC team need to draw their conclusions.

If neither of the dates is possible for you then please have your Vet take the blood sample to send to Dr Allenspach around the

same time as the sessions in mid-September.

This maintains the optimum time-lapse between samples. Details about how to carry out sampling through your vet are available from the RVC Clinical Investigations Centre, 01707 666 605, or email cic@rvc.ac.uk

You and your Vet will receive information on how to collect and mail the sample to the RVC pANCA Team. This should be done early in the week so that the sample can be processed whilst fresh.



A Brief Summary of the pANCA Project data up to September 2009, by Dr Karin Allenspach med.Vet. FVH, DECVIM-CA MRCVS

Baseline study (Sampling 1)

- From June to November 2007 a total of 205 dogs were sampled.
- 188 of them with complete pedigree record and questionnaire data -> included in data analysis
- Final sample: 72 male and 116 female dogs, the average age was 5.9 years (median 5.1 years, range 1.5 to 14.3 years) with 63 dogs (22 male, 41 female) in the group of young and 125 dogs (50 male, 75 female) in the group of adult dogs.
- 39/188 tested positive for pANCA = prevalence of 20.74% (Confidence Interval CI 95%: 15.1-26.4%)
- No significant association of sex or age group with pANCA status.

Longitudinal study 1 (Sampling 2)

- June and July 2008; two sampling sessions in Weedon Bec, Northampton and St. Leonard's Hall, Oxon. A total of 82 dogs were sampled
- 9 samples were taken by private veterinarians and sent to the RVC by post
- In total 91 dogs, of which 77 had been classified as negative and 13 as positive in the initial (baseline) sample. One new dog joined the study in that summer
- 9 dogs tested positive, 81 negative, from 1 dog we couldn't get a blood sample at the sampling session, but only the questionnaire information
- Negative in both samples: 75; Positive in both samples: 8; Conversion from positive to negative: 5; Conversion from negative to positive: 1
- Age distribution: mean age 6.7, median 5.9, range 0.5-14.3 years. Dogs ≤4years: 19, dogs >4years: 72
- Among the tested 90 dogs, 33 (36.7%) had normal, 1 (1.1%) had decreased and 55 (61.1%) had increased albumin levels.

Longitudinal study 2 (Sampling 3)

- Two sampling sessions, 65 samples taken
 - 29 samples sent to RVC by post
 - Total 94 dogs tested, of which 79 had been classified as negative and 15 as positive in the initial (baseline) sample (1 dog had not participated in sampling 1).
 - Age distribution: mean age 7.3, median 6.65, range 1-14.9 years. Dogs ≤4years: 11, dogs >4years: 83
 - Total positive dogs: 4, total negative dogs: 90
 - Albumin results: Within range 73 (78%), below range 1 (1%), above range 20 (21%)
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Overview of pANCA test results to date (all dogs with ≥ 2 samples)

Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3	Number of dogs
Positive	Positive	Positive	3
Positive	Positive	Negative	3
Positive	Positive	n/a	2
Positive	Negative	Negative	5
Positive	n/a	Negative	4
Negative	Positive	Positive	1
Negative	Negative	Negative	72
n/a	Negative	Negative	1
Negative	n/a	Negative	5
Negative	Negative	n/a	3
<i>Total</i>			99

Longitudinal study 3 (Sampling 4)

Scheduled for September 2009

From the pANCA Project Co-ordinator – Sandra Jeffries

It is great to be back on the 'frontline' of WHI and I am very pleased and honoured to have been given the job of pANCA Project Coordinator.

A big and well deserved 'thank you' must go to Carole Barnes-Davies, as the original pANCA Coordinator, for her commitment and hard work over the past 6 years.

Carole is a founder member of WHI and is now taking a well

earned rest.

The Sampling sessions for the next round of the Longitudinal Study are as follows:

Saturday 19 September at Saint Michael's Hall, Lechlade Road, Highworth, Wilts, SN6 7HF

and

Saturday 26 September at The Village Hall, West Street, Weedon Bec, Northants, NN7 4QU

If you can attend one of these testing sessions please contact either:

Sandra Jeffries,
wheatenhealth@aol.com,
 Tel: 01246 554742
 or
 Judy Creswick
scwtc.sec@btinternet.com.
 Tel: 01670 512832

Please Remember!

Try to attend one of the arranged sessions, which includes a physical examination, pANCA test and albumin measurement, free of charge.

Dogs need to be fasted for at least 6 hours prior to the test taking place.



Editorial: New Legislation – A Cause for Concern?



In January 2010 your dog must be identified by an ear tattoo or a microchip to be hip-scored.

I recently heard from a concerned dog owner who had taken her dog to the vet for routine hip-scoring.

She took along his KC registration papers and then left the surgery and went home to wait until he was ready to be collected.

The dog was going to have some routine dentistry work carried out at the same time and was therefore having a general anaesthetic.

When the phone call from the surgery came, it was to tell her that they could not continue with the hip-scoring (the dog was already under anaesthesia) because he had no microchip or ear tattoo!

The owner protested that his KC registration document was at the surgery and that his registration number was sufficient as a form of identification but the the vet insisted that he could not continue with the hip x-ray unless the owner agreed to the dog being microchipped first.

With great reluctance the owner finally felt she had no option but to agree to that the dog should be chipped but made it quite clear that she was doing so under duress.

Before collecting the dog later that day, the owner did some research and finally spoke to someone at the BVA.

She was told that the Vet had been incorrect and that the KC registration number was

adequate as a form of identification *at present* but that, by next year, they hoped *all dogs being hip-scored would have to be identified by microchip or ear tattoo.*

Now I have to say that this came as news to me and it wasn't much consolation to the owner, whose dog now had a microchip that she had not wanted in *the first place!*



I rang the KC to check the facts with them and was told that dogs would indeed have to be micro-chipped or have an ear tattoo from January 2010 in order to be hip-scored.

I am concerned by this on two counts:

Firstly, what effect may this legislation have on the number of people hip-scoring their dogs? It is after all, adding another expense, let alone, as in this case, putting pressure on an owner to put their dog through a procedure, which they may not want.

And secondly, on a personal note, I have my litters ear-tattooed anyway, so it may not be of immediate impact to me but I, like many others, feel that there are still too many question marks over the safety and security of microchips as a

form of identification.

Now you may call me cynical but I wonder just how long it will be before the ear tattoo is also deemed inadequate as a form of ID and the only acceptable method becomes the microchip.

Of course, I daresay this will have nothing whatever to do with the resulting financial gain for those who make them, those who implant them, those who may occasionally carry out surgery to remove them or for those who may provide the treatment for any associated health issues that they may cause in the future!

Lynn Carter

August 2009

“Old dogs, like old shoes, are comfortable. They might be a bit out of shape and a little worn around the edges, but they fit well.”

Bonnie Wilcox,
“Old Dogs, Old Friends”



Update on the Colony Dogs

Background

Many of you will know of the work of Dr. Shelly Vaden of North Carolina State University (NCSU)

In 1995, Dr Vaden was successful in securing grants to enable her to study the "The Mode of Inheritance of PLE/PLN in SCWTs."

These funds provided for the support of a Colony of dogs which began with a Wheaten bitch who was bred to an affected dog. Eventually an affected dog was bred to a Beagle (chosen because there had been no documented cases of kidney disease in that breed) and produced the "Wheagles" in 1996

Dr Vaden continues to study the colony dogs and it was through working with Dr Vaden, at NCSU that Dr Allenspach first became actively involved with the SCWT.

Dr Vaden's latest report on her work with the Colony dogs is printed in its entirety here, with the kind permission of Carol Carlson of SCWTCA Endowment Inc..



What Have We Learned From The Colony Dogs?

Dr. Shelly Vaden,
July 2, 2009

Fifteen years ago, the first dogs were born into our colony. The dogs have been wonderful! They have provided us with great joy as well as a wealth of information. These dogs were bred with several goals in mind. It is time to reflect on what we have accomplished.

The first goal was to determine the mode of inheritance of this disorder. In order to do this, one of our male dogs was bred to a beagle to create Wheagles. These dogs were then sequentially evaluated over time. Some of the Wheagles developed overt disease. This would suggest that the disease is inherited as a dominant trait. However, the prevalence of disease within the colony of purebred dogs is high, supportive of an autosomal recessive mode of inheritance. At this point in time, we cannot say with certainty that Beagles do not have a similar abnormality that is complicating the phenotypic expression of PLE and PLN in our Wheagles. Determination of the exact mode of inheritance could require a second outcross breeding to a dog of a breed other than a SCWT or a beagle. At this time, we have decided that it is not practical to conduct another breeding. DNA has been harvested from all of our dogs and we have supplied any interested researcher with this DNA in hope of

facilitating the identification of a genetic marker. Once a genetic marker for this disease is discovered, we most likely will be able to confirm the mode of inheritance through application of the marker.

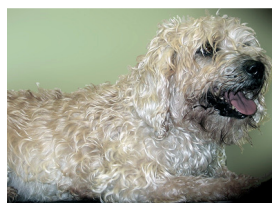
Our second goal was to sequentially evaluate dogs to gain a better understanding of the development of clinical signs of this disease, so that we could make better recommendations for screening SCWT. We have been able to effectively achieve this goal. We know that increases in fecal API are prevalent throughout the colony (and the general population of SCWT). These precede the onset of PLE. However overt PLE, as manifested by decreased serum protein concentrations, does not always precede the onset of PLN. The dogs developing overt PLE have had a greater number of fecal API samples >18.7 ug/g. All affected dogs that have been tested have had enteric food allergies. This information is very useful because it suggests that the enteric disease may have a pathogenic role in the renal disease, as suspected. In order to be an effective screening tool, evaluation of fecal API must be initiated in dogs that are less than 3 years of age and continued annually lifelong. As for PLN, we found that microalbuminuria is highly prevalent in SCWT of our colony. It often precedes the onset of increased urine protein: creatinine ratios, which is a standard test used to screen dogs for proteinuria. Some dogs of our colony had sporadic microalbuminuria and some have increased values that are not progressively increasing. However, we know that microalbuminuria that is persistent and of increasing magnitude is the best early predictor of PLN.

We have also been evaluating the therapeutic benefit of sodium cromoglycate administration and hydrolysate diet consumption in the affected SCWT of our colony. This has been a more difficult study to perform because our other objectives require that we follow the disease to a later stage than which we might generally intervene therapeutically by today's standards. Even in this later stage of disease, there does appear to be some benefit of the therapies in certain dogs. However, some individual dogs have not responded. Some dogs also have responded to the administration of an elemental diet (Vivonex®). In clinically affected dogs, providing an elemental diet may give the intestinal tract a period of relative rest, allowing it to regain some function and start to recover. Perhaps this period of 'rest' will give time for other therapeutic agents (e.g., corticosteroids) to be more effective.

As a final part of these studies, we have been feeding a litter of dogs a hydrolysate diet since weaning. It appears that this diet may delay the onset of PLE or at least make the clinical manifestations of it less severe. However, 2 of these 4 dogs have succumbed to PLN. This data is preliminary, because 2 of the dogs are still alive. Absolute conclusions cannot be made at this time. Furthermore, direct applications of these findings to the general population of dogs will be difficult. We are certainly not advising that apparently unaffected SCWT from the general population be fed a hydrolysate diet.

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“DNA has been harvested from all of our dogs, and we have supplied any interested researcher with this DNA in hope of facilitating the identification of a genetic marker.”

We have been blessed with 22 dogs: 14 SCWTs and 8 SCWTxBeagles. So how many are still with us?

We only have 2 SCWT and 5 SCWTxBeagles remaining. Of the SCWTs, one has PLE and the other does not have any clinically apparent disease. The SCWTxBeagles will be 14 years old this October.

We are starting to see some geriatric diseases in them that are not related to PLE/PLN. Many of them have mild osteoarthritis. One had a stroke and a rectal tumor but is still living the good life. Two of them have proteinuria that may be

unrelated to the disease we are studying. One has PLE/PLN. All dogs appear to still enjoy their daily routine and are free of persistent symptoms.

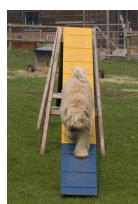
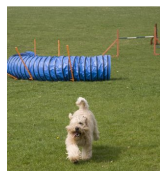
We are always open to collaborative studies and have many samples that can be shared. To date we have collaborated with investigators from the GI Lab at Texas A&M University, Karin Allenspach of the Royal Veterinary College, Iwan Burgener and other investigators from Bern University, Meryl Littman and Paula Henthorn at Penn and investigators in the Clinical Nutrition group at NCSU.

Contributions to the Colony Dogs should be sent to:

NC Veterinary Medical Foundation, Inc.
4700 Hillsborough Street
Raleigh, NC 27606-1499



Joie De Vivre



Wheatens understand the joy of life.



Sandra's snippets

Grooming tips for Elderly Dogs:

A little while ago there was a discussion on one of the Wheaten chat lines, regarding elderly Wheatens. Grooming was one of the topics discussed and many breeders and owners said that despite their Wheatens being groomed throughout their lives, they found their 'oldies' become a little intolerant of it in their latter years.

This was mainly due to the skin and the coat getting thinner, and age related aches and pains. Of course keeping our Wheatens fresh and clean is important throughout their lives, and when elderly, it is probably more

important, due to the problems associated with old age.

I personally have noticed a big change over the last few years, with our 13 years old Wheaten, Tara. Not only has her coat got thinner, it is a little dryer too, and she has become more reluctant to be groomed. I tend to keep her shorter now, especially her legs and tummy to ease this problem.

One of the grooming items discussed was a wooden pin brush to remove knots and tangles, by Chris Christensen.

"Petcetera" managed to locate them for me from America, and they are now available on their web site:

Although not cheap, I have found this brush very useful on my three dogs, even down to the youngest, who is 4 years old. The wooden pin heads are not long but they seem to be able to loosen knots and tangles without causing too much pulling on the skin and coat. Once the tangles are removed, finish the dog with a normal comb.

http://www.petcetera.co.uk/acatalog/Online_Catalogue_PIN_BRUSHES52.html

94481 Chris Christensen Wood Pin Brush 20mm - small £24.50

94482 Chris Christensen Wood Pin Brush 20mm - large £34.50



*"The one absolutely
unselfish friend that a
man can have in this
selfish world, the one
that never proves
ungrateful or
treacherous, is his dog."*

George Graham Vest

Bath time

Grooming products:

Everyone has their favourite shampoo, conditioner and finishing spray products, mine are from a company called Redcape,

<http://www.redcape.co.uk/store/itemGroup.asp?id=17-0-0>

I use ReQual Pro-Grooming products, which on first viewing seem expensive, but you dilute these

products, so they go a long way and last quite a long time. However, if you do not want to spend this amount, or buy bottles that large, you could try their smaller and cheaper packaged 'ReQual Homeline System' products.

Grooming tips:

Always groom through your dog prior to bathing, if you don't, any existing

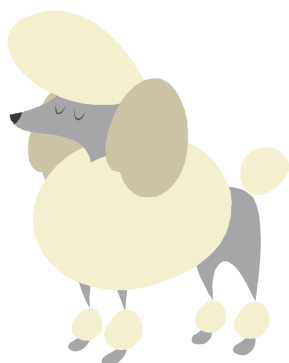
knots and tangles will tighten once the dog is shampooed and it will make your job harder and be more unpleasant for the dog to get the knots out!

Never be tempted to trim a dirty dog as this will blunt your scissors and grooming blades.

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Bath time (continued)



Did You Know?

Barbara Penney has produced a booklet called 'Grooming Tips for the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier', contact Barbara on penney@btinternet.com or telephone 0117 932 4297 for further details.

Avoid placing your scissors where they can be kicked by the dog and dropped onto the floor, this damages and sprains the blades and joints. If possible use another surface to place them on, or wear an apron or grooming overall with pockets in to safely place them.

When drying a dog with a towel, never rub your dog's coat hard as this only tangles it more, pat and squeeze gently, this is much kinder for a dog of any age, but for an elderly dog's aching bones, it is much kinder.

Bathing tips:

A quick and simple way,

when bathing your dog, is to dilute and mix the shampoo and conditioner together. The people at Redcape gave me this tip when using their ReQual Pro-Grooming products, (although you could possibly do this with any shampoo and conditioner?)

Pour one litre of warm water into a bowl and mix into it, 50ml of shampoo, and a teaspoon of the conditioner, agitate a little and using a sponge massage this mixture into the dog's **DRY** coat. Yes, I did say **DRY** coat!

Using the sponge, work

the mixture thoroughly into the coat leaving the dog's head until last, once the body and legs are covered and well massaged work the mixture into the head and muzzle. Shower and rinse off all the soapy mixture - that's it, no need to repeat, dry in the usual way and when completely dry and groomed, spray with ReQual Luxol Finishing spray for lasting condition and shine!

For any dog, not just an elderly dog, this method is twice as quick, and takes less time and effort for the owner too!

Managing Incontinence in the Elderly Dog

Many dogs become incontinent as they become older, this can be due to a number of reasons. If your dog has this problem it is always advisable to have your dog checked by your Vet in case there are any underlying problems which may require treatment, for example a urine infection. If your dog has no underlying health problems, your Vet may prescribe Propalin syrup, which helps to tighten the sphincter muscle and prevent leakage. This sphincter muscle weakens due to age, or if your

dog has been spayed and if your dog is overweight, as the fat within the body puts more pressure onto the bladder which can cause leakage. Propalin syrup cannot be given if e.g. a dog has kidney or liver problems so many Vets perform a blood and urine test prior to prescribing this form of treatment.

In the last 6 months, Tara, has started to leak when she is in a deep sleep. Her bloods and urine revealed she has early stage geriatric kidney failure therefore

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Happiness is

.... a snoozy dinosaur.



Incontinence (continued)



the Vet is reluctant to prescribe the syrup.

Tara is on a Hills prescription kd diet and her bloods results are for now, all back in the 'normal range', except for her Creatinine.

After undertaking many hours of internet research, I have overcome Tara's leaking problem by buying a special dog nappy and pads.

At first Tara wasn't happy to wear the nappy but she has got used to it now and we just put it on if we are going out for a while, and are not at home to remind her to go out to toilet.

Many nappy products we researched had poor reviews, mostly because they

did not stay on the dog very well, but the company we found, which had the best reviews and success was called:

www.petwetting.co.uk

The nappy pant itself is not cheap, but it is easy to put on (and it stays on), and take off.

They make different nappy pants for males and females and other animals. You can also buy pads for bitches in season as well as thicker ones for urinary and bowel incontinence.

To help keep Tara smelling fresh and clean, I frequently use a 'dry shampoo' to save her requiring a full bath.

You can purchase a Wahl dry foaming shampoo from 'Pets at Home'. ReQual products also have a dry shampoo available too.

Changes in WHI

Since the last Newsletter we have had some changes in the WHI Steering Group. At the end of May Barbara Penney decided it was time for her to retire and within a month of Barbie's decision, Carole Barnes-Davies and Karen Francis also decided to step down from the Steering Group.

Barbie and Carole were each founder members of WHI, which was started in February 2003, and Karen joined us very soon afterwards; all three have contributed enormously to our work and we wish to record our sincere thanks to them for their dedication and commitment to WHI. We are sad to lose such innovative and hardworking members of the group, but recognize that each has other priorities just now and we wish them well with these. Everyone knows of Barbie's talents in the field of

publications, not only was she the creator and Editor of the WHI Newsletter, but she was also the Editor of the Bulletin of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of GB for 10 years, producing 30 editions. Barbie says she has many other things that she wants to devote her time to, and who knows, maybe that book she has always talked about will finally get the attention it deserves. If it does come to fruition, I will be one of the first in the queue to buy it, because her knowledge of Wheaten history, coupled with her research skills, will make it a "must have" for every Wheaten enthusiast. Carole, as well as being pANCA Co-ordinator, also developed the WHI Website and during her time as Webmaster she conducted two very successful Silent Auctions on behalf of WHI, raising much needed funds through auctioning fantastic

donated items on-line.

When Karen joined us she helped us to streamline our activities by identifying the need to have people in designated jobs ... her organizational skills made her the ideal person to become our first Secretary.

Karen played a pivotal role in finding a key speaker for our second Birthday Event and this was our first introduction to Dr Karin Allenspach. Out of this association grew the pANCA project.

Although they cease to be active members of the Steering Group, they have each reiterated their commitment to Wheaten health and, as always, they continue to be available to offer support in any way they can. All three have been, and remain, real friends to the world of Wheatens

"Every boy who has a dog should also have a mother, so that the dog can be fed regularly."

Anonymous

However, life at WHI goes on, and in order to facilitate the smooth running of things, we are delighted that Sandra Jeffries has returned to the Steering Group as the pANCA Research Project Co-ordinator; Kate Watkins has taken on the role of Secretary and Malcolm Jeffries has become the new Webmaster in addition to his Treasurer's duties. He has spent much of the summer months working on this and his efforts will be revealed shortly! Lynn Carter, brave lady that she is, agreed to edit the first Newsletter 'post-Barbie'.

Jan Thackray
August 2009



The WHI Educational Event – 24th May 2009

We are indebted to Linda Matti, one of the attendees, for this report:

Spending Sunday of the Spring Bank Holiday looking at interior views of dogs intestines and realising the multitude of situations we create that stress our dogs proved to be a very fruitful way of spending the day and will have a lasting effect on how I feed and interact with my dogs.

The WHI seminar at Weedon Bec in Northamptonshire drew an audience of more than fifty people. The morning began with time for coffee and an opportunity to catch up with friends as well as meeting people from other breeds wanting to take advantage of the WHI expertise and growing body of information.

The day was well structured, allowing time to absorb a lot of information with the morning session comprising two lectures the first by Dr Karin Allenspach examining the possible causes of digestive disorders in dogs.

The second was by Nicole Mackie a Canine Therapist, giving an insight into the complex and often strained relationship between dogs and humans that can result in animals becoming stressed.

Having saturated ourselves with information from the morning lectures the proceedings halted for some alfresco dining as everyone drifted into sunny or shady corners to enjoy the delicious lunch provided.

Lunch eaten, dogs walked and watered and tucked up in cool spaces the seminar reconvened with an afternoon of six roundtable workshops that had both speakers and members of WHI answering

questions and sharing their knowledge and canine expertise.

We moved around, with Malcolm Jeffries as efficient timekeeper, allowing us just 20 minutes at each station, finding out about the benefits of good record keeping when breeding litters from Sarah John, who has developed an elegant and very visual method of keeping information about her puppies and used some of this to produce a book aimed at new puppy owners.

Bev Hannah demonstrated her grooming skills giving innovative advice about detangling wheaten's by starting from the back feet and working upward and forward. The level of co-operation from Elvie who was her model for the day was exemplary. All other wheaten's please take note.

Carole Barnes-Davis had recipes and advice for natural remedies to keep dogs free of fleas. Garlic featured heavily in this but lavender and lemon were also used which I found interesting and will try the advice to just cut up a lemon and soak it in water overnight then spray this on my dogs, avoiding the eyes.

Nicole Mackie expanded on her morning lecture answering individual questions about stress in dogs and gave advice on massage and touch as calming measures.

Dr Karin Allenspach also took individual questions and discussed particular dogs problems and owners queries about diet.

Lynn Carter shared her expertise in feeding dogs on raw diets with samples of her vegetable, meat and bone mixture looking like delicious doggie meatballs that made me consider how and what I feed my dogs.

The afternoon ended with tea and cakes in true WHI form.

I want to say a big thank you to everyone who contributed to making this a thoroughly enjoyable and informative day. I found the round table format of the afternoon particularly good and appreciated the opportunity of having access to the wide ranging expertise of both speakers and WHI members.

Linda Matti



*“DOG. A kind of
additional or subsidiary
Deity designed to catch
the over flow and surplus
of the world's worship.”*

Ambrose Bierce



The Management of Bladder Stones – an Owner's Account

In Newsletter sixteen, we recounted the story of Purdie, a Dandie Dinmont.

Purdie had produced a lovely litter of puppies and then, at her next season, suffered severe and life-threatening urine infections, as a result of the production of struvite stones in her bladder. At the time of the publication of the article, Purdie was making a good recovery from major surgery, her owner had implemented some advice from a homeopathic vet and was optimistic about the situation being under control. We rejoin the story in the following update and find out how things have been since, for Purdie and her owner.

As a result [of the advice from the homeopathic vet] Purdie was treated with some homeopathic remedies plus regular cranberry, dandelion and parsley as herbs added to the diet.

She then had a check of her urine in December 2008 which was shown to have no crystals present.

Then the whole story repeated itself - on the seventh day of her season in January 2009 she was again in hospital having the same operation to remove bladder stones which had got lodged in the urethra.

Our earlier hope that this was a one off cystitis type infection was not to be. Purdie was home and well again - bursting with life and vitality, but I felt very scared. The only advice offered by the allopathic vets was a 6 month session of proprietary foods designed to prevent struvites. I was unconvinced that this would help. The x-ray had proved that the crystals had formed relatively quickly and it was likely that hormonal changes were the problem not dietary issues.

The plan of action from the homeopathic vet was:

- testing urine on a weekly basis

-- using universal litmus paper;

- x-ray her every two to three months IF (and only if) she didn't require sedation;

- a course of homeopathic remedies;

- additions of celery, wild parsley, lemon barley water, cranberry juice, goldenseal, cleavers and berberis to diet;

- cut out cereals, rice & any pork in her diet.



We have followed this regime to date. The pH of her urine was brought down from 7 to 5 over a couple of weeks and has been maintained at that level. (Of interest my 3 other Dandies have urine pHs of 6 to 5 naturally). In April 2009 the urine test taken at the vets showed no crystal formation. Then at the end of April we successfully had an x-ray without sedation and this showed no stone formation.

Then right at the end of May one of the other bitches came into season and as they all normally follow suit, I started checking her urine daily and watched in horror as it rose in 3 days to 7pH. The homeopathic vet recommended increasing the dose of cranberry juice and sent some further homeopathic remedies- I started to give her a capful of cranberry juice diluted with a little milk and water **every two** hours except during the night. Within 3 days it was down to 5 and it was maintained at this level during the rest of the time she was in season.

It is interesting to speculate - I had reduced her "normal" level from 7 to 5 but once she came into season it quickly rose to 7 again

If the baseline had been 7 and it had followed that pattern, the pH would have risen to 9 and beyond within a matter of days.

It has become very clear that I will have to have her spayed. This is disappointing as I didn't keep any of her first litter and she was such a lovely mum. But I would rather keep my Purdie girl and have no more pups from her than run the risk that it is the hormonal change that will continue to threaten her life. We cannot be sure that spaying her will resolve the problem but it is the only other plan of action that might help.

I hope this is the end of the bladder stones story. I am very, very grateful to Mr Day of the Alternative Veterinary Medicine Centre. He offered a solution to the problem where my usual veterinary practice could not. This is not the first time he has saved one of my animals (a horse, a pony, a Yorkie & another Dandie have benefited from his life saving and life enhancing treatment) where allopathic medicine has failed. My usual vets are very good and work with me when I go down the alternative route. However my admiration for Mr Day is little short of hero worship.

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(It is worth noting that Purdie's owner has managed to train her to cooperate with the regular x-ray procedure and lie very still on the table - without sedation!)



Wheaten Health Initiative

“To provide a platform for the reception and transmission of information about the health and well-being of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier”

“If you don’t own a dog, at least one, there is not necessarily anything wrong with you, but there may be something wrong with your life.”

Roger Caras, “A Celebration of Dogs”

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Phew!

