

Disaster Preparedness for Pets By Sue Moore

Springtime brings thoughts of renewal along with devastating natural and man-made disasters such as tornadoes, floods, and wild fires. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has developed a booklet entitled, "Saving the Whole Family", which gives step by step instructions and helpful hints about what to do to prepare pet owners and their animals for disasters and how to avoid having to leave animals stranded in the event of an evacuation.

The booklet brings up the fact that people are often told to immediately leave their homes thinking it will be for a short period of time, only to find that they cannot return for days or weeks. So, if at all possible, it is recommended to try to take your animals with you. Details are given in the booklet about how to prepare an evacuation kit, and what to do in case the pet owner is not at home when disaster strikes. Something as simple as placing a sticker on your front and back doors letting rescue personnel know there are animals in the home, where they might be hiding, and where they receive their veterinary medical care could make a difference in their survival or not.

It gives details about having identification on your animal(s), whether small animals, equine or livestock, and having copies of veterinary records and proof of ownership available to store in an evacuation kit. Time is also devoted to evacuation essentials that should be included in each type of evacuation kit. We sometimes don't really think about animals needing their own diets and water available in containers for their use or about a first aid kit should they become injured when we are fleeing ourselves. The booklet covers evacuating birds, reptiles, amphibians and other small mammals (ferrets, hamsters, gerbils, etc.), too. Visit www.avma.org to obtain current information or link up with additional Web sites on disaster preparedness.

Our Goals

Provide low-cost spay/neuter clinics a minimum of three times each year in Stillwater and surrounding communities, utilizing mobile surgical units, local veterinarians, and CAAP volunteers.

Establish a program to insure that all animals adopted from Stillwater Animal Control cannot reproduce, thereby preventing even more homeless animals.

Continue to offer spay/neuter assistance on an individual basis to low-income pet owners in the Stillwater area through our network of seven local veterinarians.

From the President

Thank goodness Spring is finally here! The winter weather wreaked havoc with our mobile spay/neuter clinic in January. We had to cancel it due to icy weather. However, thanks to some hard work and lots of phone calls on the part of our CAAP volunteers, we were able to reschedule most of the animals that were signed up for the January clinic. We appreciate Dr. Brent Pitts of Cimarron Animal Clinic for setting aside two whole days at his private practice to do the surgeries. In all, he spayed or neutered 22 dogs and 25 cats on those two days.

Our next mobile clinic is scheduled for April 22. As usual, it will be held at the Payne County Expo Center. People are required to call ahead to register their animals.

In March, CAAP held a spay/neuter clinic for "cats only" at which we sterilized 23 cats. Since cats can produce multiple litters a year, this clinic will be instrumental in controlling the number of unwanted kittens later this year.

On April 28, we are going to sponsor the first ever Placement Paws event. This event was the brainstorm of some of our CAAP members who were concerned about the problem we always have in Stillwater of OSU students moving at the end of the semester and not being able to take their pets. This puts an undue burden on our local animal shelters and in some cases results in pets just being left behind to fend for themselves.

Placement Paws will attempt to bring together these students with people wanting to adopt pets. There are several advantages to this adoption event over adoption from a shelter. First, potential adopters will be able to talk directly with the pet's owner to ask questions to determine if the pet is suitable for them. Second, there will be no charge to either party. Third, the pets will not have been exposed to a shelter environment where they might have been in contact with diseases and behavior problems of other animals. Fourth, pet owners will have the satisfaction of knowing who their pet is going to live with. Finally, potential adopters will be able to meet and interact with the pet in a relaxed atmosphere.

The Placement Paws event is scheduled for April 28 at 2:00pm at Boomer Lake Park. If you are interested in adopting an animal in need of a home, please consider adopting one of the fine pets that will be available at this event.

Nancy Stevens, President

Our Mission

To promote the health and welfare of companion animals through education, spay/neuter assistance and support of the human-animal bond.

Heartworm Disease

By Dr. Karen Dawson, D.V.M.

Now that spring is upon us and warmer temperatures have arrived, so have the mosquitoes. The fleas and ticks are out in abundance now also. I don't think the ticks ever went away this year. I know everyone was hopeful that the cold weather we had would kill some of the pesky insects. The flea life cycle gets shorter when the temperature and humidity rise so they are just now hatching out in most places and will reach infestations when the hot weather hits. Now is a good time to start treating your yards and getting flea and tick prevention on your pets.

Mosquitoes are buzzing inside and out, at least at our house, thus we all need to be concerned about heartworms and their prevention. Heartworms can affect any dog regardless of age, sex and habitat. They are found in virtually all parts of the United States and other countries. They are primarily a disease of dogs, but they also affect cats and even humans.

For those of you who don't know about heartworms, they are transmitted by mosquitoes. A mosquito bites a heartworm positive dog and then later bites your dog to get a blood meal and thereby injecting a larval stage into your dog. It takes six months for the worms to a year to mature, and they can grow four to twelve inches in length. They live five to seven years in an animal. The adult worm then produces offspring called microfilaria that circulate in the blood vessels as they mature into adults. The adult worms take up space in the blood vessels and heart, causing organ damage. The heart chambers are filled with worms instead of blood making it inefficient as a pump and increasing its workload which leads to congestive heart failure. If left untreated, the disease can be fatal to dogs.

There are very few symptoms in early heartworm disease. As the worm population increases, the symptoms may include: difficulty breathing, coughing, fatigue and tiring easily, listlessness, weight loss and a rough hair coat. The test for heartworms in dogs is a simple blood test. In cats, it is more difficult to diagnose, as the test is not as accurate. Some cats are diagnosed post mortem.

Most dogs can be treated for heartworms. In the more serious infections, the treatment can be fatal so the easiest way is to give prevention. There are many brands of heartworms prevention on the market. Some are topical and others are a once a month tablet given by mouth, so check with your veterinarian for the one best suited for your pet. In Oklahoma, it is necessary to treat year round and test annually. So let's keep our pets healthy and give them their once a month heartworm prevention!

Note: We appreciate Dr. Dawson for taking time from her busy veterinary practice to contribute this article to this newsletter.

Canine Parvovirus

By Lil Holcum

Canine parvovirus is the most common serious infectious disease of dogs in the United States and is an extremely tough and resistant bug. It is much more common in puppies than in adult dogs. Parvo attacks the lining of the digestive system. When dogs and puppies contract parvo, they often have diarrhea, vomiting and lethargy. Symptoms usually begin with a high fever, lethargy, depression and loss of appetite. Secondary symptoms appear as gastrointestinal distress, such as vomiting and bloody diarrhea. In many cases, dehydration, shock and death follow.

Canine parvo is carried by dogs. Dogs with typical diarrhea that parvo causes shed the virus in their feces and it remains in the ground for months. Parvo can be brought home to your dog on shoes, hands and even car tires. It can live outside the animal for many months, but is NOT an airborne virus.

Treatment generally consists of IV or sub-cutaneous fluids and antibiotics. Vets can only treat the dog by preventing dehydration and loss of proteins. This includes giving fluids, regulating electrolyte levels, controlling body temperature and giving blood transfusions when necessary. Without intense treatment, probably 80% or more of infected puppies die.

Vaccination is vital to prevent parvo. The surest way to avoid parvo infection in your dog is to adhere to the recommended vaccination schedule that begins when puppies are 6-8 weeks of age. Immunization for parvo is usually included in your dog's distemper vaccine that provides protection against several potentially fatal canine diseases all at the same time.

*As the winds blow on
And the waters rise deep
You can hear their cries
You can hear them weep
Those you have brought into your home
Those who are loyal, caring and warm.*



*You feed them each day, and tell them to stay
And now when they need you, don't turn them away.
When you vowed to love, when you vowed to care
You vowed to sacrifice, and vowed to prepare
So now in times of trouble and strife
You are responsible for more than one life.
You need to plan, think, and prepare
For all those who need you
Those who depend on your care.*

Cindy Swancott Lovern



**APRIL 28
2:00-4:00**

EVENT - BOOMER LAKE PAVILION