Animal Crackers

M. Josephine Deubler

University of Pennsylvania
Important for Dogs and Cats

Rabies Vaccination
There has been a dramatic increase in the number of rabies cases reported, particularly in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The cause appears to be an outbreak of the disease in raccoons, with subsequent spillover to skunks, foxes, horses, dogs, and cats. In contrast, the number of cases in bats has remained relatively constant.

Cats are particularly at risk because of their free-ranging nature and hunting instincts. However, there are estimates that only about four percent of the approximately 53 million cats in the United States are vaccinated against rabies. The result is that for the past few years, there has been a higher frequency of rabies in cats than in dogs.

Dogs and cats should be vaccinated against rabies. Killed vaccines which give protection for three years are available. If one of these vaccines is used, cats and dogs should be vaccinated at three months and one year of age, then every three years. Be sure to have your veterinarian check the manufacturer's recommendation, as some vaccines give protection for less than three years.

At the present time, there is no approved method for vaccinating wild animals against rabies, although researchers are working to develop techniques, including an oral vaccine.

New Poultry Laboratory
Construction of the Evan L. Stubbbs Building at New Bolton Center will begin shortly. Named for the 1911 graduate, a pioneer in the study of avian infectious diseases, the new structure will house a sophisticated laboratory. "The Evan L. Stubbbs Building is designed to safely deal with and manage research with infectious organisms, primarily of poultry," said Dr. Robert J. Eckroade, associate professor of poultry pathology and director of the poultry pathology laboratory at New Bolton Center. "Funding has been provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Our primary task is to study avian influenza, a disease which has dealt devastating losses to Pennsylvania's poultry industry."

The new 43- by 65-foot one-story structure will have an impressive array of safeguards. "It will have two air handling systems, and in each the air will be filtered to remove all organisms, including any virus," Dr. Eckroade said. "It will be a very limited-access building with air locks, shower areas, one-way air flow, a special pathological incinerator, and a chemical treatment retention tank for effluent water."

All these precautions are necessary, as the researchers will be dealing with infectious organisms pathogenic for food animals. "The building is primarily for avian influenza research," said Dr. Eckroade. "This disease is devastating to the poultry industry, and while a lot is known about the influenza virus, we know very little about the disease it causes in poultry."

He explained that the avian influenza virus is present in wild migratory waterfowl and that it is quite resistant. "During the winter in Pennsylvania it can survive for about 105 days in the manure from infected birds." Pennsylvania took drastic measures to curtail the spread of the disease. Millions of chickens were depopulated before the disease was eradicated. However, there was another outbreak of a mild form of the disease on a Pennsylvania farm in early 1986.

The source of this outbreak was traced to trucks with dirty coops originating from the live bird, street market system. "There is a large market for live chickens in New York City and other large cities," said Dr. Eckroade. "80,000 live birds are sold weekly in New York alone through about 40 street markets."

He explained that supplies for this market travel by truck from farm to farm to buy small flocks of chickens. "It was found that these trucks were not cleaned and disinfected after each trip, thus it was possible for the virus to be introduced to the Pennsylvania farm," according to Dr. Eckroade. Legislators are considering regulations making mandatory the cleaning and disinfecting of vehicles used for poultry transport.

The researchers at New Bolton Center will study the avian influenza virus infection of poultry, pheasants, turkeys, and ducks. The influenza research team at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine includes Drs. Helen M. Acland, Charles Benson, Shennill Davison, Robert Eckroade, Linda Keller, and Ben Wolf. The Evan L. Stubbbs Building will be part of the Cooperative Poultry Diagnostic Laboratory at New Bolton Center.

Second Century Fund
Gifts, subscription and bequests to the Second Century Fund now total $206.6 million. During the last six months, approximately 160 separate gifts have been recorded, ranging from $10 to the clinical research fund from grateful pet owners to the completion of the endowment of one of the chairs in medicine.
pup should gain one to two grams per day for each pound of anticipated adult weight. For example, if an adult is expected to weigh 20 pounds, the pup should gain 20 to 40 grams per day for the first five months of life. (An owner is slightly less than 30 grams.) Supplemental feeding or a better quality diet is indicated if this growth rate is not achieved.

During the first few weeks of life, the puppy cats and sleep. The twitching and jerking during sleep is important for muscle development. For the first two weeks, the puppy's body temperature is 94° to 97°F. There is no shivering reflex for the first six days, and the puppy is dependent on the mother or an external heat source to sustain normal temperature. Many puppy deaths are caused by chilling, and the bitch and puppies should be kept no lower than 70°F.

Check the weight to be sure the pups are thriving. Be sure they are kept warm.

Cold Weather Notes

Antifreeze is very toxic to dogs. Dogs seem to love it, and a very small amount can be fatal. Prompt veterinary attention is necessary if any is ingested. Be careful where you drain radiators.

If dogs are kept outside in cold weather, be sure they have a dry bed and protection from drafts. Additional feed may be needed. Avoid shifting between heated and unheated kennels. Different breeds have different requirements. All very young puppies must be kept warm.

City dogs often walk on salted sidewalks. Wash their feet with warm water regularly. Dry with a towel and check between the pads.

Dogs kept in warm apartments should wear a sweater or coat when taken outside in cold weather, especially toy breeds and those with short hair.

Cats may get under the hood of cars. There have been some nasty accidents. If this is the only warm place for your cat, it might be well to check its whereabouts before you start the car.

Don't neglect regular grooming. Bathing usually is not necessary if the dog is kept clean by brushing and combing. As a general rule, regular or frequent bathing is not necessary.

Many dogs will shiver when frightened, excited, or emotionally upset. They will shiver when they are cold. This is not necessarily a sign of illness.

Keep your vaccination schedule up-to-date. Some infectious diseases occur more frequently in cold weather.

AKC Filming

The bucolic background, complete with cows, in some of the terrier video tapes to be released in February was provided by New Bolton Center, the large animal facility of the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Pennsylvania. From October 1 to 8, 1985, AKC personnel and a camera crew came to the Chester County campus to tape Norfolk and Norwich terriers, miniature schnauzers, bull terriers, Welsh terriers, fox terriers, and Airedale terriers. The filming for the breed standards series even included Norwich terriers going to ground in a wooden tunnel under a haystack. The weather cooperated and the entire filming went without a problem.

William A. MacKay Scholarship Fund

William A. MacKay, Belle Meade, NJ, has endowed a scholarship fund at the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Pennsylvania.

Our School receives more applications for admission than any other veterinary school in the nation," said Dean Robert R. Marsiluk, "yet the difficulty of obtaining sufficient financial aid turns many bright students away. Mr. MacKay's contribution aids us in our efforts to admit the most highly qualified students, regardless of their ability to pay.

"We wanted to do something for one of the veterinary schools," said Mr. MacKay. "Our veterinarian, Dr. Amos Stokes (1935), is a Penn alumnus, and that in part determined that our contribution would go to the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. A scholarship fund is a meaningful way to help tomorrow's veterinarians, particularly in light of ever-rising tuition fees."

Mr. and Mrs. MacKay and their six children are ardent dog lovers. "I have had dogs since I was three years old," he said. "My parents owned boxers, German shepherds, and Doberman pinchers. Now my family has wire-haired fox terriers, Doberman pinchers, Lakeland terriers, and Pekingese."