



4-1-1989

Animal Crackers

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Vaccination Schedule for Cats

All cats should be vaccinated against feline panleukopenia virus, feline calicivirus, feline viral rhinotracheitis and rabies.

At VHUP (Veterinary Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania), only vaccines containing killed virus are used. Vaccination should be done under your veterinarian's supervision and schedules may vary with different veterinarians.

VHUP recommends a combined vaccine (panleukopenia, calicivirus and rhinotracheitis) at 8 - 10 weeks of age and again at 12 - 14 weeks with annual revaccination. Three months is the age for the primary rabies vaccination, repeated at one year of age - then revaccination every two years.

There is a vaccine against Feline Leukemia (FeLV), but this is not used routinely at VHUP.

Leeches

Leeches have been used in human and veterinary medicine for thousands of years. Even in the early 20th century, bloodletting was used as treatment. Using leeches was considered less painful than actually cutting blood vessels. It is now recognized that the use of leeches has some value, although in the past they may have worsened many conditions and probably transmitted some diseases. Now they are used to remove blood and reduce swelling from transplants. Veins heal more slowly than arteries, causing a build-up of arterial blood. Application of leeches for five days removes the arterial blood, giving veins time to heal and regain normal function. An American company obtains medicinal leeches from Wales and sells thousands for surgical uses.

Most Popular A.K.C. Breeds

In 1988, the American Kennel Club registered 1,220,500 dogs of 130 breeds, a new record high. Cocker spaniels lead the list for the sixth consecutive year. Labrador retrievers moved up to second place while Poodles dropped to third. Unchanged from 1987, Golden retrievers, German shepherd dogs and show chows are fourth, fifth and sixth. Rottweilers moved to number seven (from twelve in 1987). Beagles were number eight (seven in 1987), dachshunds remained number nine and Miniature schnauzers were tenth (eighth in 1987).

Of the seven groups recognized by A.K.C., sporting breeds led in number of registrations, followed by non-sporting, toy, working, herding, hound and terrier.

There were 1075 dog shows held in 1988, 364 obedience trials and 1535 specialty shows. At the largest all-breed show (Santa Barbara, California) there were 3,422 dogs competing. When considering a breed, a visit to a show is preferable to making a decision from a picture. You should know the difference between a puppy and an adult. Grooming and training requirements also should be investigated.

Warm Weather Notes

When the weather is hot, it is advisable to limit exercise to early morning and evening when it is cooler. Water should be readily available and bowls kept clean. Do not feed during the heat of the day. Warm weather brings an increase in Parvovirus cases. Keep vaccination up-to-date. Flies carry the virus, so remove uneaten food promptly. Avoid contact with fecal material.

Heartworm preventive medication is recommended wherever there are mosquitoes. Ivermectin is effective as a microfilaricide when given once a month.

Fleas and ticks require constant attention. Many different products are available. Always read labels carefully and use insecticides at recommended intervals. The house, kennel and yard must be treated (in addition to the animal itself).

"Hot Spots" may appear overnight. They may be caused by insect bites or other irritations. Do not neglect grooming and any moist, red spot requires prompt attention. Your veterinarian may recommend a preparation to use at the first sign of trouble. Delayed treatment may result in a serious skin problem.

Closed cars become death traps in minutes when the weather is hot. Heat stroke requires immediate treatment. Hosing down with water helps but intravenous fluids should be given as soon as possible.



When to Neuter?

There are so many answers to this question it seems best to be vague about any recommendation. Six months of age is frequently mentioned as "ideal."

A new theory is that it might be better to neuter pets when they are eight weeks old. This can be done safely and has become a policy at some animal shelters. Millions of homeless pets are euthanized each year.

Most puppies and kittens are adopted when they are about eight weeks old. If they are altered before they go home with their new owners, the number of unwanted animals they might produce could be greatly reduced. One controlled study has shown that there are minimal differences in the mature animal whether neutered at eight weeks or at six months.

There are many purebred dogs and cats which, in most cases, are neutered for other reasons. Responsible owners plan breedings and mate only those animals which will improve the breed. They give great importance to eliminating faults and inherited problems. Animals are neutered when they do not fit into breeding programs. There is no rule about the age for neutering in these animals. Often it is based on the veterinarian's advice.

The American Kennel Club is considering limited registration. This would mean that the registration shows that this animal is purebred but cannot be used for breeding or shown at championship shows.

Canaan Dog

On June 1, 1989, the Canaan dog became eligible for entry in the Miscellaneous Class at American Kennel Club championship shows and matches.

This breed is believed to have originated in the "land of Canaan" in pre-biblical times. Drawings found on tombs at Beni-Hassan, dating about 2200-2000 B.C., depict dogs which closely resemble the Canaan dog of today. These dogs were guard and herd dogs for the ancient Israelites. They became semi-wild and survived in the Negev Desert, living with the Bedouin and the Druze. In 1934, Drs. Rudolphina and Rudolph Menzel, noted dog trainers for German military and police organizations, escaped to Palestine and began a redomestication program for the wild-living pariah dogs. The dogs could withstand the rigors of the desert under working conditions. As a breed, the Canaan dogs proved highly intelligent and easily trainable. They served as sentry dogs, messengers, Red Cross helpers and even as land mine locators. The Canaan dog was first recognized by the Palestine Kennel Club, and by 1948 there were 150 dogs registered in their stud book.

The Canaan dog was first brought to the United States in 1965 when the late Mrs. Ursula Berkowitz of Oxnard, California, imported four Canaan dogs. The Canaan Club of America was founded and a substantial number of dogs are registered in their stud book. In the breed standard, adopted in 1988, the Canaan dog is described as "aloof with strangers, inquisitive, loyal and loving with his family... dogs are 20 to 24 inches in height and hitches 19 to 23 inches... disqualification: dogs over 25 inches or bitches less than 18 inches... color: predominantly white with marking(s) of color, or solid-colored with or without white trim... Temperament: alert, vigilant, devoted and docile with family, reserved and aloof with strangers. Highly territorial, serving as a responsive companion and natural guardian. Very vocal, persistent. Easily trained. Faults: shyness or dominance towards people."

The Miscellaneous Class at A.K.C. shows includes Australian Kelpies, Border collies, Canaan dogs, Cavalier King Charles spaniels, Chinese crested, Chinese Shar-Peis, greater Swiss mountain dogs, miniature bull terriers, Spinoni Italiani and, after July 1, 1989, petit basset griffon Vendéen. These breeds cannot, until fully recognized, be registered by the American Kennel Club. To compete at A.K.C. Shows, the owner must obtain an Indefinite Listing Privilege (ILP) and the number must be shown on the entry form.

Canaan dogs are registered with the Canaan Club of America, Inc. Further information may be obtained from the secretary: Lorraine Stephens, P.O. Box 555, Newcastle, OK 73065.

