

# Animal Crackers



## BOOK REVIEW

**PET CARE IN THE NEW CENTURY: Cutting Edge Medicine for Dogs and Cats** by Amy Shojai. New American Library (Penguin Putnam Inc., 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014).

Paperback, \$14.00.

Here is an up-to-date reference book covering modern veterinary care. More than a hundred veterinarians, among them quite a few from Penn. (listed in an appendix) explain many health and behavior conditions, arranged alphabetically. There are notes on contact lenses as a diagnostic aid as well as protective glasses. Tests for hearing loss are discussed and hearing aids that are available. Pacemakers are used for some heart problems in dogs. Kidney transplants are used for cats. The topics include aggression, cancer, cognitive disorders, obesity, pain, parasites and vaccinations. "Modern Miracles" describe results of innovative treatments.

The appendix lists veterinary colleges in the United States and their websites. A specialist has completed additional training and is a "Diplomate" of a veterinary specialty college. The appendix gives contact information. Among the specialties are internal medicine, dermatology, ophthalmology, surgery, radiology, nutrition and behavior. Most have websites listing members.

The human-animal bond brings up ethical questions, which are thoughtfully covered. New procedures may receive much publicity, but their effectiveness has not been proven. Pet insurance now is available to help cover the cost. It may cover experimental treatments, but not pre-existing or inherited conditions. Some owners never question the cost of saving a pet's life while others consider spending a "fortune" a poor ethical choice. Is there an answer?

The difficult subject of genetics is briefly covered. Molecular medicine looks for causes of disease in the genes. Research has identified the genes involved in many canine and feline diseases and tests can be used to identify suspected carriers.

This book covers many advances in veterinary medicine and shows you how to take advantage of them. It's a worthwhile addition to the library of dog and cat owners.

## NOTES ON HORSES

Paint and Quarter Horses lead in registrations, followed by Thoroughbreds, Tennessee

Walking Horses, Standardbreds, Appaloosas, Arabians, Morgan Horses and Saddlebreds.

The average price of Thoroughbred yearlings sold at auction in 2000 was \$54,506.

Kentucky is the foundation of the Thoroughbred breeding industry with 416 stallions and 20,616 mares bred in 2000.

The average horse eats 11,000 pounds of hay, grass and grain each year. On average, a horse consumes two to three ounces of salt daily. During moderate work, it can lose 1.75 to 2.2 ounces of salt in his sweat and 1.25 ounces in urine. A horse will consume as much sodium as it needs when offered salt free choice.

## ANTHRAX

Anthrax is a disease which occurs in almost all warm-blooded animals and humans. The disease is also called Charbon, Milzbrand and Splenic Fever. The human form is known as woolsorters's disease. It occurs worldwide. In the United States there are recognized areas of infection but it has not been seen in Pennsylvania for decades.

The cause is *Bacillus anthracis*, a spore-forming bacterium. The spores may remain viable for decades. Infection of herbivores occurs when they graze in areas where spores in the soil are activated by change in conditions such as flood or drought, especially if the temperature is over 60 degrees. Other species are infected when they eat meat of animals dead of anthrax, get contamination of skin cuts or inhale large numbers of spores. The generalized form is characterized by rapid onset and may be rapidly fatal. Localized infections usually respond to treatment. Intestinal anthrax is acquired by eating raw or undercooked infected meat.

The first vaccine for anthrax was made by Pasteur in 1879 and annual vaccination of grazing animals can control the disease in endemic areas. Ciprofloxacin is the antibiotic of choice for treatment, although the organism is sensitive to a large number of antimicrobials. It is important that regulatory officials be notified if the disease occurs or is suspected so appropriate control measures can be taken.

Anthrax spores manufactured for criminal purposes can have the appearance of a white powder. If there are suspicious circumstances, local law enforcement authorities should be notified.

Factual information concerning various forms of biological and chemical agents and the mail may be found at:

Center for Disease Control —  
<http://www.cdc.gov>

United States Postal Service —  
<http://www.usps.gov>

Pennsylvania Department of Health —  
<http://www.health.state.pa.us>

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