



# Kulshan Veterinary Health Notes

February 2010

*Spring Is Just Around the Corner .*

## Don't Forget That Slug Bait Can Be Toxic to Pets

While slug bait is nearly essential for successful gardening in western Washington, it is important to realize the danger of this bait to your pets.

Metaldehyde, the toxic component of slug bait, attracts and kills slugs. Unfortunately, slug bait is also very tasty, as well as toxic, to dogs. Cats find slug bait less palatable, but just as deadly.

Without treatment most animals that ingest slug bait die. Early treatment, however, allows for a more optimistic outcome.

The first sign of slug bait toxicity is incoordination. Animals will often stagger and stumble as



if they were drunk. Mild muscle tremors, excessive salivation, and increased irritability follow this. Muscle incoordination progresses over one to two hours to the inability to stand and then loss of consciousness.

When your pet has eaten slug bait or begins to show these signs, immediate medical attention is required to improve the overall prognosis. A delay of even an hour can greatly alter the overall results of treatment.

Treating slug bait poisoning usually takes 24 to 48 hours, but may require 72 hours to ensure full recovery. A week later, a follow-up exam and blood test are needed to determine if any permanent liver damage has been done.

As with any condition, prevention is the key. Pets should be confined when slug bait is placed in the environment. This is important if your pet has previously been poisoned by slug bait because pets develop a liking for the taste and will seek out slug bait.

Slug bait is available in liquid, pelleted, and powdered forms. Each form is equally toxic, but the powder and liquid are more difficult for your pets to ingest. The bait is also less palatable when wet. Thus, if you choose to use one of these products, we recommend the liquid or powdered preparations. We also recommend that powdered products be wet down after application.

## Name Changes From Taschereau to Bunch

As the saying goes, a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Kulshan hasn't hired a new doctor, but clients used to seeing Dr. Taschereau may have been confused when offered an appointment with Dr. Bunch.

Dr. Taschereau's name change became official early this month and at that time we changed to addressing her as Dr. Bunch. She's still the same great doctor. She just has an easier name to spell.



Dr. Jessica  
Bunch

## Don't Let Your Pet Be A Mere Statistic!

*Regular Care Can Keep Your Pet's Mouth Healthy*



While February's emphasis on pet dental care serves as a reminder of the importance of dental health, it is important to remember that dental care is a year-round process. Imagine your own mouth if you only cleaned your teeth in February.

Oral disease is the number one health problem diagnosed in dogs and cats, according to the American Veterinary Dental Society and only three percent of dogs and one percent of cats get treatment. Poor oral health also leads to serious other diseases

### *Ways to keep your pet's teeth clean all year round . . .*

1. Regular tooth brushing - the Gold Standard of dental care
2. Oral rinses - Including water additives or after meal disinfectant rinses
3. Dental chews - Things pets chew help, but special chews work better

Not all dental care procedures and products are equally effective. We'd be happy to help establish an appropriate home dental care plan for your pet.

# Controlling Pain In Routine Procedures

Procedures that cause pain and distress to animals are the most concerning of all animal welfare issues. Common procedures such as branding, tail docking, castration, and dehorning are routinely performed on a variety of species, but many farm animals don't get the benefit of proper pain management. Although we would never consider castrating a dog or horse without pain control, it has become fairly routine in livestock. However, that doesn't mean the level of pain is any different, but rather it is expressed differently.



First it is important to recognize signs of pain in individual animals. To better appreciate this, one must think of where each animal species would fit into the food chain to better understand their reaction to pain or illness. For instance, if you are a carnivorous predator such as a dog or cat you may exhibit pain more readily and very differently than an herbivore prey animal such as a cow, sheep or goat that may only grind its teeth. Herd or flock animals will hide their pain or weakness as to not draw attention to themselves in fear of being singled out and eaten. Horses tend to express pain more readily even though they are a prey animal, but they also have the advantage of strong, athletic ability allowing them to outrun most of their predators.

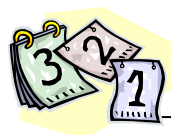
It is important that we start considering pain management in all species regardless of the way they express their pain, since all of these procedures are painful and generate animal welfare concerns. It is important to remember that pain assessment in livestock can be very difficult due to the stoic nature of the animal and it is equally as important to be able to recognize these vague signs of pain. Pain assessment can be broken down into two main categories:

1. **Pain specific behavior** such as head rubbing, ear flicking or teeth grinding after dehorning or bucking, tail flagging, and laying down after a castration band is applied.
2. **Decline in frequency of normal behavior** such as an increase in overall lethargy, reduced activity, and decreased time eating.



One of the best ways we can provide better pain control and reduce stress associated with these procedures is to use anesthetics (sedation and nerve blocks) and analgesics (anti-inflammatories). Performing painful procedures such as dehorning at a young age (<3 m) has been proven to be less painful and traumatic to the animal with faster healing times, less trauma, and less complications. Veterinarians and producers have access to inexpensive and effective methods of pain control and should be moving towards making it part of our routine procedures. Just because animals express less signs of pain, doesn't mean they aren't experiencing it at any less degree.

Don't forget about our reduced rate PAIN FREE DEHORNING and CASTRATION CLINIC occurring the first Saturday of every month. Please call ahead to schedule an appointment.



## Important Kulshan Dates to Remember



- Mar. 6 - Pain Free Dehorning/Castration Clinic - At Kulshan 10:00 - 12:00 by appointment
- Mar. 25 - Equine Metabolic Syndrome Seminar - NW WA Fairgrounds People's Place, 6:30 pm  
Presented by Dr. Wendy Harless-Mollat from Pilchuck Veterinary Hospital
- Mar. 27 - Equine Vaccination Clinic - At Kulshan 10:00 - 12:00 by appointment
- Apr. 3 - Pain Free Dehorning/Castration Clinic - At Kulshan 10:00 - 12:00 by appointment
- Apr. 5 - Sm. Animal Pain Mgmt & Chiropractic Seminar - NW WA Fairgrounds People's Place, 6:30 pm  
Presented by Drs. Johnson and Bunch
- Apr. 12 - Equine Chiropractic & Biomechanics Seminar - NW WA Fairgrounds People's Place, 6:30 pm  
Presented by Drs. Johnson & Schwab
- Apr. 17 - Equine Vaccination Clinic - At Kulshan 10:00 - 12:00 by appointment

**For more information related to any of these events, please call our office or visit:**

**[www.KulshanVet.com](http://www.KulshanVet.com)**