



PACFA Update

Colorado
Department of
Agriculture

December 2011

Winter Edition

Upper Respiratory Cases Prompt Increased Awareness

The Pet Animal Care Program (PACFA) was made aware of an outbreak of upper respiratory disease in dogs in the Durango area this spring. Due to the high number of dogs presenting with clinical signs several veterinarians in the area became concerned about a possible outbreak of Canine Flu. The area veterinarians worked closely with CSU to test dogs in search of the influenza virus; however, testing at CSU and other laboratories never resulted in isolation of influenza. The final determination was that the outbreak was most likely a commonly occurring respiratory infection that appeared more like an epidemic due to the number of dogs affected. In all more than 150 dogs the majority of which attended local daycare and boarding facilities became ill and all made full recoveries.



Champ already considering his Christmas

There are lingering questions about Canine Flu. The researchers at CSU are continuing to gather information about the incidence of influenza in Colorado's dog population. A grant received from the Morris Animal Foundation is helping CSU conduct surveillance of the shelter dogs in Colorado and other states to help answer some of the questions.

The virus was first diagnosed in dogs in 2003 in Florida at a Greyhound racing facility. The signs of illness begin within 2-5 days of exposure and range from mild to severe. The mild form of infection causes a moist cough that lasts from 10-30 days. Some dogs will develop a dry cough similar to "kennel cough" or Bordetella infection which may cause some confusion in diagnosis. Dogs may also display a nasal discharge caused by a secondary bacterial infection. The severe form is characterized by high fever usually 104-106. This leads to pneumonia and ultimately death in a few cases. The fatality rate due to infection with the virus is low, generally between 5 and 8%; but it does affect the animal for an extended period of time and most dogs have little immunity. No vaccine is available.

CIV is most easily spread where large numbers of dogs are housed together such as shelters, boarding facilities, shows or events and veterinary clinics. Facilities that house dogs together are urged to review sanitation and infection control with their veterinarian. Suspect cases should be placed in isolation until the shedding period is over. Infected dogs can shed the virus in respiratory secretions for up to 14 days. PACFA regulations require that any animal with a communicable disease be isolated and timely veterinary care received.

Good infection control practices can reduce the risk. Dog owners that take their dogs to shows, or other activities with dogs or who board their dogs at kennels should check with their veterinarian to ensure proper vaccination. They can also ask the kennel whether respiratory disease has been a problem there and whether the facility has an isolation facility for suspect cases.



Inside this issue:

Stay Green All Year Long 2

Did You Know? 2

Pyrethrin in Snakes and Rodents 3

Rule of the Month 4

Preparing for Renewal 4

Stay Green All Year Long

Love of animals and concern for the environment and health seem to go hand-in-hand. This is probably why PACFA inspectors are often asked about “green” alternatives to traditional chemical sanitizers and disinfectants. The truth is that traditional chemical sanitizers, used as prescribed by the label, pose little environmental or health risks. But there are relatively new products on the market that may be as effective as traditional chemical sanitizers while assuaging concerns some may have about health or the environment.



An important thing to know is that the terms “sanitizer” or “disinfectant” are legal designations. A product can only bear these words on its label after certification from the EPA. If a product doesn’t say “sanitizer” or “disinfectant”, it isn’t. Another way to tell is the product will have an EPA registration number printed on the label, but these are small and can be hard to find. This article will briefly discuss two fairly new products that have received this EPA designation.

The first is thymol or thyme oil. This herb-derived chemical is now available under several different brand names. If you like the idea of a plant-based sanitizer, this may be something to look into. As you might imagine, it has a pleasant smell (thyme), which may be a welcome relief from bleach fumes. The manufacturers reviewed for this article don’t recommend rinsing the product off, which may be a bit of a time-saver.

The second green sanitizer I’ll briefly mention is Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (AHP). This is a proprietary term, and my understanding is that at this time the product is available from only one manufacturer. PACFA does not endorse any product or company, but we certainly want our licensees to be aware of their options. The company that produces this product is Virox; you may wish to visit their website. Most sanitizers contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These are the substances that cause strong odors, irritation, and at extreme concentrations, health issues. This product contains no VOCs. More surprising, the product is considered completely non-toxic (but I wouldn’t mix it in a cocktail). This is a truly unique product; it requires a short contact time, it’s odorless, and more. Check out the website to learn more.

We understand that there is a real desire among our licensees to be aware of technologies and ideas that can keep them at the forefront of health and environmental issues. We will continue to print “green” ideas, and we encourage all licensees to submit information or questions on this topic.



Did You Know?

- A PACFA-licensed shelter or rescue may transfer unaltered dogs and cats to other PACFA-licensed shelters and rescues. Licensure can be verified by calling our Lakewood office.
- Dog and cat rescues must be PACFA-licensed if they transfer more than 24 animals a year.

Pyrethrin in Snakes and Rodents

Pyrethrin is a chemical derived from plants that is commonly used as an insecticide. In the pet trade, many people gravitate to pyrethrin for the control of mites in reptiles and rodents, largely because it's effective, and partly because it's a "natural" product and therefore perceived as inherently safe. The reality is that pyrethrin is highly toxic to all pet animals. Synthetic compounds based on pyrethrins, known as pyrethroids, are actually much safer to use in pet animals than the naturally-occurring counterpart.

The pyrethroid most commonly used for mite control in reptiles and rodents is permethrin, as in the product Provent-a-Mite and in many other widely available formulations. It is vital for herp owners to realize that permethrin is a poison, and must be used exactly in accordance with the label instructions. Any permethrin product, used inappropriately, can kill your reptile. Do not assume that all products that list permethrin as the active ingredient are essentially the same; the percent active ingredient can vary vastly, from .5% to 40%. Unless you are comfortable with calculating and diluting the proper dose, you are taking a huge risk using a permethrin product that does not specifically give instructions for treating reptiles. What's more, the term "permethrin" does not refer to a single molecular isomer; there are various forms of the chemical legally called "permethrin", and the toxicity of these various chemical species may vary. If you have any questions about the proper use of any insecticide, consult your veterinarian. An experienced reptile vet may have safer treatment options for you to consider first.

Aside from being aware of the potential risks associated with chemicals used to treat a reptile, snake owners in particular should be aware of any chemical treatments administered to the rodents they feed their snakes. As stated, permethrin is often used to treat rats and mice for mites. Permethrin shows much lower toxicity to pet mammals (except cats, which are highly sensitive to permethrin) than to cold-blooded species. For this reason, there is the potential for a rodent treated with permethrin to be apparently healthy and yet still have enough of the chemical left on its skin to be harmful to a snake. This phenomenon, known as "relay toxicity", is well-documented in wild animals, where the dose administered to the rodent is uncontrolled. Fortunately, this is rarely reported in pet animals. But the potential exists, especially if the doses used are not appropriate or if the rodent is fed to a reptile soon after receiving a treatment. In medium to large rodent facilities, the animals may be prophylactically treated with permethrin on a regular basis. This introduces the possibility of a chronic poisoning of the reptiles that are fed these animals, unless the doses administered to the rodents are controlled and appropriate. If you operate a rodent breeding program that primarily produces food for the reptile pet trade, it is imperative that the treatment protocol you use for the treatment of mites has been reviewed and approved by an experienced reptile veterinarian.

Ultimately, we are responsible for the longevity of our animals. It's important not to take any claims of safety or efficacy at face value without doing a bit of independent research into the pros and cons of treatments we may be considering. Before you assume that if something is "natural" it must be safe, remember: so are cobras and hurricanes. And above all, when using a potentially toxic chemical, always follow the product label directions or your veterinarian's instructions exactly.



Rule of the Month

Rule of the Month

11.00 RETAIL AND WHOLESALE PET ANIMAL DEALERSHIP FACILITIES

11.00 G. 1. c.

Sick or injured animals (except fish and invertebrates) must be provided with timely veterinary care and prescribed treatment followed, or be euthanized humanely under the supervision of the pet animal dealership's attending veterinarian, pursuant to § 35-80-102(7).

Feeder animals for sale or for use in retail/wholesale pet animal dealerships are subject to the same requirements for veterinary care or humane euthanasia as the other animals. Fish and invertebrates only are exempt from the requirement; all other feeder animals are included. If a feeder animal is injured, ill or otherwise in need of veterinary care it must be provided in a timely manner and the prescribed treatment must be followed. Humane euthanasia (under your veterinarian's supervision) is also an option and must also be provided in a timely manner.



**Pet Animal Care Facilities Act
Division of Animal Industry
700 Kipling St., Suite 4000
Lakewood, CO 80215-8000**

M231212000



Preparing for Renewal

License renewal time is quickly approaching again. Now would be the time to start preparing. If your mailing address has changed, please contact us right away to ensure that you'll receive your application packet.

If you have stats due, please begin gathering them to submit with your application. Please feel free to call or email our office with any questions that you may have. Begin watching for your renewal packet sometime in late January.

