

Colne Valley News – September 2017



Dental care

You may have noticed when your pet is being examined by a vet that this includes looking inside the mouth. Although it is easy to see the lower teeth when your dog pants or your cat yawns, the teeth in the upper jaw are hidden until the upper lip is lifted up. It is not uncommon at a vaccination visit to find quite advanced dental disease which had not been apparent to an owner, although the smelly breath may have been an indicator! In more advanced cases, a pet may go up to a bowl of food, driven by hunger, take a bite or two of the food but then run away because of pain on eating.

In the case of three-year-old Mango (pictured above) who belongs to Amy, one of our vets, it was a wet chin, due to excessive salivation, which signalled a dental problem. Mango's teeth were in good condition apart from the incisors of his upper jaw. Under general anaesthetic, the outer incisor on each side was extracted. Radiography with our dedicated dental x-ray machine showed that, although the middle incisors were absent, their roots were still present (see photo on next page) so they were extracted. He was discharged with pain relief and has made a smooth recovery. Amy will be continuing with home dental care.

Antony runs dental clinics to monitor how well home care is going. He can advise on a dental care strategy to ensure that it is effective and enjoyable for you and your pet. It is important that eating is a pain-free and pleasant experience for our pets. There is nothing worse than being hungry but unable to eat due to pain.

Be disease alert

In past years, cases of Seasonal Canine Illness or SCI have been reported in the autumn, generally from September to November. Vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy develop within 72 hours of walking in certain areas of woodland. Whether this happens again this year remains to be seen as the incidence appears to be falling, but it is worth taking precautions. If you are walking dogs in woodland, then the advice is to keep them on the lead and to use a spray effective against mites on their legs beforehand, as it is thought that harvest mites may be the carrier for this disease.

There has also been a case of suspected Alabama rot reported in a dog walked on Mersea Island. Washing off mud after a walk is the best advice for this serious disease for which, like SCI, the cause has not been identified. It manifests initially as patches of sores on the skin, progressing to kidney failure. There is no seasonal pattern to its occurrence. Like SCI, the key to recovery is early and prompt recognition of the disease and appropriate intensive treatment.

Carry two poop bags

A recent front page story carried by one of the broadsheet newspapers was of importance to dog walkers. Another council has introduced powers which mean that you may be fined if you do not have two plastic bags on your person, ready to clear up after your dog. You have been warned...be prepared!

