




## Welcome to our Autumn newsletter.

# **NEWSLETTER** **Autumn 2011**

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I am writing this newsletter sitting on the beach on a glorious Sunday morning, while the dogs charge around doing what dogs do at the beach! What a wonderful place we live!

I hope you find time in your busy schedules to get out & about with your dogs and enjoy Northland!

## VETS IN VEGAS

In February, practice owners Didier & Julie headed off to the States to attend the Western Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas (of all places!) What an experience!! 16,000 vets from all over the world. At any given time there were a dozen different lectures, so rather than hoping for something relevant and interesting, it was more a matter of "what can we least afford to miss".

Didier concentrated on veterinary imaging: xrays and ultrasound, with the odd bit on CAT scans and MRIs (yes- they're readily available for animals in the States and becoming more so here in NZ). It's not so long ago that ultrasound was something we generally just dreamt about and now we can't imagine life without it. Certainly an awful lot less animals get opened up on the surgery table to find out what's going on inside. The highlight for Didier was a workshop on advanced ultrasound with one-on-one practical help and tips from some of the top veterinary ultrasonographers from Japan, Europe and the US.

Julie focused on anaesthesia and pain relief. Pain is a subject that has, over the years, been somewhat ignored in veterinary science. We are recognising now that although our cats and dogs don't whinge and moan like we do, they still experience pain in much the same way. Our particular areas of interest are chronic pain (caused by conditions like arthritis) and post-operative pain. Julie has come home armed with all the most up-to-date information and techniques to incorporate into the practice and keep our patients as comfortable as possible.



"The Kiwi contingent of vets".



# FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD!!

## **NUTRIGENOMICS: YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT!**

The exciting new field of Nutrigenomics studies the effects of nutrients on gene expression. While Didier & Julie were in the States they visited the very impressive Hills Pet Nutrition Centre in Kansas, where scientists are leading the way in Nutrigenomics.

The human DNA genome was finally mapped in 2001, followed by the dog genome in 2004.

Now, using computer technology called "Genechip analysis", scientists can study the expression levels of different genes in various disease states or life stages. The effects of specific nutrients on particular genes can then be tested.



The first product launched based on these principles was Hills Canine J/D, a food that helps dogs suffering from arthritis. Using gene maps, it was found that the fish oil EPA decreases the production of an enzyme that causes the destruction of cartilage in arthritic joints.

Another area that is receiving a lot of attention is obesity (in pets and humans). The gene expression maps of lean and obese dogs look completely different, but feeding specific nutrients to an obese dog changes it's gene expression towards that of a lean dog.

This research is enabling targeted nutrition to be developed much faster than ever before.

Of course this research is invaluable to the human sector as well. It is difficult to maintain humans on a healthy diet for extended periods without momentary (or extended) lapses, due to our wide choice of foods and (let's face it) our lack of willpower! These studies may provide evidence that Nutrigenomics can improve the health and quality of humans as well as our pets. Watch this space!!

## **NUTRITION: THE 5TH VITAL ASSESSMENT**

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association has developed a global initiative to include a nutritional assessment as part of every standard physical examination for all small animals; adding to the first four vital assessments: temperature, pulse, respiration and pain.

It encourages us to record the body condition score (which evaluates body fat) and the current diet of every patient. We then look at nutritional risk factors such as growth or old age, obesity, bad teeth, poor coat or concurrent disease and make nutritional recommendations accordingly.



Appropriate nutrition throughout all life stages can help to prevent diet-associated diseases and assist in the management of other diseases. (A good example of this is kidney failure, where it has been proven repeatedly that feeding a prescription kidney diet is more effective than any other treatment.)

Of all the external factors that contribute to the health of our pets, nutrition is by far the easiest to control.

So, we don't mean to hound you, but we will be looking at your pets' diet. We're trying to help!



## YANNI AND HER FIFTEEN PUPPIES!

"Yanni" is a beautiful German Shepherd, imported from Australia as a puppy by her very committed owners Tracy and Geoff. They decided to breed from her for the first time this year. The dog that they selected to breed her with lives in Hamilton so we did multiple progesterone blood tests before she went down there, to make sure she was at the perfect stage of her cycle to conceive.

Things didn't go quite to plan when she met her new "boyfriend" so the vets in Hamilton used Artificial Insemination (AI) to get her pregnant.

Michelle scanned her here at Mill Road 28 days later and everyone was very excited to see that she was definitely pregnant. Everything proceeded normally and then towards the end of her 64 day gestation we decided to take an x-ray to see how many puppies she was going to have. She was huge at this stage and very ready to have her babies! Everyone had a shock when we saw at least thirteen puppies on the x-ray!! Tracy and Geoff were going to be busy!!

Four days later Yanni was not very well and was brought in for a check. We ultra sounded the puppies and their heart rates were low so we were concerned that they were distressed. In consultation with her owners we decided that Yanni should have a caesarean immediately.

We all swung into action, as many hands were needed. She was rapidly prepared for surgery and put under general anaesthetic. Debbie performed the surgery with Nurse Monica assisting and 5 nurses and vets on stand-by to look after the puppies once they were born. An incision was made in her uterus and all the puppies were removed. And they just kept coming! In the end 15 puppies were born in about 25 minutes! Once they were born they were handed to one of the waiting nurses and rubbed vigorously and mucous removed from their noses and mouths. They were kept well stimulated until they were breathing well and making some noise. Then they were kept warm to wait for Mum to wake up. It was all action for an hour. Yanni's uterus was then sewn up and her abdomen sewn closed. She was then given a few minutes to start to wake up. The anaesthetic we use is very short acting so shortly after surgery she was beginning to lift her head. We then started introducing her to her many puppies. It was important that they all had their first drink of colostrum as they get much of their initial immunity from this. About 2 hours after surgery Yanni and her new brood went home with Tracy and Geoff.

Fifteen puppies have certainly been a challenge but they are four weeks old now and all doing really well. It has been a big commitment for the family as they have been supplement feeding the puppies, as Yanni cannot produce enough milk to feed them all; which involved two hourly feedings at the beginning! Well done to the whole family.

We look forward to meeting all the pups again at their vaccinations and hopefully seeing some of them throughout their lives.



## MAUNU GETS A FACE LIFT



Our branch clinic at Maunu has recently had a make-over. Don't forget if you live in the area that we can see your pets there and save you a drive into town. If they need hospitalisation we can transport them down to Mill Road for you. You'll find food, flea and worm products and the usual array of toys and accessories there too.

Open	Monday to Friday	7.45 – 12.30 & 2.30 – 5.30
	Saturday	9.00 – 12.00

Consultations are available mornings and afternoons, including Saturday mornings.

## STAFF NEWS

### CONGRATULATIONS MICHELLE!

At Oceans Resort, Tutukaka, on a very wet day in March, Michelle married Ricky Eyre, a Coastal Monitoring Officer with the Northland Regional Council. All the Mill Road vets were there to see them tie the knot, and we wish them all the very best for their life together.



### WELCOME AMY!

Amy Fryer has recently joined our nursing team. Amy studied veterinary nursing at Otago Polytechnic and has since had five years experience, mainly in Kerikeri. She will be taking a career break shortly to have her second child, but she plans to stay a part of the Mill Road team.

