



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2010

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Welcome to our first "E-newsletter"

We hope you are enjoying watching the All Whites show the world what us Kiwis are made of! (At the time of writing they had just drawn with Italy, the World Cup holders. Hopefully we're all still proud of them as you read this!). To help share a bit of soccer-mania with our furry friends, check out our latest *Advance promotion*.



Clinic renovations: Big changes benefit patients and clients

(An excerpt from an article in the Leader)

If you've been into Mill Road Vet Clinic lately you probably will have noticed a few changes. Slowly but surely over the last 18 months a transformation has been taking place.

We had been dreaming of making changes at the clinic for years, but the catalyst was the opportunity to obtain a new xray machine. Didier Poot, vet and practice owner, had undertaken extra study in ultrasonography and radiology (xrays) so he jumped at the chance to have a state-of-the-art new machine; only to find it didn't fit in the old pokey xray room!

Chris Howell, from Main 4 Architects, designed a concept that maximized the space available, without the need to enlarge the building a lot. He utilized a verandah space to build a diagnostic suite. The xray machine has come out of storage and a brand new, animal specific ultrasound machine has its own dedicated room.

On the other side of the building an extension now incorporates a new cat ward, an isolation unit and a large store room, which has freed up the third consulting room for the growing practice.

Staff at Mill Road admit that working through the noise and dust was "a bit of a nightmare", but the clinic is such a pleasure to work in now, it makes it all worthwhile! The cats are loving having their own area away from the dogs and all the staff are enjoying the extra space. The diagnostic suite is being utilized not only by Mill Road's own patients but also by "outpatients" from practices around Northland. Both xrays and ultrasounds can be taken here in Whangarei, with the images being sent to veterinary specialists for immediate interpretation, saving clients and patients a trip to Auckland.

We are planning an open day at Mill Road later this year, to give people an opportunity to see past the consulting room door, so keep an eye out for that.



CPD: Continuing Professional Development

At Mill Rd we take the business of keeping up-to-date very seriously.



Vet Scholar

We are great fans of the NZ Veterinary Association's Vet Scholar courses. These are innovative on-line learning programmes for vets and vet nurses. These courses cover all sorts of topics, and include forums where vets can post questions or current cases for discussion with other vets around Australasia. They all finish with an on-line exam, to keep us on our toes!

Over recent months Julie has studied Clinical Pathology (in-depth analysis of blood test results). Leanne and Michelle have done a course on ECGs (an important diagnostic tool in heart disease). Michelle has also done a number of medicine courses, with topics covered ranging from blood transfusions to cancer and Leanne is currently studying surgery- fractures of the hindlimb and chest surgery. Debbie has undertaken urogenital and spinal surgery modules and nurses Chani and Sandi have both done an anaesthesia & analgesia (pain relief) course.



VSG : Veterinary Specialist Group

Didier recently spent 2 days in Auckland working with Chris Warman, the diagnostic imaging specialist at the Veterinary Specialist Group. As well as honing his skills in ultrasonography, he was able to establish a system with Chris where-by he can scan patients in Whangarei and send captured images to Auckland for an immediate specialist interpretation when required.

Leanne has also spent a day at the VSG, in the surgery department. She "scrubbed in" with the surgical specialist operating on one of our referred patients, then spent the rest of the day with the surgical team, gaining knowledge & experience.

Specialist Visit

As part of our affiliation with the Veterinary Specialist Group in Auckland, Mark Robson, the internal medicine specialist, recently had another day at Mill Road. He sees medical referral cases from around Northland on these visits, but the day also becomes a day of CPD for all the Mill Road vets. We start the day with a "journal club" where we have an in-depth discussion and analysis of new research articles. The rest of the day revolves around the discussion of medical cases we have on- the- go, with Mark's input being valuable not only to the vets, but also the patients involved. Think "House" here, if you're a fan of the TV show!!



"Boston" benefits from the combined input of 6 vets!!

VIN: Veterinary Information Network



Mill Rd is a member of VIN: an online resource that enables us to be part of the worldwide veterinary community. It gives us instant access to vast amounts of up-to-date veterinary information. Message boards enable us to post a question, which will be answered by one of a large number of veterinary specialists on subjects ranging from behaviour to oncology, nutrition to emergency medicine. Or we can enter a specific topic and search through previous message boards and discussion forums, conference proceedings and journal articles.

Gone are the days of a shelf full of dusty old textbooks!!



CASE STUDY: "Mouse" Poot

Our first case study is dear to our hearts: Mouse belongs to vets & practice owners Didier & Julie.

Like builder's houses, vet's animals are often the last to get sorted out! Julie & Didi had been aware that Mouse was eating like the proverbial horse but losing weight despite it, for some time. She was bright & energetic though, so for months things never got past the "we must run some bloods on Mouse" stage.

Eventually the eminent arrival of the VSG medical specialist spurred them in to doing a blood test, and as they suspected, Mouse was diagnosed as hyperthyroid.

Hyperthyroidism is a common endocrine (hormonal) condition of older cats. It is caused by a benign growth of the thyroid gland, which causes an over-production of thyroid hormone.

The classic symptoms are weight loss despite a voracious appetite and often hyperactivity and restlessness. Chronic vomiting and diarrhoea, poor coat and various other signs can be seen. Most seriously, hyperthyroidism leads to heart disease and increased blood pressure, which can cause heart failure, sudden blindness or sudden death.

Mouse's bloods ruled out other concurrent disease. (We are always particularly concerned with checking for kidney insufficiency, which of course is also common in old cats and complicates treatment options.)

The treatment options for hyperthyroidism are lifelong oral medication, surgical removal of the affected thyroid gland(s) or radioactive iodine treatment.

Despite belonging to 2 vets, Mouse is almost impossible to tablet, so that option was immediately ruled out.

Thyroidectomy is associated with various risks, both surgical and anaesthetic, due to the heart disease seen with this condition, and has largely gone out of favour.

Radioactive iodine treatment is the safest and most effective treatment. This is accomplished by a simple subcutaneous (under the skin) injection of radioactive iodine, which selectively destroys the affected tissue. The only real problem with this treatment is that the patient becomes radioactive for a few weeks! For this reason the treatment must be carried out in a special facility.

So it was off to Auckland for Mouse! The Veterinary Specialist Group has a purpose-built facility for the treatment of hyperthyroid cats. She was admitted, treated and kept in isolation for a week.

For another week after coming home she had to be considered a slight radiation risk, so was not allowed prolonged close contact. This was the hardest part of the whole process really: convincing her she wasn't allowed to sleep on the bed!

Post treatment blood tests 2 months later confirmed a normal thyroid level & now, a year out, at 14 & ½ years old, she's still fighting fit, & enjoying her new soccer ping pong balls!!



NURSES CORNER



We are very excited to have become involved in Hills' "Pet Fit" programme. Basically, this is Weight Watchers for cats and dogs. Just like with humans, obesity is a common problem and a serious one, potentially leading to diabetes, arthritis, heart disease and a raft of other problems.

You may be referred to us by one of the Mill Rd vets, or you are welcome to book in to see us yourself (for your pet!). We will weigh your animal, measure their body condition and, together with you, develop a diet & exercise plan. You then pop in for regular checks and your pets' details are entered into the Petfit website, which tracks their progress, and has lots of tips to help you both on your way. (Check out www.petfit.co.nz) It's free to join up, there are prizes along the way and you can enter "slimmer of the year" to win a year's supply of Hills pet food and \$2000 in travel vouchers.

Have a look at the article on [overweight pets](#) and please feel free to phone and ask about Pet Fit if you think it might help your pet.



STAFF NEWS

Didier recently competed in the Cape Brett Challenge: a grueling 37 km run over rough terrain with over 2000m of vertical climbing. He ran it in 6 hrs & 4 mins & placed a very commendable 10th!

Our nurse Monica was also there, walking the 10km Kauri Ridge, which she did in 2hrs & 32 mins. Well done to both of you!



A Dog's Purpose

A child's perspective

After the sad euthanasia of an old dog, the family and the vet sat for a moment, and talked about how hard it is that animals' lives are shorter than ours.

Suddenly the youngest child piped up. "I know why".

His explanation was so comforting we thought we should share it with you.

" People are born so that they can learn how to have a good life- how to love people and be nice, right? Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long."

