Welcome to the eleventh edition of Behavior News, the newsletter designed to keep veterinary staff and other animal handlers up to date on current behavior recommendations for companion animals. In this issue we discuss some of the benefits of low-stress handling in small animal practice and some insight on dairy cow behavior and welfare. We also offer insight into a few new books and pet products. For additional resources on animal behavior at The Ohio State University, please visit: vet.osu.edu/Behavior and indoorpet.osu.edu

Animal Behavior in Social Media

Social media is rapidly becoming the frontrunner for information and knowledge sharing and delivery. For those of you with an interest in veterinary behavior, you might consider checking out the following pages and blogs.

Fetch the Facts... by Dr. Emily Levine, veterinary behaviorist
petbehaviorblog.wordpress.com

Dr. Hunthausen’s Dog & Cat Behavior Blog
hunthausen.wordpress.com

The Family Dog Project - Ádám Miklósi
familydogproject.elte.hu/index.html
Dairy cows change their behavior when they are ill

by Katy Proudfoot, PhD

Most mammals, including dairy cows, rats, cats, dogs and people, undergo a common set of behavioral changes when they become ill. At an early stage of an infection, animals have decreased appetite and show signs of malaise, including a decrease in activity and a withdrawal from normal social behaviors.

Although originally thought to be a negative side-effect of illness, these ‘sickness behaviors’ are meant to help the immune system defend against the illness. The body needs a high amount of energy to mount an immune response and a fever to create an inhospitable environment for the pathogen. Resting and reducing normal activities can help with energy conservation. Researchers have discovered that the immune system (cytokines) communicates directly with the brain to facilitate these behavioral changes meant to help the animal recover from the illness.

Recognizing when a dairy cow is becoming ill is extremely important to ensure her welfare and optimum productivity. A sick cow produces less milk, and if she is treated with an antibiotic or other medications, her milk is not saleable for human consumption. For dairy producers with hundreds or thousands of cattle, identifying animals at early stages of illness becomes a challenge.

Like other animals, recent research has discovered that dairy cows show classic sickness behaviors such as a loss of appetite, withdrawal from social behaviors, and a general reduction in activity. For example, cows with both clinical and sub-clinical metritis (an infection in the uterus common after a cow gives birth) spent less time eating, and ate less compared to healthy animals. This reduction in feed intake began almost three weeks before they were diagnosed with the illness, suggesting that monitoring this behavior may help identify at-risk cows.

Cows with mastitis, an infection of the mammary gland, also reduce their food consumption beginning five days before clinical signs are detected. These cows also change their daily time budgets, and avoid eating during ‘peak’ feeding times when their group-mates are eating. As herd animals, cows generally synchronize their behaviors and eat their meals simultaneously, sometimes leading to competition over prime feeding areas. Cows with mastitis shifted their meals to later in the day when there were fewer cows to compete with.

You may expect ill dairy cows to spend more time lying down to rest, but cows with mastitis do the opposite: they spend more time standing. This is likely because they experience pain in their udders when they lie down. Although they stand longer, they spend that time standing ‘idly’ or still, likely as a way to conserve their energy and alleviate pain at the same time.

Cows with mastitis and/or metritis will avoid social contact with other cows if given the chance. To test this idea, we created a pen that held one cow at a time directly adjacent to a group pen. The pen was outfitted with a plywood ‘corner’ where the cows could segregate from the group if they chose (see image on the left). Cows with signs of clinical illness, including a fever, spent much more of their time behind the plywood barrier compared to healthy cows.

Photo of a cow with metritis (an infection of the uterus) using the secluded corner of her pen. Ill cows spent more time in the corner of the pen compared to healthy cows.

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Knowing which behaviors change at early signs of illness can help identify animals that need to be monitored or treated. This may sound like a daunting task on herds with hundreds or thousands of cows, but new technologies are allowing for easy, automatic collection of behavior. For example, leg bands and neck collars that measure standing time, activity, and rumination time (an indicator of feed intake) are currently available on the market and show promise as disease detection tools.

An understanding of sickness behaviors can also aid in the development of appropriate housing for ill animals. Segregating sick cows into ‘hospital’ pens is recommended, and these pens should have a low number of animals (so they do not have to compete for food), should be in quiet locations, and should have a comfortable lying surface, such as sawdust or straw, to facilitate rest and allow ill cows to recover.

**New Textbook Review**

by Meghan E. Herron, DVM, DACVB


Most of us are familiar with the Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice journalist text series. Every four to six years this series dedicates a full issue to companion animal behavior. This most recent edition tops the list of “must haves” for the small animal practitioner who is interested in scientifically referenced, up-to-date information on behavior problem prevention, identification, triage, management and treatment, both in the veterinary clinic setting and in the home. Topics include: genetics and behavior of cats and dogs, the effects of stress on small animal health and behavior, canine aggression towards family members, inter-cat aggression, and more. Ohio State’s own Dr. Meghan Herron co-authored a chapter with Traci Shreyer, MA entitled “The Pet Friendly Veterinary Practice: A Guide for Practitioners”, providing a comprehensive overview of low-stress handling and bite prevention in small animal practice. The May 2014 issue is available in hardcopy or as an e-book from Elsevier: [elsevierhealth.com/small-animal/behavior-a-guide-for-practitioners-an-issue-of-veterinary-clinics-of-north-america-small-animal-practice-e-book/9780323297301/](elsevierhealth.com/small-animal/behavior-a-guide-for-practitioners-an-issue-of-veterinary-clinics-of-north-america-small-animal-practice-e-book/9780323297301/)
In the News....

A recent publication by Ohio State’s Drs. Herron, Kirby-Madden (class of 2014), and Lord, entitled *The effects of environmental enrichment on the behavior of shelter dogs*, was presented at the National Council on Pet Population & Society of Animal Welfare Administrators 2014 Research Symposium, by co-author Linda Lord. Her presentation, as well as the partnership program between the Ohio State College of Veterinary Medicine and the Franklin County Dog Shelter was discussed in April 1 issue of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The full article entitled *Unmasking the Shelter Dog* reviews current thoughts and controversies in regards to animal behavior assessment and welfare in today’s dog shelters. Visit: avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/150401a.aspx to read more.

Save the Date

2015 AVSAB Meeting - Las Vegas, NV

AVSAB is doing something new this year!

AVSAB has teamed up with the SVBT (The Society of Veterinary Behavior Technicians) and the AVBT (The Academy of Veterinary Behavior Technicians) to hold an interactive, hands-on conference in 2015!

Save the Dates: Sept. 25—27, 2015 in Las Vegas, NV.

NEW Feb 2, 2015! The conference has a new dedicated website! Visit http://animalbehaviorconference for up to date information about the conference, and to register.

We look forward to seeing you all there!

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY BEHAVIORISTS

2015 Veterinary Behavior Symposium

Friday, July 10, 2015 ~ Boston, MA

Keynote speaker: Raymond Coppinger

[Click here for his biography](#)

Register here: [mtgs-etc.com/acvb2015.htm](mailto:mtgs-etc.com/acvb2015.htm)
“...And Don’t Get Bit!”

by Morgan Wanner, class of 2015

My favorite animals to work with are those with a history of fear driven aggression at the veterinary office. The most common phrase I hear when I take such a patient is “...and don’t get bit!” In fact, the reason I became interested in animal behavior is because I fear getting bitten by aggressive dogs.

I imagine it sounds counterintuitive to enjoy something you’re scared of. I know fear can be debilitating or dangerous for me, my staff and my clients. Fear can even interfere with treatment, unless you handle it properly. On Community Practice here at the Veterinary Medical Center I saw many examples of that.

In one instance, I met a patient who was frozen by fear. From the moment I walked into the room, he hid under a chair like a furry statue. His owner reported that he used to a stand motionless during a physical exam but had progressed to snapping during his last visit to the vet. The dog’s saucer like black eyes and stiff posture made it very clear that being in our hospital terrified him. As Dr. Barrett probed deeper into the situation, we discovered that the dog was scared outside of the hospital, as well. While she took a few extra minutes to determine the extent of the problem, I tossed pea sized nuggets of Braunschweiger (liver wurst) under the chair. In about three minutes, we had the dog taking food from Dr. Barrett’s hands. It was incredible progress and his owner became more open to other suggestions (such as trazodone for future visits) because he could see the change for himself.

This is an example of how the escalation from fear (freezing) to aggression (snapping) can be prevented through low stress handling. My first step is to read the dog’s body language. This gives me time to calmly assess the situation. If the patient is fearful, I go slow and give them time to adjust. If the behavior has already become aggressive, I take a step back, and come up with a new plan. This cycle of evaluating and adjusting my approach keeps me in control. Being in control allows me to take advantage of tools such as sedation, muzzling, food, and towel techniques to keep myself, my team and my patient safe.

As I learned how to “not get bit”, I also discovered that low stress handling was a fantastic tool for increasing client confidence. During my second Community Practice rotation, I helped diagnose a newly diabetic patient and was responsible for teaching his owners how to give insulin. As I showed them the syringes, they seemed uncomfortable. When I asked, they admitted they were uneasy about using needles twice daily on their dog. Their dog was the apple of their eye and they didn’t want to hurt him. I told my clients that the needle was small and if we distracted their dog, he may not notice it.

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To demonstrate, I had a classmate smash a quarter of a Pill Pocket and feed it to the dog slowly. While she fed the treat, I injected him with saline from the practice syringe. The dog didn’t so much as blink. His owners were surprised and relieved. From that point forward, we practiced distracting the dog with small treats (not a large one, he was diabetic after all) while giving the injection. The last time I spoke to them, that dog’s owners were still injecting him while he enjoyed a treat. By acknowledging their concerns and demonstrating a low stress way to give insulin, I made the dog easier to medicate and helped alleviate fear in his owners.

Much like the owners of the diabetic dog, low stress handling has increased my own comfort level. Now, whenever I hear the words “…and don’t get bit,” I reply “that’s part of the plan.”

The Foobler: Timed Food Toy for Your Dog

by Mary Rose Lawrence, Behavior Club Treasurer, class of 2017

The Foobler is a puzzle feeder designed to allow your dog to engage its natural foraging instinct. These are great toys to exercise your dog’s mind and to provide physical exercise too!

What’s great about the Foobler is that it is an automatic self-reloading food toy. It is made from a heavy durable plastic. And within the ball are six chambers, which are set to a timer. So it is an automatic self-reloading food toy. The creators claim it will hold two cups of dry kibble, but I have found that slightly less is ideal to get the lid to lock properly. When the Foobler is turned on, the compartments inside rotate automatically. There are two holes that allow the food to fall out.

After filling the food compartment, you can flip the ball over and remove the bottom to set the timer. Don’t worry. This does not need to be done every time the Foobler is used — only if the time needs to be changed. The time interval can be set to dispense every 15, 30, 60, or 90 minutes. When all six compartments have been used, the Foobler turns off automatically.

There is a bell sound that alerts the dog that the compartments are changing and the fun begins all over again. If your dog is sound sensitive, the bell is continued on page 7
not very loud. However, there will be some need to desensitize them to the sound and to the sound of the chamber motor.

Like with any new food toy, some encouragement is needed the first few times to get your dog interested and supervision is required to make sure your dog is playing with it appropriately.

I have had my Foobler for six months now and I’ve been very happy with it. It has survived heavy pouncing (by a high-spirited Boxer) and rolled down carpeted stairs several times. I have also been pleased with the battery-life, as I have yet to change them.

If you are interested in investigating the Foobler, you can view their Kickstarter page or visit them on Facebook.

[link to Kickstarter page] [link to Facebook page]

**CEVA Diffusers: Out With the Old and In With the New**

by Susan Green, Behavior Club President, class of 2017

I love my FELIWAY diffuser especially for when I’m away during Spring and Christmas break. Before, when I would return home, Mowzy and Merm were hesitant to approach me and would often get in a spat or two. Since I started using the FELIWAY diffuser, they readily come to greet me and seem more at ease with each other. I also place my diffusers in strategic locations for the best effect: one by the kitchen/feeding area and another by the litter box/sleeping area. But enough chit chat and onto the news:

Our beloved CEVA diffuser for Dog Appeasing Pheromone (D.A.P) and Feline Facial Hormone Analogue (FELIWAY) are receiving a makeover! These new diffusers are less prone to overheating, can now accommodate refill vials that last up to two months, and have LED lights to indicate if they are correctly plugged in. Please note, the old refill cartridges will fit in the new diffusers but will not work! So maybe you should think twice before you order a ginormous supply of the now outdated refills. Luckily, CEVA will be offering a free exchange program in which clients can replace their old diffusers for the updated model.

This program has not yet been rolled out, but keep an eye out for this opportunity! CEVA diffusers are supposed to be replaced every six months anyways, so unless you have a relatively new diffuser, you shouldn’t have to worry about this program.

If you have any further questions, please visit CEVA’s website [atceva.com/en/](http://atceva.com/en/) or you can email our local CEVA representative, Fred Poulton, at Frederick.poulton@ceva.com.

**The Run Down:**

- CEVA has new diffusers for D.A.P and FELIWAY products that do not overheat
- The new diffusers accommodate refills that last two months, however, the old refills will not work in the new model.
- In the near future, old diffusers can be exchanged for new diffusers through CEVA.
- Both old and new diffusers should be replaced every six months.
- The new diffusers are not yet available and have been rumored to be on back-order