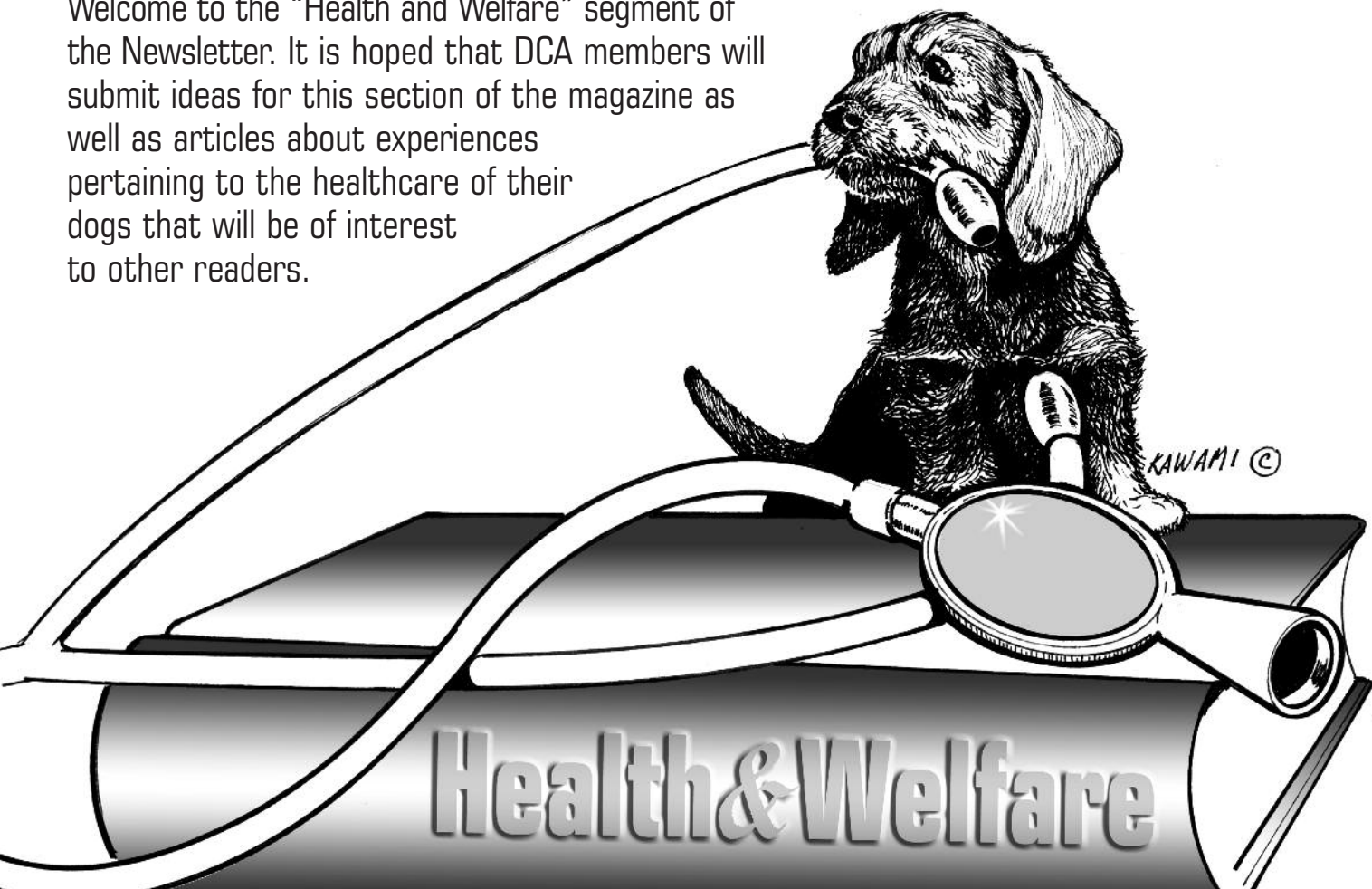


Welcome to the "Health and Welfare" segment of the Newsletter. It is hoped that DCA members will submit ideas for this section of the magazine as well as articles about experiences pertaining to the healthcare of their dogs that will be of interest to other readers.



Please send ideas, suggestions and articles to: Charlotte Borghardt, DCA Health & Welfare Committee, P.O. Box 1126, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-1126, teckelhofaz@yahoo.com

Report on AKC/CHF Parent Club Canine Health Conference

submitted by Charlotte Borghardt, Chairman, DCA Health Committee

I was the DCA representative to the Canine Health Conference from 12 – 14 August 2011. This is a biennial conference held in St Louis, MO to discuss various health issues and new innovations in the field of canine health research.

This year, the majority of topics were cancer related. I will write separate article for the cancer related topics. However, there were other topics discussed as well such as: The History of Veterinary Medicine and Canine Research, Coping with Stress, Canine Degenerative Myelopathy, AKC Breeder of Merit Program and also an update on the health of the 9-11 Search and Rescue dogs.

Coping with Stress: Dr. Arleigh Reynolds, is a Nestle Purina Nutrition Scientist in Salcha, Alaska. His study used sled dogs based in Alaska. To say that this presentation was interesting is an understatement. The stress factor in the dogs in this study was the use of

exercise. Dr. Reynolds found that moderate exercise improves the immune system; however, extreme exercise impairs the immune systems.

There were three Immune Enhancing supplements studied:

- Probiotics – These must be primarily live organisms and need to be administered in large amounts (8-10 CFU per dog per day). They help the immune system to work better. Studies have shown that some dead bacteria may be as effective as live bacteria and the dead also becomes nutrients for the live bacteria. Probiotics clear up diarrhea faster and more effectively than any antibiotics unless there is a systemic reason for the diarrhea.

- Immuno biologics (EBC and Colostrum) stimulate the immune system to function at a higher level of competence. Egg Biologic Compounds (EBC) are from hens that have been immunized against potential pathogens. The EBC stabilizes the gut microflora and lowers potential for diarrhea, infection and intestinal inflammation. Colostrum was shown to increase the stability of micro flora to prevent diarrhea and also increased titers from vaccines for a better vaccine response.

- Antioxidants – Vitamin E and C were found to dampen the effects of training. Do NOT supplement these vitamins!! Exercise

encourages the body to make its own antioxidants.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) – Diagnosis and Treatment – There is no known cause of IBD. Studies suggest that interplay between genetic factors and entire bacteria are crucial for development of this disease. The clinical signs include vomiting, diarrhea and weight loss and histopathologic lesions of inflammation that may involve the stomach, small intestine or colon. IBD diagnosis is one of exclusion – rule everything else out. Treatment includes both dietary and pharmacologic interventions as well as therapeutic manipulation of the enteric microbiota through the use of antibiotics, prebiotics and probiotics. IBD is similar to Crohn's disease or colitis in humans.

Canine Degenerative Myelopathy – This disease was first discovered in German Shepherd Dogs in 1973. It is a spontaneously occurring, adult-onset progressive disease that leads to paralysis and death. Most dogs are at least 8-years-old before they show clinical signs. The initial clinical signs are upper motor neuron asymmetric spastic weakness and general proprioceptive ataxia in the pelvic limbs. That eventually leads to paralysis. Dog owners often elect euthanasia within a year of diagnosis. A

definitive diagnosis of Dm can only be accomplished postmortem. This disease is very similar to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease) in humans. While they are still studying other factors that may cause DM, the DNA test may show those "at risk" dogs but not necessarily those who will "get it."

AKC Breeder of Merit Program - Formulating the Breeder of Merit Health Criteria – The AKC Breeder of Merit program honors breeders/exhibitor's dedication and hard work as they continue to produce dogs that are healthy, capable and beautiful. AKC is not

pushing to "raise the bar" in the parent club requirements for health testing. This program is to recognize those breeders who "go the extra mile" in ensuring that their dogs are health tested and the parent clubs are responsible to setting the health testing criteria. Granted that not all canine diseases have DNA or health testing available, but the minimum requirement should be the CHIC requirements for each breed. NOTE: At this time, DCA has no health testing requirements in spite of the fact that we do participate in the CHIC program. See DCA Newsletter "Winter

2010" for CHIC program information.

Results of Study of 9-11 Search and Rescue Dogs – AKC contributed almost \$500,000 to fund a study on the long term health impacts on 95 search and rescue dogs that had been deployed to the WTC, Pentagon and New Jersey landfills. Researchers also used a control group of SAR dogs that had not been deployed to these sites. The main result was that there were no significant increases in health issues of the deployed dogs as opposed to the non-deployed dogs. They were not developing the respiratory problems as their human counterparts. ﷺ

USEFUL LINKS – CANINE HEALTH RESEARCH

Research Participation - www.akcchf.org/research/participation-needed

Searchable Genetic Tests – www.akcchf.org/canine-health/genetic-tests

Grant Sponsorships – www.akcchf.org/sponsor

Research Success Stories – www.akcchf.org/research/success-stories

Glossary of Terms – www.akcchf.org/canine-health/glossary

Educational Podcasts and Videos – www.akcchf.org/news-events/multimedia

Orthopedic Foundation for Animals – www.offa.org

Canine Health Information Center – www.caninehealthinfo.org

Canine Comparative Oncology and Genomics consortium (CCOGC) www.ccohc.net

Canine Hereditary Cancer Consortium – www.vai.org/helpingdogs

Canine Genetic Diseases Network – www.caninegeneticsdiseases.net

Colorado State University- Animal Cancer Center – www.csuanimalcancercenter.org

Dog Owners Live Longer, Are Happier & Healthier

Academic research has revealed that dog owners are happier, healthier and likely to live longer. Whilst it has been established for some time that pet ownership makes people happier, it has now been shown that the benefits of owning a dog outstrip those of cat or any other animal.

A psychologist from Queen's University, Belfast, said dog owners tended to have lower blood pressure and cholesterol.

Writing in the British Journal of Health Psychology, she says that regular "walkies" may partly explain the difference.

Dr. Deborah Wells reviewed dozens of earlier research papers which looked at the health benefits of pet ownership.



In some cases, the research even ventured as far to suggest the social support offered by an animal is greater than the support than another human could offer.

She confirmed that pet owners tended in general to be healthier than the average member of the population.

As well as lower blood and cholesterol levels, dog-owners suffered fewer minor ailments and serious medical problems than owners of other pets such as cats.

It has been believed for some time that dogs can assist people in recovery from serious illnesses such as heart attacks, and act as "early warning" to detect an approaching epileptic seizure. This research adds further strength to the claim.

Dogs as Stress Relief

Dr. Wells was not totally sure why, exactly, dogs are so beneficial to our health:

"It is possible that dogs can directly promote our well-being by buffering us from stress, one of the major risk factors associated with ill-health. The ownership of a dog can also lead to increases in physical activity and facilitate the development of

social contacts, which may enhance both physiological and psychological human health in a more indirect manner."