



May, 2011

Teaching Toddlers *by Barbara Axel*

For many years I have given presentations on dog care and training to groups ranging in age from elementary school youngsters to adults, changing the format somewhat, especially for each age group.

When in 2005, the leader of preschool daycare for a local church contacted me, I was not at all sure we could make a difference to babies from two to four years old. We were invited to make our class presentations on two different days so that all the children would be able to attend. "Let's try it out," I said and met with the church leader to establish a protocol for the diapered set. The highest priority was safety, of course, with getting and keeping the toddlers' attention next.

Now it is 2011 and the presentations have become an annual routine that we all look forward to and enjoy. Contact between babes and dogs makes us smile from ear to ear for the entire day.

This is what we do: In preparation for our visit teachers read Stephanie Calmenson's excellent book, "May I Pet Your Dog" to each class during the week.

Some time before our first visit we go to the school, to see where to best exercise our dogs, to walk the distance from outside door through hallways to the presentation room, and actually visit the room to ascertain the best layout for presentation and petting. Together with the staff we plan the arrival and setting up for dogs and children. Carpeted floors are best so the children can sit on the floor and the entire room can be utilized. Between each row of children space is left so the dogs and handlers can walk without restriction. This way every child knows that without running at or after the dog they will have a chance to pet. Children who have allergies or may be uneasy about touching the dogs are settled in the back of the room and will not be approached. We know about these special cases by the time the program starts.



Presentations including petting are limited to a half hour. The babies actually have this long attention span and do not get restless as long as the program is interactive. We introduce ourselves as their friends and neighbors; then ask them to raise hands if they own particular species of pets as we go through a list.

Topics discussed include only those subjects that are within the concepts of babies. We do compare their needs with the needs of their dogs. Both species need food, a secure place to sleep, safe toys, baths, visits to the doctor and vaccinations, kindness. We present a lot of sample handouts for the children to pass around as we talk, making sure the objects are of sufficient size that they cannot be swallowed, and are without sharp edges that can poke self or neighboring child. Below is a sample of what might be used.

- Dog toothpaste tube
- Stainless steel bowl
- Nylabone dog toy in plastic package
- Hairbrush
- Collar with rabies tag attached
- Small dog travel crate



It helps to designate a helper to pass out and collect these items.



We use graphic terms to ensure interest. For instance we say that the eating bowls must be clean enough to see your face in the bottom just before we pass it around. The children look to see their own face.

Simple obedience commands are demonstrated briefly. One of our dogs ran through an agility tunnel on command and ignored reaching hands. She also sang goodbye at the end of the program.



DOGS: It is of utmost importance that every dog brought to these presentations is impeccably clean and of stable nature, and actually enjoys, not just tolerates the presence of babies. Young children may have screechy voices, and sometimes unpredictable movements. We've got to know beforehand that our dog will not turn to snap if it gets a tail pulled or an extra hard squeeze of skin once in a while. It should not react to soiled diapers either.



To our surprise the children were always attentive the entire time, and were very gentle when stroking the dogs' fur. They all paid attention and asked if they could pet the dog as it was brought to them before they touched.

What is even more remarkable is that those babies who again attended daycare the following year remembered what they had previously been told. I had no idea that there would be so much retention.



Teaching toddlers? Yes! Absolutely!

European Study Takes Issue with Cage Free

4/29/11 by Rod Smith. Feedstuffs <http://www.feedstuffs.com/>

A new study conducted in Europe cautions that any shift from conventional cage housing for layers to alternative housing such as aviary or floor housing requires not only maintenance of salmonella surveillance programs but optimization of them due to an increased risk of bird-to-bird and egg contamination in the alternative systems.

This counters the popular position of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), which maintains that -- based on European research -- salmonella risk is lower in cage-free, floor housing.

The new study, done by researchers at Ghent University in Belgium and scheduled to appear in the July issue of *Poultry Science*, was announced today by the Poultry Science Assn., which publishes the journal.

According to the study's lead scientist, Dr. Jantina De Vylder in the department of pathology, bacteriology and avian diseases, the researchers sought to identify the effect of housing systems on the spread of salmonella in a group of layers and on internal egg contamination.

She said they found that aviary and floor systems present a greater risk of bird-to-bird transmission of *Salmonella enteritidis* (SE) than conventional and colony-type/enriched cages do. She said they also found that a higher number of eggs were internally contaminated by SE when produced in aviaries than in cage or floor systems.

De Vylder said bird-to-bird transmission was slightly higher in aviaries and "even more pronounced" in floor systems than in cages. She said researchers controlled for variables that could impact transmission and suggested that the differences were likely inherent to the housing systems.

She said the differences in internal egg contamination were not as clear but may have been due to stress, noting that stress does induce some change in a hen's oviduct that could create "an environment that is more susceptible" to salmonella survival in egg albumen.

Following any relocation of hens from conventional to alternative housing, "it is vital" for salmonella surveillance programs to be maintained and for additional steps to minimize transmission and contamination, he said.

European studies

The European Union has banned conventional cage systems, effective next January, in preference for colonies and other alternative systems, which has prompted a number of studies in Europe to determine if infectious agents like SE are less or more prevalent in the alternative systems than in conventional cages.

Most of those studies concluded that the prevalence is greater in conventional cages, and HSUS has repeatedly cited those studies in its campaign to abolish cage housing (*Feedstuffs*, Aug. 23 and Nov. 22, 2010). In doing so, HSUS emphasizes that all of the most recent 10 studies drew similar conclusions but fails to disclose that those studies were done in Europe and did not consider U.S. management and technology.

To this point, De Vylder said his team was concerned that the earlier European studies "may have been influenced" by a number of variables such as farm and flock size and age of the housing, and some work "most likely (did) not reflect the actual situation in the field."

Zoonotic Parasites In Feral Pigs Threaten Eastern N.C.

25 Apr 2011 The nation's feral pig population continues to expand, increasing the potential for interaction with humans and domestic swine - and for spreading diseases. Researchers at North Carolina State University examined feral pigs from eastern North Carolina to determine exposure to two parasites that can be transmitted from animals to people - *Toxoplasma gondii* (*T. gondii*) and *Trichinella*.

The study found that wild pigs host a significant number of these parasites.

"If ingested by humans, these parasites can invade muscle tissue and organs, causing flu-like symptoms - with more serious complications in the immune-compromised," says Dr. Chris DePerno, assistant professor of fisheries and wildlife sciences and co-author of the paper describing the research. "Little research has focused on evaluating feral pigs as potential reservoirs for these zoonotic parasites. Because of the numbers of commercial swine populations in eastern North Carolina, the expanding feral pig population, and the greater interaction with humans, we wanted to determine the exposure of feral pigs to these zoonotic parasites."

Modern market farm production practices have nearly eliminated the presence of most of these parasites in domestic swine. However, the recent trend toward organic and free-range pig production has increased domestic pig exposure to infection, and the possibility of human infection through pork consumption.

Between 2007 and 2009, researchers collected blood serum from 83 feral pigs harvested at Howell Woods Environmental Learning Center in Four Oaks, N.C. The pigs were then tested for the presence of antibodies. The prevalence of antibodies to *T. gondii* and *Trichinella* were 27.7 percent and 13.3 percent, respectively, and 4 percent had antibodies to both agents.

"As feral pig range and population size expands, the opportunity for feral pig hunting increases. We recommend education programs be conducted for hunters to understand their risk of exposure to these diseases during the cleaning process and meat consumption," DePerno says. Also, he hopes to conduct additional research examining the interaction of feral pigs with domestic swine operations, especially in light of the growth of free-range pig productions.

Source: Caroline Barnhill, North Carolina State University
Article URL: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/223241.php>

The “Missouri Solution” Wins

With news that Missouri’s legislature and Governor have passed and enacted a “Prop B” compromise, it’s clear that the Humane Society of the United States and its East Coast riches failed to accomplish much in the Show Me State.

According to campaign finance data, HSUS shoveled \$1.85 million (in cash) into its Missouri front group’s bank account, and added nearly \$300,000 more in non-cash contributions.

Even with a huge financial advantage, Prop B squeaked into the “win” column by a narrow 3-point margin. And ironically, HSUS’s heavy-handed approach mobilized grassroots agriculture supporters across the state.



Just a few months later, a bipartisan coalition has repealed significant parts of Prop B. Everyone from farming organizations to the Missouri Humane Society got behind the compromise to promote a “Missouri solution.” HSUS got left out in the cold.

So, what now? HSUS is doubling down.

HSUS is pushing *yet another Missouri ballot campaign*, an attempt to modify the legislature’s power so it will be harder for lawmakers to amend ballot initiatives in the future. This new HSUS campaign (HSUS owns the website domain, and a “Prop B” lobbyist is the campaign’s treasurer) could easily burn through another few million dollars from HSUS’s unwitting donors. And if it succeeds, HSUS will almost certainly be back for yet another expensive bite at the “Prop B” apple.

We imagine the Missouri economy will be grateful for any dollars HSUS wants to throw across the Mississippi river. But we also think Missouri’s hands-on dog and cat shelters (remember them?) would appreciate those funds even more.

It’s hard to predict the future, of course, but this much is clear about the present: HSUS pumped a lot of money into Missouri and didn’t get much out of the deal. And we probably won’t read about it in a future HSUS fundraising letter.

April 29, 2011. Humane Watch

http://humanewatch.org/index.php/site/post/the_missouri_solution_wins/

Animal Rights Fugitive Moves to 3rd Most Wanted Terrorist

The FBI has reordered its “Most Wanted Terrorists” list, moving animal liberation fugitive Andreas San Diego to number three. The FBI’s wanted poster has this to say about Andreas San Diego:

“San Diego has ties to animal rights extremist groups. He is known to follow a vegan diet, eating no meat or food containing animal products. In the past, he has worked as a computer network specialist and with the operating system LINUX. San Diego wears eyeglasses, is skilled at sailing, and has traveled internationally. He is known to possess a handgun. Daniel Andreas San Diego is wanted for his alleged involvement in the bombing of two office buildings in the San Francisco, California, area. On August 28, 2003, two bombs exploded approximately one hour apart at the Chiron Corporation in Emeryville. Then, on September 26, 2003, one bomb strapped with nails exploded at the Shaklee Corporation in Pleasanton. San Diego was indicted in the United States District Court, Northern District of California, in July of 2004.”

The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$250,000 for information leading directly to the arrest of Daniel Andreas San Diego.

HSUS Dogged By Calls for Short IRS Leash

The more HSUS pushes a PETA-like agenda, the more scrutiny it attracts. Last summer we reported on a letter U.S. Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO) sent to IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman to convey his concerns about HSUS's extensive lobbying activities. (Luetkemeyer followed up by writing to the IRS's Director of Exempt Organizations.) Congressman Pete Visclosky (D-IN) later forwarded the IRS Commissioner a letter from one of his constituents who raised additional concerns about HSUS's political interventions.

Now a cadre of *six* Members of Congress—including more than half of Missouri's Congressional delegation—are demanding a thorough federal investigation into HSUS's tax-exempt charitable status.

On April 18 Luetkemeyer; Alaska's Don Young (who refused an award from HSUS just three weeks ago); and Missouri's Billy Long, Sam Graves, Jo Ann Emerson, and Vicky Hartzler (all Republicans) wrote to U.S. Treasury Inspector General Eric Thorson that during “the past two years, [HSUS] has conducted substantial political activities within Missouri that brought into question its tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status.”

Could a major setback for HSUS be coming?

The six federal legislators are asking Thorson, the ultimate investigative authority on the federal tax code, to look into whether the Humane Society of the United States's lobbying activity violates its charitable status, noting that (to their knowledge) the IRS did not take any action following Luetkemeyer's letters to the IRS last year:

We believe that HSUS's own public documents show beyond question that lobbying is a “substantial part” of its activities, and feel that the IRS's failure to act is attributable to the politically sensitive nature of HSUS's activities.

Specifically, the Members of Congress take issue with HSUS's admission that it spent over \$26 million on “Advocacy and public policy” in 2009 alone. Additionally, they write, HSUS “spends more than twice as much on ‘Advocacy and public policy’ than any other category of expenses.”

It's unclear whether the IRS investigated HSUS after Luetkemeyer's 2010 requests. (For all we know, there may be an investigation already underway.) But between forceful opposition to HSUS in the Nebraska legislature and in the Missouri statehouse, and this latest move, it's clear that the issue isn't going away anytime soon.

There's certainly a compelling case to be made that HSUS spends far too much time and money on lobbying activities. It certainly doesn't send nearly enough money to pet shelters.

The devil is in the details, though, and it will be interesting to see how deep the Inspector General is willing to dig. If HSUS loses its exempt status, the IRS can assess back taxes and penalties. Not only would HSUS no longer be able to attract donations with the promise of a tax deduction, but it could have an enormous amount of back-taxes to pay.

It's important to note that tax-exempt charities *are* permitted to do a limited amount of lobbying. The Humane Society of the United States can operate within the letter of the law, for instance, while spending *some* money on lobbying.

But the letter from this particular “gang of 6” is arguing that HSUS *has far exceeded* those regulatory limits. Just as there are plenty of questions about how HSUS accounts for its fundraising expenses, its *political* spending will clearly come under some sort of microscope soon.

There may be a consensus forming that animal rights groups in general are prone to abusing their special tax status. Canada's federal government drafted new regulations in February that would change the law dramatically. Under the proposed rules, in order for animal advocacy to be considered charitable, “the benefit to humans must always take precedence over any benefit to animals. If a purpose or activity that promotes the welfare of animals harms humans, or has a real potential to cause significant harm to humans, it is likely not charitable.”

It's clear that HSUS and Humane Society International couldn't continue to receive a tax benefit in Canada under this sort of system. (And with the Conservative Party's strong showing in yesterday's Canadian elections, the new regulations could be finalized very soon.)

The real question is whether or not the U.S. Treasury Department could ever move in Canada's direction. Or has the Humane Society of the United States already over-lobbied its way to some sort of special protection?

Posted on 05/03/2011 at 04:24 PM by the HumaneWatch Team <http://humanewatch.org/>

Public Health Vets Release Guidelines to Prevent Zoonoses

Posted May 5, 2011. Hand washing is the most important step a person can take to reduce the risk of contracting a disease after coming into contact with animals in a public setting, such as a pet store, according to a report released today by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians Inc. (NASPHV).

The report, titled “Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings,” provides recommendations on how to minimize animal-related health risks in pet shops, feed stores, zoos, fairs and other public places.

While human-animal contact has many benefits, NASPHV notes in the report that an inadequate understanding of disease transmission and animal behavior can increase the likelihood of infectious diseases, rabies exposures, injuries and other health problems among visitors, especially children.

Infections with intestinal bacteria and parasites pose the highest risk for human disease, according to the Nashville, Tenn., organization. The risk for human infection can be increased by factors and behaviors such as hand-to-mouth activities such as thumb sucking, eating, using pacifiers) and by the layout and maintenance of facilities.

Hand washing, the report states, is the most important prevention step for reducing disease transmission. Hands should always be washed immediately after exiting animal areas, after removing soiled clothing or shoes, and before eating or drinking.

The design of facilities and animal pens should minimize the risk associated with animal contact by encouraging hand washing. Hand-washing facilities should be accessible by children, adults and persons with disabilities and be conveniently located in transitional areas between animal and non-animal areas. If soap and water are not available, NASPHV recommends using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.

The design of a facility also should prevent humans from coming into contact with animals or contaminated surfaces except in specified areas. The report provides guidelines for managing the contact between humans and specific animals, including fish, birds, dogs, cats, small animals, reptiles and amphibians.

The risk for disease or injury from animal contact can be reduced by carefully managing the animals themselves, according to the report. Venue operators should monitor animals daily for signs of illness, and they should retain and use the services of a licensed veterinarian. Ill animals should not be used in exhibits, according to the report.

Experience from disease outbreaks suggests that visitors knowledgeable about potential risks are less likely to become ill, according to the report. Therefore, NASPHV finds education to be essential in reducing risks associated with human-animal contact.

The entire report is posted on the CDC website

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6004a1.htm?s_cid=rr6004a1_e&source=govdelivery

Geriatric Concerns in Our Pets

What do we mean by geriatric? Well, it has long been accepted that a dog or cat who is over the age of 8 years is considered to be geriatric. There are more and more geriatric pets these days; due to, the significant improvements in health care for our pets and the elevated status that most of our pets enjoy in their families. So, what are our biggest concerns with our elderly friends?

Arthritis is one of the top concerns that leads to our geriatric friends slowing down, becoming stiffer in their ability to move or less likely to be as playful. Dogs, cats, ferrets and birds can all develop. Dog owners have quite a few options of non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) to choose from to help their friends with their pain. A quick list of the most commonly used NSAIDs available are Rimadyl, Etogesic, Zubrin, Metacam, and even aspirin. However, cats and other commonly owned exotics do not have the same options as our canine friends, but we do have treatment options for them. Controlling pain from inflammation associated with arthritis can help get the spring back in your pet's stride.

Hearing loss is another very common problem that occurs with geriatric patients, just as we see with elderly humans. Unfortunately, pets do not have the option of using a hearing aid like humans. We do have the option to train our pet to respond to a variety of tools that can aid in communication.

A laser pointer can be used to train a pet to respond to and follow the light when flashed in front of them. Paging collars are also available to assist owners of pets with hearing loss or complete deafness to gain their pet's attention. Hand signals incorporated with training from a young age is ideal, then when the time comes that the pet can no longer hear, they can still recognize the hand signals an owner utilizes to communicate with them and the owner is used to using the hand signals. Early use of alternate forms of training, prior to hearing loss, will help to reduce both an owner's and pet's anxiety as the pet's hearing is lost.

What do we do with a pet that is losing its eyesight? Well, that will depend on what is causing its sight to diminish. There are cataracts, glaucoma, high blood pressure and SARDs (Sudden Acquired Retinal Degeneration) to name a few of the most common causes of sight loss in pets. Surgery and medications are available to help with many of the reasons for sight loss, just as we see in human medicine. Ophthalmologists (eye specialists) are available for referral from your veterinarian (keep in mind that particular surgical procedures can be very costly, but well worth the expense). As a pet loses its eye sight, keeping the environment the same is also very important to allow a pet to feel more comfortable in its environment and to help it continue to successfully navigate through its home and yard (for a dog). Owners will notice that just as in humans, the other senses become more acute to allow the pet to navigate within its new darkened world.

Dental disease becomes more common with age and dental care becomes a true necessity. Keeping geriatric pets free of tartar and periodontal disease helps them to continue eating and maintaining their appropriate level of nutrition and also comfort. Maintenance of good dental health in our pets (as in ourselves) helps to reduce a source of discomfort and infection. If your pet has normal dental health, keeping their mouth healthy and normal can easily be done at home by using toothbrushes and toothpastes that are safe to use in animals; as well as, special rinses and chews. Keep in mind that human toothpastes are NOT safe to use in pets due to the higher levels of fluoride. Please remember that if your pet's breath smells bad or you can visibly see dental calculus (the brown/yellow hard material on teeth) then your pet's mouth needs to be evaluated by your veterinarian. Your veterinarian can advise you on the proper dental hygiene for your pet. This may include a recommendation for a thorough dental cleaning, polishing, and fluoride treatment.

Lastly but certainly not least, major organ failure is another big concern for owners with elderly pets. There are many options for treatment for pets with heart failure, kidney failure, and liver failure. Specialized care can include pacemakers, synthetic valves, and kidney transplants all similar to what is seen in human medicine. Medications have also been developed to help with many of the symptoms associated with organ failure and can even help increase the functioning of those organs.

Special diets are also available that are specific for particular organ failure as they progress or help to slow the progression of the organ failing. Organ failure can often be controlled, but the key to successful management is early detection. Bi-annual comprehensive physical exams that include complete bloodwork can help in the early detection of chemical changes associated with organs failing. This can be quite valuable in treating a geriatric pet and allow for a longer life with their loving owner.

Veterinary medicine offers the geriatric patient's owner more options to help ease the aging process. By working closely with your veterinarian from the time you acquire a pet, can help an owner to identify subtle changes in their pet before it is too late to help them. Remember, old age is not a disease, but a process. By taking an active role in your pet's overall healthcare you can directly aide your pet to live a long, healthy and active life.

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