

WILLOW CREEK VETERINARY SERVICES



March/April



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Dates to Remember:

March

9th-Daylight Savings

16th-Palm Sunday

17th-St. Patrick's Day

21st-Good Friday

23rd-Easter

April

1st-April Fool's Day

15th-Income Taxes Due

23rd-Earth Day

SPRING IS THE TIME TO CASTRATE & DEHORN

Spring is the best time to castrate your calves. Castrating at this time minimizes stress on the calves and the risk of complications. Bulls that are castrated at 8 to 9 months of age lose their weight advantage over steers within 1 to 3 weeks. Research by Oklahoma State University showed that calves castrated at 2 months of age and implanted with Ralgro weighed the same as intact calves who were also implanted. Calves castrated at weaning can also retain a stagy appearance and will bring a discounted price.

Castrating bulls at weaning or later causes stress and significant decreases in average daily gain regardless of castration method used. Complications of surgical castration include bleeding to death and infection of the scrotum. Banding also has risks including Tetanus and infection of the spermatic cord and /or scrotum.

Spring is also the best time to dehorn your calves. Any calves with horn buds can be dehorned by cautery (electric iron) which will kill the horn germ cells. This method is very effective and eliminates

the risk of blood loss and infection that is seen with dehorning in the fall.

This is also a good time to apply fly tags, implant and vaccinate your calves. While you have the cow and calves sorted you can also vaccinate your cows for reproductive diseases. Vaccinating prior to the breeding season allows for the best protection against diseases that cause infertility or first trimester abortions and you can use modified live viral vaccines at this time which are more effective, longer lasting, and less expensive than killed vaccines.

PUPPIES & KITTENS NEED VACCINATED TOO

Puppies and kittens require a series of vaccinations similar to human babies. You and your veterinarian can talk about which vaccinations should be given, how many times the vaccine should be administered to insure good protection, and when "booster" shots should be done. (A booster refers to giving a vaccine more than one time. The follow-up vaccinations will boost the immune level up higher and the patient will be even better protected from the disease.) Most pets will be given a combination vaccine called a multivalent vaccine which protects against more than one disease. This combination vaccine allows the animal to be vaccinated with one or two injections instead of four or five injections. Always consult with your veterinarian when you get a new pet to determine which vaccines are appropriate.

Veterinarians generally recommend vaccinating your pet no later than 10 weeks of age.

A booster vaccination is usually recommended every three weeks until they reach 16 weeks of age. At this time their first rabies vaccination can be given. After this series of vaccinations you pet should be well immunized until next year. Yearly boosters help your pet maintain high levels of immunity.

All dogs and indoor cats are required by Nebraska state law to be vaccinated for rabies. The first rabies vaccination can be given at three months of age. Rabies should be given again in one year and then every two to three years depending on the community you live in, for the life of the pet. Rabies is a deadly disease to humans and all other mammals. There is no treatment for rabies once clinical signs have developed. Should your pet bite a person, you will need proof of current rabies vaccination. If your pet has not been vaccinated for rabies they will, by law, be

ethanized in order to be tested for rabies.

It is a good idea to have all new pets examined by a veterinarian even if they have already received vaccinations. Your veterinarian will discuss what additional vaccinations are recommended for your pet and how often they will need to be given. This visit will also allow your veterinarian to set up a preventative health care plan for your animal. This may include parasite control, dietary recommendations and test your new pet should receive prior to mingling with pets you already own. Vaccinations and a preventative health care plan will help keep your pet healthy and may prevent costly vet bills in the future.



Be Open To New Experience's
and
Life's Little Surprises



PET OBESITY

Americans are getting heavier, and so are our pets. 1 in 4 American pets is obese. Like people, excess weight causes health problems in animals. These include a reduced life span, impaired heart, liver, and breathing functions, digestive disturbances, increased surgical risk, skin problems, heat stress, and increased risk of diabetes.

Is your pet overweight? Monitoring your pets' appearance rather than weight will be more accurate with regards to body fat. Dogs tend to carry their fat behind the front legs, along the back and tail base. Cats carry their fat along the lower abdomen, in the abdomen and in the face. Body condition can be monitored using a scale from 1 to 5. An animal with a body condition score of 1 is very thin with prominent ribs and spine. 2.5 to 3 is ideal, the ribs can be felt but not seen and there is a slight abdominal tuck or waist. 5 is obese, the ribs are difficult to feel and no waist can be seen. Pets that are 10-15% above the ideal body weight for their specific breed are considered obese. So a weight gain of only a pound or two can make a big difference in

an animal's health.

As with people, it is easier to maintain your pet at a healthy weight, than it is to help them lose weight. If your pet is overweight, the basic prescription is the same for pets as it is for people: eat less, over more. Before starting your pet on a weight loss program it is a good idea to have them examined by your veterinarian. Some animals have a medical condition causing their obesity and need medical treatment. Other animals, particularly older or very obese animals, may have cardiovascular or respiratory disorders making strenuous activity unsafe. Older dogs often have arthritis which will limit how much activity they are comfortable with doing. Losing weight will, however, make them feel better. Your veterinarian can help you formulate a diet and exercise plan that is practical and safe for your pet. In addition, veterinary staff often know creative ways to exercise your pet. So, if you have a couch potato cat, or are unable to take your dog for long walks, they may be able to help.

Several steps can be taken



to prevent your pet from becoming overweight. Start by feeding your pet two meals per day, instead of free choice. Treats are ok and can be an important part of your relationship, but should be small and used to reward good behavior. Table scraps are not the ideal diet for your pet and it is recommended that they be eliminated from their diet. Finally, be aware of any other sources of food that your pet may have and eliminate them if possible, or at least take them into account when feeding, so that your pet is eating an appropriate amount everyday. Remember that daily exercise will keep your pet healthy, happy, and may help with obedience issues as well.

We welcome any questions or concerns you have about your pet. You may contact us by phone, stop by the clinic or e-mail us at www.willowcreekvet.com.

PROPER HOOF CARE FOR YOUR HORSE

Most horses require regular hoof trimming to maintain proper hoof length and balance. Most lameness problems involve the hoof. Hooves that are out of balance put added stress on certain parts of the leg instead of distributing weight evenly. Long hooves often crack and break also causing lameness. Most horses should be trimmed every 6 to 8 weeks. Some horses, de-

pending on what they are used for may need to be shod. These shoes should be reset every 6 weeks.

We recommend that you find a quality farrier to trim and shoe your horses. No formal training or licensing is required to be a farrier. Many farriers do go to school or learn by interning with other farriers. The American Farriers Association (AFA) provides certification of qualified

horseshoers. The AFA has four levels of examination: Intern Classification, Certified Farrier, Certified Tradesman Farrier, and Certified Journeyman Farrier.

The intern classification provides testing and recognition for beginning farriers. Certified Farriers are certified as quality farriers by the AFA. They have an understanding of anatomy and physiology of the leg and the ability to properly trim and



Shoe horses based on AFA standards. Certified Tradesman Farrier is an intermediate level of certification. Certified Journeyman Farriers are advanced farriers with the ability to build their own shoes and make modifications as needed to treat different lameness problems.

For more information or to find a certified farrier in your area, call us or visit www.americanfarriers.org

LAMINITIS AND FOUNDER IN HORSES

Do you have a pony or horse that is awaiting the arrival of spring? Just to finally get out of a small lot, get rid of the dry hay and eat so much green grass that they....well....founder!

Laminitis and founder are similar, but not the same. Laminitis is a term for inflammation of the laminae in the foot. Founder is when the coffin bone has rotated down through the sole of the hoof.

The overfeeding of grains or lush grasses may be the cause of a lot of laminitis or founder problems.

A few tips to help avoid potential problems in horse(s)..

- Ensure that the horse is not obese and feed a fiber-based diet.
- Restrict grazing when fructan levels are high. Ex:spring and autumn.
- Allow your horse to graze when levels are low. Ex:late evenings to early mornings.
- Don't graze on bright, frosty mornings and in drought conditions.
- Establish pastures with leafy grasses and a variety of herbs.
- Don't graze the aftermath of a hay cut when growth is very stemmy.
- Use grass based on timothy mixtures, not rye grass.

To ensure your horses hoof health, you need to be aware of the reward

potential problem causes in order to help out your equine friend.

If your horse appears to be lame, give us a call. We have the ability to radiograph the hoof to check for rotation of the coffin bone. Based on the radiographs, we may have you contact your farrier and discuss treatment and trimming options to help your horse. We have a list of local farriers available if you are in need of one.

SPRING & SUMMER PESTS

Fleas, ticks, and mites are **ectoparasites**, parasites that live on or burrow into their hosts' skin. **Parasites** live at least part of their life cycles at the expense of host organisms. They can cause blood loss, skin irritation, allergies, and disease.

Some parasites live continuously on a single host, and others live intermittently on their host. Many parasites spend as little as 10% of their life actually feeding (i.e., living) on a host. Some live on different host species at different stages of their life cycle (e.g. ticks that carry Lyme disease live on white-footed mice as larvae, and on deer or other mammals as adults). Some can live on various host species, and others are restricted to a specific host species, often to a single area of the host's

body. For example, demodectic mange is caused by a hair follicle mite and is usually found only on the head or legs.

Fleas

Fleas on dogs, cats, and other pets can be controlled and treated in multiple ways including [topical treatments](#) (e.g., flea collars, drops), [systemic treatments](#) (e.g., oral medications), and [treating the environment](#), or extermination, may also be needed.

We recommend the following treatments:

Fipronil (Frontline®) kills adult fleas before they have a chance to lay eggs. Applied as a spray or as topical drops, fipronil pools in the sebaceous glands and hair follicles and continues to effectively kill fleas for weeks after the initial application. Fipronil is resistant to water and has an excel-

lent safety and efficacy (effectiveness) record.

Nitenpyram (Capstar) is an oral medication which begins to kill adult fleas on dogs and cats within 30 minutes of administration. It must be used in conjunction with environmental control in order to break the flea cycle. It can be used on puppies and kittens as young as 4 weeks of age. Although it has a relatively brief duration of action (a day or two), it may be repeated as often as necessary.

The decision about which flea control remedy to use can be difficult. Pet owners should discuss treatment options with their veterinarians.

Ticks

Ticks are eight-legged, blood-feeding **ectoparasites** that are closely related to spiders, scorpions, and mites and live on mammals

and birds. There are about 800 different species of ticks.

Ticks are relatively large (compared to fleas and mites), with soft rounded bodies. Most ticks attach to their host and feed for as long as 12 to 24 hours before they fall off. Young ticks (nymphs) may feed on one host, drop off, and then feed on a different host as adults. Most ticks spend about 10% of their lifetime attached to their hosts.

Individual tick bites can cause **local reactions, including skin** damage, irritation, inflammation, and hypersensitivity. A large number of tick bites can cause anemia. Some ticks secrete toxic saliva that can cause paralysis. All ticks can carry and transmit disease.

Some of the diseases ticks can transmit are Lyme disease, Tick-borne fever and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. (cont. on page 4)

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SUMMER PESTS (CONT.)



Lyme disease (lyme borreliosis) is caused by the bacteria

Borrelia burgdorferi and is spread by the deer tick. It is one of the most common tick-transmitted veterinary diseases in the world. Lyme disease can affect both cats and dogs. Its most common clinical symptoms are arthritis, lameness, anorexia (loss of appetite), and depression. It can also cause cardiac, neurological, and kidney disease.

Canine ehrlichiosis (tick-borne fever) is caused by *Ehrlichia canis* and is spread by the brown dog tick *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*. It occurs throughout the United States, but

damages and decreases the production of blood cells and leads to anemia, lowered disease resistance, and abnormal bleeding. Diagnosis is usually based on a blood test. Treatment involves antibiotics and supportive care. Though the prognosis is usually good, ehrlichiosis can be fatal.

Rocky mountain spotted fever is caused by the bacteria *Rickettsia rickettsii* and is spread by the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*) and the wood tick (*D. anderson*). Symptoms include fever, lethargy, depression, anorexia, swelling, a stiff gait, abnormal bleeding, breathing problems, and eye pain. Rocky mountain spotted fever is difficult to differen-

tiate from canine ehrlichiosis. The prognosis is good if the dog receives prompt treatment, including antibiotics and supportive care.

Removal:

If pet owners find a tick on their dog or cat, they should **remove it** by grasping the tick with fine-pointed tweezers and gently pulling it free. The more quickly the tick is removed, the lower the risk of disease transmission to the pet.

Preventions:

Preventative control of ticks is difficult.

Topical acaricides (e.g., Frontline®) are among the most common devices used for dogs. Revolution is the topical treatment that we recommend for cats. Revolution also treats ear mites and some intestinal parasites.

If you feel your home is infested with fleas. Acaricides are pesticides that kill ticks and mites. Treating the pet's environment usually requires the help of a professional exterminator. Check your local yellow pages under Pest Control Services.

If you have concerns or questions, please stop by or call the office. We are here to serve you and keep your pet healthy, safe and happy.

