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NEWSLETTER SPRING 2008

WELCOME!

What's New?.. Cat kennel update

Staff News...introducing Joanne Cross

Rabbit Nutrition...What should you feed your bunny

Star Pet...Buster the rags to riches story

Exotic Spot...the red ear terrapin

Kids Corner...Amelia shows us her artwork

WHAT'S NEW?

In the last issue of our newsletter I mentioned that we were awaiting the arrival of our new cat kennels. I am pleased to report that these have arrived and will be in use very shortly in a separate room to the dog kennels. This will enable us to house cats separately from dogs when they are hospitalised or recovering from surgery, leading to lower stress levels for our feline friends. Hopefully we will have photos of the cat kennels in use for the summer issue.

STAFF NEWS

Regulars will notice a new face at reception and I'm sure you will join us in welcoming Joanne Cross who joins Paula and Julie at the front desk. Joanne is a mother of two children and also has 2 dogs and a hamster at home. She is looking forward to meeting with clients and their animals.

Martin Lawton has been away at the Western States Veterinary Conference in February to continue his professional development and Lynne Stoakes and Jo Sheen have CPD planned for April. This is essential to keep up to date with the latest developments in Veterinary medicine and is supported by the practice.

Lynne Stoakes will be taking part in the Farleigh Hospice 14mile sponsored walk for the third year running. Please help to support this worthwhile charity which gives vital help to people with life limiting illness and their families by signing the sponsor form at reception.



RABBIT NUTRITION

Rabbits have a complex digestive system. They have a very large caecum (large bowel) with bacteria, which help them to break down the fibrous plant food in their diet. Rabbits produce two types of faecal pellet. There are caecotrophs, which are soft and covered in mucus. These are rarely seen as the rabbits eat them to obtain the nutrients that the bacteria have helped to release. Then there are the typical hard round pellets, which you will find in their hutch.



A rabbit's diet needs to have a high proportion of fibre. In the wild rabbits graze or browse for much of the day on grass and vegetable plants. In domestic rabbits we can provide fibre in the form of grass or grass hay and this should form the bulk of the diet and should be available all day. In addition to this we often feed concentrates (muesli style mixes with cereal or pelleted feed). These supply essential vitamins and minerals as well as protein and carbohydrate, however they should make up a small proportion of the diet as they can lead to obesity if fed in large quantities. Fresh water is also essential to good digestive function.

Grass is also important for good dental health in rabbits and rabbits not given the opportunity to grind tough plant material will develop overgrown molar teeth which if left leads to a sore mouth, anorexia and "slobbers".

If rabbits are not fed enough fibre or water or if they stop eating due to any other reason such as dental pain they may suffer from a serious complaint known as ileus. This is a common condition in pet rabbits and can be fatal if not treated in its early stages. The gut motility slows or even stops leading to gas build up within the gut and results in colic, which is very painful.

STAR PET!



This issue our star pet is a little Staffordshire Bull Terrier puppy. The puppy was brought in to Lawton and Stoakes having been seized from his previous owner by the RSCPA. He was emaciated and had diarrhoea and was very poorly. A test on his faeces showed he had Parvovirus, a nasty viral infection, which could have been prevented by vaccination. He stayed with us for many days and had to be kept in isolation until he had recovered. He was appointed his own nurse who cared for him during his stay and played with him and gave him plenty of TLC. While was with us he gained weight and it was wonderful to see him become a normal lively puppy. Best of all he has now been taken on by a family who love him to bits

and have given him the name Buster, which fits his personality perfectly!

EXOTIC SPOT

The Red Eared Terrapin By Jamie Biggs

The Red Eared Terrapin originates from North and South America, and is one of the most



commonly kept Terrapins, which can live for up to 40 years in captivity. They are aquatic reptiles and spend most of their time in water, however it is important to provide them with an area of dry land on which to bask. Although baby Red Eared Terrapins are very small (about 2cm long), they can grow to around 30-40cm in length, so it is important to keep this in mind when designing

their terrarium. A fully grown Red Eared Terrapin should have an area of water at least 4x2x3 feet, as well as the dry basking area.

Like all reptiles, the temperature at which they are kept is vital to their health. An aquatic heater and thermostat should be used to maintain the water temperature at 75-85°F. A hot spot of 90-95°F should be provided on the area of dry land using a ceramic or infrared heating bulb, which should too be linked to a thermostat. A UV light should also be placed 18-24 inches from the basking area and should be switched on for 10-12 hours a day.

A varied diet is essential to keep the Terrapin in good health. Hatchlings should be fed everyday and are mainly carnivorous, whereas adults will readily eat plant material such as watercress and romaine lettuce as well, and should be fed every other day. Suitable foods include prawns (still in their shells), whitebait, sprats, pinkies and small mice. Crab sticks, kidney and liver can be offered, but only in very small amounts as they are low in calcium and high in phosphorus. Calcium and multivitamin supplements should be given with every feed, especially to young and growing animals. It is usually best to feed Terrapins in a separate container, as they are very messy eaters!

KIDS CORNER

This issue's Kids Corner comes from Amelia who is just 5 years old and who is the daughter of our head nurse Fiona. She has drawn a picture of a Guinea Pig (was she inspired by our article on Guinea Pigs in last issue's Exotic Spot?) We will be giving Amelia a £10 WHS voucher for her hard work!



If any kids/ young people (of any age!) would like to feature in future issues please send in your pictures, poems or jokes to us by post, email or hand them in at reception and remember we give a **£10 WHS voucher** for any that we publish!! **WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR????**

SPRING IS HERE!!!!



It's time to wake hibernating tortoises. Remember they need to be kept warm once they are awake so be prepared for a cold snap and have a heat lamp ready. Details can be obtained from our nurses or receptionists. Once awake tortoises should be given a nice warm bath and offered food. If they are not eating within a week you should contact the surgery to have them checked up.