



*To provide a platform for the reception and transmission of information about the health and well-being of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier*

## NEWSLETTER

No. 9. October 2005

### EDITORIAL

**EXCITING NEWS**, WHI have organised a Seminar for the 27<sup>th</sup> November where the speakers will be Dr. Cathryn Mellersh BSc PhD, Senior Canine Geneticist at the Animal Health Trust, and Dr. Karin Allenspach med.Vet.FVH,DECVIM-CA, who has recently taken up an appointment as a lecturer in Internal Medicine at the Royal Veterinary College.

I am amazed how far around the world our Newsletter has reached. I had an email from someone asking for a copy of the references to Stacy Pober's article in Newsletter 6, *Risk, Raw Feeding and Pathogens: A Review*. As this had not then been typed I sent a message to say that if he was in the UK I would photocopy and post it. But no, he was a veterinary student in Australia researching raw meat diets for a report and had never even heard of a Wheaten and had no idea as to what it was! When emailing the relative pages I explained about the breed and suggested he read Dr. Ian Billinghurst's book 'Give your Dog a Bone'. *Stacy Pober's article, together with the Reference pages, is available should anyone require a copy.*

Pat Symons sent in a cutting from the Sunday Times for the last issue in which it stated that one in every 100 dogs on flights fail to make it alive. Obviously a typical exaggeration from the press as this caused considerable discussion on the US SCWTbreeder link. Dogs are flying in the United States all the time and the general consensus was that the Airlines took great care of animals in transit. Someone wrote that Carl Kole, a Wheaten owner now retired, was one of the primary forces behind tightening up pet transport safety on airlines. The cutting also said that one dog had been stuck on the tarmac in a blizzard in Vancouver. A blizzard in Vancouver was questioned where apparently it seldom snows! It was said that if it did it wouldn't be much below freezing and then not for long.

There will always be an isolated case, the one that the press pick up on, but from feedback it appears that animals travelling by air are usually well catered for. Many thanks to all of you who responded.

I have been fortunate that in 23 years of ownership my Wheatens have never been stung by a wasp or bee . . . until last week!!! One stepped on a sleepy wasp and got stung. Only two days before I had been reading some breed notes which advised using vinegar for wasp stings. The breed note correspondent reported relief for the dog in two minutes. It took about half an hour to settle with mine, but it did work and vinegar is something always available in the cupboard.

Apparently dog hair, especially the woolly variety, is good on the compost heap as it releases nitrogen into the compost which helps to break down organic material.

Any time you are away from home without the dogs and could for whatever reason be unexpectedly delayed for any extended length of time, it is useful to have on you details of those left at home and who to contact with regard to their welfare. This is where the Emergency Pack we have to offer could be useful. See Page 4 for full details.

WHI Newsletters are published usually on a two monthly basis and are sent by email where possible. If you change your email address please remember to let us know. Hard copies can be provided by post if you prefer. Back copies can be accessed from our website.

Please let me know of any issues you would like to see raised in the Newsletters, and if you are able to attend the Seminar raffle prizes are always welcome.



Barbara 0117 9324297

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## "TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE"

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2005

### WHEATEN HEALTH INITIATIVE

presents

#### Dr. CATHRYN MELLERSH BSc PhD

Senior Canine Geneticist – The Animal Health Trust  
who will speak on

#### "Basic Genetics, DNA, Genes and how mutations cause inherited disease in dogs"

and

#### Dr KARIN ALLENSPACH med.Vet.FVH,DECVIM-CA

Lecturer in Internal Medicine – Royal Veterinary College  
who will speak on:

#### "PLE AND PLN IN THE SCWT"

Clinical presentation, treatment and possible preventative measures

The Sports Connexion, Ryton-on-Dunsmore,

Coventry

Reception at 10 am

*Although this seminar is aimed primarily at owners and breeders of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier, the subject material will be of interest to other breeds dealing with the problems of hereditary disease in a small gene pool.*

**Tickets £15 to include refreshments and Buffet Lunch**

*Cheques payable to 'Wheaten Health Initiative'*

*Closing date 20<sup>th</sup> November to guarantee lunch*

To ensure your place at this event, or for further information, please contact Malcolm Jeffries, 31 Storforth Lane, Hasland, Chesterfield S421 0PP Tel: 01246 554742 or email: [sananmalc@aol.com](mailto:sananmalc@aol.com)

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## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS

**DR. CATHRYN MELLERSH** has recently been involved in the AHT Genetics and Oncology Research Groups Open Days for representatives of pedigree dog breed clubs. Dr. Mellersh described to delegates the recent progress of the Genetics Group in studies aimed at identifying the mutations responsible for a number of inherited canine diseases, such as Copper Toxicosis in Bedlington Terriers and hereditary cataracts in Staffordshire Bull Terriers. The Group is also optimistic about the development of diagnostic DNA tests for these conditions. The title of her talk will be '*Dogs, DNA and Disease*'; when she plans to cover some basic genetics, including DNA, genes and mutations followed by a summary of the general strategies the AHT use to identify genetic mutations that cause inherited disease. She will give examples of some of the success stories the AHT have had this year and describe new DNA diagnostic tests that have been developed as a result of the research.

Dr. Mellersh completed her PhD in 1991 and has worked in the field of canine genetics ever since. Her first post-doctoral position was with Dr. Jeff Sampson (Kennel Club Geneticist) when he was a lecturer at Leicester University, during which she characterised some of the first canine microsatellites to be identified. After she spent 5½ years in Seattle working with Dr. Elaine Ostrander, one of the world's leading canine geneticist, where she worked on the construction of canine genetic maps. She joined the AHT in 2001 and is currently involved with the identification of mutations that cause inherited disease in dogs.

**DR. KARIN ALLENSPACH** graduated as a vet in Zurich, Switzerland and went on to do a residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania where she worked alongside Dr. Shelly Vaden DVM, DACVIM and finished with the European Diploma of a Specialist in Small Animal Internal Medicine. Dr. Allenspach then went back to Switzerland to do a PhD involving research in chronic diarrhoea in dogs. On the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005 she took up an appointment as a lecturer in Internal Medicine at the Royal Veterinary College.

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## Myths and Legends

### Some Questions & Answers on Protein Losing Diseases & RD

- **My dog is 8 and very healthy so I know he will not develop PLE or PLN.**
- *Dogs as old as 14 and previously healthy have been diagnosed with PLE or PLN. Many of the older dogs are asymptomatic (do not show physical signs of the illness), only bloods, urinalysis and in some cases biopsy can tell if a dog is affected.*
- **My puppy got sick at 7 months so I know it must be RD.**
- *Protein-losing disease can occur at any age. Although in the SCWT, RD is more common between the ages 7 weeks to 3 years, protein losing disease can occur at any age.*
- **A dog cannot have RD and a Protein-losing disease at the same time.**
- *A dog can have one or any combination of the diseases. Wheaten's have been diagnosed with both RD and PLN and with PLN and PLE.*

- **You cannot be sure that a dog has PLN and not RD.**
- *The kidneys of a dog with RD are quite different from a dog with PLN. The damage to the glomeruli in RD cases is, under microscopy, different to the damage shown with dogs with PLN. There are differences seen with blood chemistry and urinalysis.*
- **A dog has to have a post-mortem before a definite diagnosis can be given.**
- *Although post mortems can provide additional proof, a diagnosis can be made while the dog is still living by blood tests, urinalysis, endoscopy or biopsy and ultrasound.*
- **A lot of old dogs die of kidney disease – it could be just old age not PLN**
- *Changes in the kidney due to old age cannot be mistaken for those caused by PLN. Examination of the kidney in post mortem procedures will identify the distinct changes due to deterioration in old age from those caused by PLN.*
- **A dog with PLE has to have a biopsy before it can be diagnosed.**
- *A biopsy does not need to be routinely done in order to diagnose PLE. A blood screen may show the changes due to PLE. Also the examination of faeces, over a 3 day period (not currently available in the UK) will show if a dog is 'spilling protein' into the intestine. An endoscopic biopsy, an additional aid to help confirm the diagnosis in certain circumstances, is the safest way to do this as surgical biopsy has proven to be more dangerous*
- **A simple urine test called the Heska E.R.D.-HealthScreen™ Test can tell you if your dog will get PLE or PLN.**
- *The Heska E.R.D.-HealthScreen™ Test does not diagnose PLE or PLN. This screening test is designed to test for the loss of microalbuminuria (protein) in the urine and therefore cannot help in detecting PLE. In PLE the loss of protein is seen in the faeces. If a dog tests 'positive' for microalbuminuria in the Heska ERD urine test then it indicates there may be a potential problem which could be due to PLN or to another cause. A full blood screen and urinalysis by a veterinarian will be required to make a diagnosis.*
- **There is no point in screening tests because if your dog is going to get PLE or PLN it will still do so and there is nothing you can do about it.**
- *The outlook for dogs diagnosed with PLE and PLN is improving constantly due to ongoing research. Early diagnosis is essential; diet, medication, etc. can in many cases improve a dog's lifestyle and its longevity. Dogs have been known to survive years after diagnosis.*
- **My dog is very healthy and does not drink a lot so it does not need to be tested.**
- *A dog in the early stages of disease will not drink a lot. At this stage the dog is frequently in a state of "compensation" where signs such as excessive drinking will not be apparent.*
- **My dog is very healthy and does not pass urine frequently so it does not need to be tested.**
- *A dog in the early stages of disease will often not show obvious signs. This is not an indication that the dog is clear of hereditary disease.*

- **My dog has never had regular bouts of diarrhoea or vomiting so it can't have PLE or PLN.**
  - *These are classic signs that something is wrong but they are by no means always seen. Vomiting and diarrhoea are only two of the many signs, which might indicate PLE and or PLN. The absence of such symptoms does not necessarily indicate the absence of hereditary disease.*
- **I know that this dog must be a carrier because it is the sire/dam of a dog with PLE or PLN.**
  - *There is no such certainty as we do not understand how the disease is inherited. Unfortunately, as yet there is NO identified mode of inheritance. The only way of being absolutely certain of whether a dog is a carrier lies in the future with the identification of the gene/s responsible.*
- **I cannot use my dog for breeding because a litter-mate has been diagnosed with a protein-losing disease.**
  - *There is no way of knowing at present if the litter-mate of an affected dog is "safe" to breed from or not. It might be wise not to breed from a litter mate of an affected animal but, as the mode of inheritance is not yet established, it is not certain if every other dog in a litter could pass on the deleterious mutations.*
- **I don't need to worry about protein-losing disease because I don't have American dogs in my pedigree.**
  - *There is no foundation for assuming that only dogs born in America are at risk of PLE/PLN. ALL the diseases are recognised hereditary diseases of ALL Soft-Coated Wheaten Terriers no matter what their nationality/place of birth/coat type etc is.*
- **There is nothing that can be done to stop these diseases in the SCWT.**
  - *You can keep up to date with the latest health information.*
  - *You can test regularly and repeatedly throughout the dog's life.*
  - *You can be open and honest about the results.*
  - *You can make your breeding choices with care and use dogs from other people who are taking the same precautions with regard to their dogs.*
  - *You can choose not to breed from affected dogs, or littermates of affected dogs.*
  - *You can ask your vet to send a blood sample from your dog (for DNA storage) to the Animal Health Trust to further aid in the research into the treatment, cause and prevention of disease in the SCWT.*

*Only by taking part in this collective effort and working together openly and honestly, can we safeguard the future of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier.*

## CLICKNOW and raise funds for the Animal Health Trust

There is now a unique and FREE way to raise money for the AHT while searching the web. The AHT has teamed up with **ClickNow**, the innovative charity fundraisers, who have created a websearch facility that raises money for the AHT using the world's top three search engines: Google, Yahoo and Ask Jeeves! It's a simple idea – whenever an AHT supporter, anywhere, uses this new Websearch facility, **ClickNow** guarantee they will donate at least 50% of the income they receive to the AHT every month. A typical user will raise between £30 and £50 per year for charity. The best thing about the AHT Websearch is that it COSTS YOU NOTHING to use it.

To join up visit website [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk) and click on the **ClickNow** logo.

## Evening Primrose Oil

Are you aware that Evening Primrose Oil is not safe to give a dog suffering from epilepsy? Some bottles do mention this but other don't. Seven Seas who manufacture R & A Vitapet Formula containing Gamma Acids which is part of Evening Primrose Oil, when contacted confirmed that the product was not safe to give a dog suffering from Epilepsy.

## Hips and Arthritis

The Hip Hip Hurray web site [www.dogarthritisclick.com](http://www.dogarthritisclick.com) went live on the 1<sup>st</sup> August. This offers a great source of information on canine arthritis – tips, treatment and care. A canine arthritis information sheet highlighting warning signs and symptoms may be downloaded from the web site. Call the Hip Hip Hurray hotline 0870 199 5125 if you do not have access to the internet.

## Inadequate socialisation still the main cause of aggression

The latest figures published by the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC) show that nearly 67% of biting dogs referred for a behaviour consultation had received inadequate socialisation during puppyhood.

The APBC has been publishing an Annual Review of Cases since 1994. The latest, 2004 review, also found that the most common type of dog referred to an APBC member was a crossbreed with the border collie, Labradors and German Shepherds the most common pedigree breeds seen.

57% of dog problems presented involved aggression either to family members or strangers.

*Source – Veterinary Nursing Journal – August 2005*

## Itching & Scratching

It has been suggested that Camomile tea can be useful for itchy/scratchy dogs. Make up a cup about three times stronger than you would drink – three teabags rather than one – let it go cold and keep it handy along with a flannel. Once the dog begins to scratch soak the area well with the flannel soaked in tea. Apparently this is a very old established remedy.

## Monkshood

The Royal Horticultural Societies' July publication 'The Garden' has an article entitled 'Fatal Attraction' in which it said it is time that Monkshood Aconite (*Monkshood Wolf Bane*) were brought out of the shadows and more widely grown.

Although very beautiful plants, Monkshood is poisonous in every part, both to animals and children, even books recommend that gloves be worn as poisoning can be caused merely by handling

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## NEWS REPORTS & INFORMATION

### Animal Health Trust Empty Printer Cartridges Appeal

The Animal Health Trust have had a very good response to their appeal for used printer cartridges for recycling. Recycling envelopes can be requested from the Animal Health Trust – Email [fundraising@aht.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@aht.org.uk) or Tel: 08700 502424.

*Please note that Epson or Epson compatible cartridges, laser or fax cartridges, cannot be recycled.*



the plant and its roots. The toxin is deadly so avoid planting this in gardens where there are children and animals.

### Magnetic Collars & Microchips

According to an article in Our Dogs, 26<sup>th</sup> August, Magnetic Collars which help to relieve arthritic, muscular pain etc. are not suitable for pets with microchip ID implants. Work carried out by the late Rory Frost, founder of the Tattoo Register, showed conclusively that magnetic impulses either removed, or jumbled up, the information in the chip making it illegible. This was questioned with a vendor selling these collars at a recent craft fair who said that was rubbish.

On checking with websites for Magnetic Therapy, one stated – *“The dog collar is not suitable if the Microchip is placed in the neck . . . which most are. The magnetic Mat is alright though and so too is the magnetic Animal Water Pad. Just a point here . . . the Collar is not in any way unsafe . . . it is only that it could upset the chip itself and make the chip/security/identity tag useless . . . we are actually working on this now and hope in the near future to be able to produce a magnetic collar (dogs & cats) that will not have any chance of interfering with the chip. But at the moment it could”.*

### Pyometra

The breed note writer for Basset Hounds, Our Dogs, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, had read about an American vet who had treated a number of bitches for pyometra using antibiotics and prostaglandins (which have a hormone like effect and which can cause muscular contractions sufficient to clear the womb of the pus. Out of 10 bitches treated only 4 remained clear of pyometra for the rest of their lives, the other 6 had a later bout of pyometra and were spayed. However, 5 of the 10 bitches did produce litters after the treatment.

One of my Wheatens had a discharge between seasons which was probably building up to Pyometra. The Vet suggested three things, spaying, prostaglandin treatment, or a massive dose of antibiotics. As she was then 13 surgery was out of the question for me. My vet said that Prostaglandin treatment may only work in 50% of cases, so I opted for the antibiotics which did clear it. She lived to be 14 and three months with no recurrence. *Barbara*

### Silvered Cage Covers

Jane Lilley reported in her column Dog World 5<sup>th</sup> August 2005 the danger of silvered cage covers. Whilst these are marvellous for keeping dogs cool, the importance of siting them carefully, preferably so that the sun is either not shining – or even unlikely to shine – so that it reflects into judging rings or, if circumstances decree otherwise and there is no alternative space available, it would be sensible to put a light mesh cover or towel firmly fixed over the bright side.

The sun came out suddenly during judging and a dog that was fine on the table duly set off down the ring and stopped in his tracks looking very frightened, refusing to move in anything other than a series of terrified rushes. The owner explained that the sun had suddenly reflected into his eyes from the silvered cages lined up in the grooming area alongside the ring. Jane herself was temporarily blinded by just such a flash from those same cages, which acted like a mirror, as if the very heart of the blazing sun was shining directly into her eyes. It hurt badly and her eyes continued to ache for days afterwards.

### Winter Awareness

Both the colder winter weather and the festive season bring hazards for our pets. Spillage from antifreeze tastes sweet to pets but most brands are very poisonous if consumed and can be fatal. Flex to Christmas trees and other Christmas lights is just perfect for puppies and young dogs to chew. Not all dogs will die from electrocution

thanks to modern circuitry, but a charred mouth is a very unpleasant wound to suffer. Be careful, be safe.

### Xylitol

The sweetener Xylitol is very toxic to dogs. This is an artificial sweetener that is in sugarless chewing gums, mints and some household baking products and is life threatening to dogs; they can die very quickly. Vets are seeing more cases of Xylitol poisoning; dogs are getting into people's bags or perhaps owners are giving them treats and as some dogs like to eat anything they can steal, this too could be a problem. Recently only six mints were enough to put a Golden Retriever into a coma – she recovered but may suffer permanent liver damage. It is probably best to keep those mints on a high shelf.

*Source – Italian Greyhound Breed Notes, Dog World 26.8.05*

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## CELEBRATING OUR SENIORS

Another tribute, this time to a very 'Oldie'. 'Sullane' (*Glendowan Arabella*) dob 24<sup>th</sup> April 1988, owned by Mary Taylor in Bristol, is now in her 18<sup>th</sup> year. This must certainly be the oldest living Wheaten in the UK.

It is so rewarding to hear of Wheatens reaching a good age. Let me know of any you have, or have had in the past, that have reached 14 and over so that we can celebrate more of our Seniors' long and healthy lives.

*Barbara*

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## EMERGENCY PACK

Personal 'Emergency Information' Pack which can also be attached to car crates.

*Size : 8¾" x 6" - Colours Blue or Black*

This contains the following items:

- ❖ Contact details
- ❖ Useful tips
- ❖ Details of what a good Pet First Aid Kit should contain
- ❖ **Pet First Aid booklet – Quick Guide to Animal Emergencies**
- ❖ **Brochure identifying a SCWT** for use in situations where it may be difficult to recognise the breed
- ❖ Notebook & Pen
- ❖ Spring Clip for use if you have to fasten your dog safely to something quickly

**Price £12.50 inc. p&p from Barbara**



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## MONTGOMERY HEALTH FORUM TAPES

A set of five audio tapes covering the talks by Dr. Wendy Beers DVM, Dr. Meryl Littman VMD, DACVIM, Dr. Shelly Vaden DVM, DACVIM and Dr. David Williams, with a Panel Discussion, is available on loan to those of you who would like to learn more about the hereditary health problems that can affect the breed. There is also a book to accompany these tapes.

Please contact WHI to arrange collection.

## MEDICAL TERMS BOOKLET – Questions & Answers

To help you to understand more about the words and terms that are used by the professionals caring for your Wheatens  
Copies of this comprehensive guide can be obtained at a cost of £2.50 + 50p p&p from Barbara

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## PEDIGREE DATA – For Sale

There are over 23,000 Wheatens of global ancestry at present in the WHI database.

This data is compatible with the **Anim-All** computer software programme purchased separately from John Grierson 01204 300349  
[www.griersoft.com](http://www.griersoft.com)

*All proceeds go to the WHI Health Fund to continue our education programme*

**All this data could be yours for just £75**

*Data is restricted to pedigree information only*

This is a must for breeders. Having this data to hand can aid breeding decisions, particularly with regard to health issues

For further details please contact :  
Sandra Jeffries on 01246 554742 E-mail :  
[Sananmalc@aol.com](mailto:Sananmalc@aol.com)

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## Breed Specific Health Services available at the ANIMAL HEALTH TRUST

This booklet gives full information for SCWT owners and their vets about Blood and Urine Testing at the Animal Health Trust and is free on request from WHI.

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## Recommended Web Site:

For more detailed information regarding health matters visit:  
[www.scwtca.org](http://www.scwtca.org)

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*"The apple cannot be stuck back on the Tree of Knowledge; once we begin to see, we are doomed and challenged to seek the strength to see more, not less." - Arthur Miller*

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## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

### Member Benefits

Impartial, informed and sympathetic advice and assistance on health issues from the WHI team.

Should you ever find yourself facing a serious health problem, or any problem, with your Wheaten, there are experienced, caring, people at the end of a telephone who will share their knowledge with you, and who will do their utmost to ensure that you have all the information you need to make informed decisions.

Plus regular Newsletters dedicated to health matters.

- *Do you care about the health of your dog?*
- *Do you want to belong to a group dedicated to resolving issues about your dog's health?*
- *Do you want to share your knowledge and experience with others?*

***If you answer YES to all questions - then join us!***

Contact :

Malcolm Jeffries 01246 554742 E-mail : [Sananmalc@aol.com](mailto:Sananmalc@aol.com)

There is no membership fee, but any donation will be appreciated to help with administration costs.  
*(Please make cheques payable to WHI)*

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## Contacting us:

### Telephone:

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**Write:** Wheaten Health Initiative  
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**E-mail:** [wheatenhealth@hotmail.com](mailto:wheatenhealth@hotmail.com)

**Web site:** [www.wheaten-health-initiative.co.uk](http://www.wheaten-health-initiative.co.uk)

*We would be grateful if all of those contacting us for more information can provide an electronic address (if possible) for future contact and dissemination of information*

***And finally . . .***

*We are always willing to listen to your thoughts and ideas.  
We have an open door, so please, come and talk to us.*