



(Founded 2003)

WHEATEN HEALTH INITIATIVE

Newsletter 17 April 2009



*Join us for a day on the
Care & Well-being of your dog
Full details inside*



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

If it were easy to achieve, it may not be worth having!

Contacting us

Chairman	Ian Carter	01793 765253
Secretary	Karen Francis	02086 692255
Treasurer	Malcolm Jeffries	01246 554742

Carole Barnes-Davies	01245 231434
Lynn Carter	01793 765253
Barbara Penney	01179 324297
Jan Thackray	01132 525206
Lynne Witheyman	02380 614508
Kate & Sarah Watkins	01543 684864

Write: Mrs. Karen Francis
Secretary
Wheaten Health Initiative
23 Osmond Gardens,
Wallington, Surrey, SM6 8SX

Email: wheatenhealth@hotmail.com
Website: www.wheatenhealthinitiative.com

Contents

Editorial	3
Dealing with Diarrhoea	4
Information	5
Kate's Korner	6
Seminar - 'The Care and Well-Being of your Dog'	7
International Breeders Seminar - Stockholm 2008	8
Message from America	10
Contacts	10
Publications	11

Cover Photo – Blousey (Willsbridge Blousey-Brown)

EDITORIAL



Barbara Penney
11 Sheridan Way
Longwell Green
BRISTOL BS30 9UE
Email: penney@btinternet.com

*'The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always
so certain of themselves, but wiser people so full of doubts'*
Bertrand Russell

The new date for the re-scheduled Seminar on 'Digestive Disorders in Dogs and the Possible Causes' is the 24th May, full details of this can be found on Page 7. A flyer is enclosed with a tear-off slip for tickets. In addition to a talk by Dr. Allenspach, we are pleased to also have Nicole Mackie, a Canine Therapist, who will be speaking on 'Stress in Dogs', plus an afternoon of workshops when our morning speakers will be in attendance with plenty of opportunities to ask questions.

Some Wheatens do suffer from colitis and digestive disorders and I feel sure the article on 'Dealing with Diarrhoea' by Prof. Steve Dean on Page 2 will complement Dr. Allenspach's talk.

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who has given donations to help with our work, with a special mention to Lesley Handley for her generous donation in memory of Crystal who sadly died earlier this year.

Do be extra vigilant when walking your dogs off lead in areas where there could be mineshafts or caves. An Irish Terrier fell into a hole where the ground had subsided into a disused mineshaft in the Rhondda Valley in South Wales, and as it was too deep for the owner to get the dog out, cave rescue had to be called in. Amazingly, it was said, the dog didn't bark. I lost Kaber on one occasion and when I did find him he was coiled in barbed wire, unable to move and silent! It didn't dawn on me then, but on thinking about it dogs are very vulnerable to predators in these situations which is not of much help to the frantic owner!

Have you seen or heard of the 'Paw Plunger' recently introduced? This was invented by an American Actress and journalist in New York after several muddy walks with her Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier in Central Park. You fill the plastic container, which looks like a very large mug with a handle, with water and the specially designed soft brushes inside remove surface and ingrained dirt without damaging coat or causing discomfort to your dog. I was trying to work out how the fourth leg can emerge clean if you take the Plunger away with you ready filled and re-use the water, should have been obvious really, you take an extra bottle of water with you!

A little late I know, but still I believe of interest, and with no opportunity to offer this information before I have included a brief report on the International Breeders' Seminar arranged by the SCWT Club of Sweden held in 2008 during the World Show in Stockholm.

As one of our objectives is to keep you up to date with information on health developments and testing in other countries, I have also included a message just received from the SCWT Club of America Endowment, Inc. and you will be able to access all copies of their 'Wheaten Health News' from the website.

I look forward to seeing you to our Seminar on the 24th May when we won't have the weather against us!

Barbara



DEALING WITH DIARRHOEA

‘A Vet’s View’ with Steve Dean

Colitis is a problem AVV frequently gets asked to cover and equally frequently tries to ignore the subject for as long as possible. It is hardly a subject to grab the interest and anybody who has suffered colitis, either personally or in their dogs, hardly wishes to be reminded of it. However, having been asked several times in 2007 and as this time of year, in the post Christmas/New Year depression, is often totally dispiriting anyway, AVV has decided a dismal column on diarrhoea is perhaps not out of place. For that dear reader is what colitis is all about – fluid, smelly diarrhoea.



Colitis is a catch-all term covering many conditions and equally as many causes but tracking down which one is the challenge. The word ‘colitis’ means inflamed large intestine (colon to be precise but it includes the rectum too). The colon is where a large quantity of fluid gets taken out of the gut contents and the semi-dried faeces pass to the rectum ready to be expelled. However, when the large bowel becomes inflamed it loses its ability for absorption and in many cases adds fluid to the gut contents as a byproduct of inflammation. So the already moist or liquid gut contents becomes even more fluid. The colon will be swollen, full of fermenting contents and inflamed (and probably sore). So the the body takes over, in other words it offloads offending substance as soon as possible. This usually results in explosive amounts of diarrhoea often, to a large extent, passed uncontrollably in inconvenient locations (e.g. dog kennel or house). If colitis persists for some time and it often does, it is not unusual to see streaks of blood and mucous appearing in the diarrhoea and eventually a lack of output from all the straining except fluid dribbles, but the discomfort maintains the straining effort. The bloody diarrhoea reflects the inflammation of the bowel lining associated with the more chronic cases and the mucous is a natural response to colitis as the body tries to calm the situation in the bowel.

So what causes colitis? The answer is many things but it is important to note that the dog is designed to use colitis (along with vomition) as a mechanism for solving gastric problems which is a pretty important strategy given a dog’s predilection for eating rubbish. So the number one cause for colitis is food, or at least what dogs consider food. High dietary levels of fat or protein are often associated with colitis and in some cases this is just the result of too much nutrition (over feeding) and in others, a protein intolerance is the root cause. As a result dairy products are frequently considered the cause especially bovine milk based products. Wheat based cereal products and beef protein are common causes of dietary intolerance too.

Infection is also possible and this may be primarily in the colon or perhaps more frequently secondary to gastro-intestinal infections further up the bowel. The simplest form will be bacterial overgrowth and intestinal hurry from the small intestine flooding the colon with undigested, bacteria laden food. The process continues as fermentation in the colon thus producing not only diarrhoea but also copious amounts of gas. However, infection can turn out to be something far more serious like salmonella, campylobacter, giardia or E.coli, to name but a few nasty, pathogenic organisms. Even some of the roundworms infect the colon (whipworms are a classic example) and can cause chronic persistent colitis and diarrhoea. Colitis can be a consequence of other disease processes too. For example, pancreatitis deranges the digestive process and allows semi-digested material to enter the large bowel and therefore has the capacity to induce a colitis that would not otherwise exist.

In summary, colitis can be caused by many factors and tracking a persistent case to its end point can be quite a challenge and often quite expensive. Despite this, it is the case that many cases are due to simple dietary imbalances or minor infections or bacterial overgrowths that respond to little more than dietary management. So how should the owner approach a case of suspected colitis? Diarrhoea frequently responds to minimal treatment, consisting of starvation for 24-48 hours followed by a slow and careful re-introduction of relatively bland food (fish or chicken with boiled rice is preferred). The starvation allows the gut to empty and without a medium to grow, bacteria find it hard to develop, so starvation also tends to

deny the bacteria food. A reduction in potential bacterial load and the removal of further irritation for the colon wall is often sufficient to allow the body to deal with the problem and commence a return to normal. Resist the temptation to overfeed to quickly following a period of diarrhoea as this could start a relapse. Many try to do this because a dog that has had diarrhoea looks so wretchedly thin and having been starved adds to the 'pinched' look but this is as chiefly because of fluid loss rather than starvation. So getting oral fluids into a dog is more important than food in the short term. Do not be in a hurry to get the recovering dog onto normal food either. The lining of the bowel can be seriously compromised by colitis and infection and can take days if not weeks to recover fully, so nurse this condition seriously and slowly and give nature a chance.

A little kaolin can help the process of resolution and also persuades the owner they are doing something beneficial (a medicine must be good!). Probiotics might also prove useful in helping the recovery as they provide friendly bacteria to re-colonise the bowel and crowd out the pathogenic ones.

However if the colitis persists despite these simple remedies it is a sign that other factors might be at play. A particular nasty infectious organism may require antibiotics and whipworm will of course require a decent wormer. To determine which drug is needed in the more complicated cases, a bit of good clinical diagnosis is needed and this is a professional job. Finally if you are unlucky enough to have a dog with a 'sensitive stomach' or a dietary intolerance this will require careful ongoing dietary management and the prudent use of anti-inflammatory drugs but once again this is very much the professional's role and often the specialist's skill to get a definitive answer.



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Adders

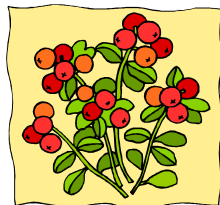
Notices are going up in Nature Reserves and other areas warning people of the danger of Adders waking up at this time of year and suggesting that owners may wish to keep their dogs on a lead, especially on a warm day on moorland or in forestry. If your dog gives out a yelp, check its nose & face for a bite. A bite can be hard to see as a dog's face is covered in hair. If you suspect a snake's bite is responsible, or you are not sure, take your dog to the nearest vet immediately. Sometimes dogs are bitten but do not react, if this happens your dog's first symptoms will be fatigue, shallow breath, whimpering and even bleeding from the nose and mouth in smaller dogs.



Adders are on the increase and bites can be fatal in dogs, so be prepared to act quickly.

Poisons

Solanum Capsicastrum, commonly known as Christmas or Winter Cherry and of the Deadly Nightshade family, has large attractive fruits that look a bit like cherry tomatoes. These are very toxic and do drop off; with dogs or children in the house it is not a good idea to have one around.



An owner in another breed found their pup dead on the floor after eating just two of the cherries. A vet told him that even if he had been there he couldn't have saved the pup owing to the deadliness of this plant.

This genus includes things like tomatoes and potatoes; whilst the fruit and tubers are harmless other parts of the plant are not e.g. stems and stalks. The flowers all look very similar in shape though not necessarily in colour and the fruits the same 'like cherry tomatoes'.

Potpourri

Two Cavaliers got hold of potpourri from a decorative basket in the owner's living room. They started playing with it and then eating it and within hours were vomiting, convulsing and going into body rigidity and shock. Apparently the potpourri was made in India and bought from a well-known supermarket. The vet diagnosed strychnine poisoning symptoms and because of their failing conditions, both were put to sleep. The distraught owner devoted her time researching her concerns and has since found there is a

laboratory in England that has case studied on toxic potpourri from India. The toxin is indeed strychnine which is in its commercial source and comes from a tree grown in India.

After searching the internet it was found that the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew is discovering more about the plants used in pot pourri because of concern amongst retailers regarding possible health risks associated with its ingredients. The [Centre for Economic Botany](#) runs a potpourri identification and toxicity report service. The report authenticates the species and provides information on any adverse reactions. Most of the 100 different samples a year seen at Kew have come from India. Prospective ingredients are usually labelled with common names by the supplier. These can be vague, one 'grass' from North America turned out to be *Nolina texana* in the plant family Dracaenaceae; while its leaves are safe, the fruits and flowers are toxic. Only a few items have had to be withdrawn, most notably the fruits of *Strychnos nux-vomica* (the commercial source of strychnine). Some, like the pungent chillies (*Capsicum annum* var. *annum*), are unsuitable because they can cause irritation when touched. Beware of potential dangers like this in your homes and keep everything well out of reach of your animals. If in doubt, leave it alone.

KATE'S KORNER

A CAUTIONARY TALE!! PAPER SHREDDER DANGER TO YOUR DOG

I've just been catching up on my back copies of Our Dogs and came across this warning which I would like to pass on.

A dog owner from Tyne & Wear is asking paper shredder manufacturers to change their design after her Jack Russell almost lost his tongue in one.

Whilst shredding some documents, she turned away for a moment and her curious dog licked the machine, setting off the mechanism, which pulled his tongue into the works. She rushed the heavily bleeding dog to her vet, where immediate surgery saved his tongue and his life. The vet initially stitched the badly sliced tongue but during the night the stitches came undone. Staples were then inserted and after another night's stay in the veterinary hospital, he was allowed home. As you can imagine, he had difficulty eating and drinking but after nine days the staples were removed and the dog has now recovered. His relieved owner is asking all manufacturers of paper shredders to consider adding a flap to cover the shredding mechanism.



Kate Watkins



*'Values are like fingerprints.
Nobody's are the same
but you leave 'em all over everything you do'*

Elvis Presley

THE CARE & WELL-BEING OF YOUR DOG



OPEN TO ALL BREEDS

Dr. Karin Allenspach

Med.vet. FVH Dipl. ECVIM-CA PhD MRCVS

Lecturer in Internal Medicine at the Royal Veterinary College

will talk on

'Digestive Disorders in Dogs and the Possible Causes'

followed by

Nicole Mackie

VTCT-Dip ECBT IDTS Cert Asc MPDTE VNA NAP HBT

Canine Therapist on

'Stress in Dogs'

A Question and Answer session will follow

Back by popular request -

AN AFTERNOON OF WORKSHOPS

- to include

FIRST AID FOR DOGS

BASIC GROOMING TASKS

NATURAL HOLISTIC REMEDIES (Herbal & Aromatherapy)

NATURAL FEEDING

and other topics

when our morning speakers will also be in attendance

The Village Hall, Weedon Bec, Northampton NN7 4PQ

10.00 am - 4.30 pm

Sunday 24th May 2009

Tickets - £8 to include refreshments and a buffet lunch



Presented by WHEATEN HEALTH INITIATIVE

International Breeders' Seminar Stockholm - 2008

This seminar was attended by four of the WHI Steering Group. It was easy to absorb, extremely interesting and excellent in all respects. I commend all those whose first language was not English on how well they were able to give their presentations and this seminar was one of the best events of my trip.

Hilde Nybom (Lakkas Wheatens) was the organiser for this event and very kindly provided a table where various WHI publications and information could be displayed. Hilde thanked us personally for attending and sharing what we do for the breed and said that these efforts are very valuable, both for the results they will hopefully produce, and also for showing other breeders that personal initiatives are needed and can make a difference.

Barbara



The Speakers

After an introduction by Ove Johansson, Chairman of the Swedish Wheaten Terrier Klub, the first presentation was by Agria, Sweden's leading animal insurance company, who have conducted a research project concerning Wheaten health in Sweden and provided the data for 1995 to 2002, and a follow-up study is presently being conducted. Professor Brenda Bonnett DVM at Guelph University, Canada, was engaged to perform this study. Prof. Bonnett has carried out a very informative set of analyses for the 100 most common breeds in the Agria data bases. The UK Kennel Club's pet insurance division has now been sold to Agria.

The second presentation was by Nick White, Glen of Imaal breeder, from Ireland, who replaced Elaine Butler. I have no notes on this.

Hilde Nybom (*far right in the photo*) spoke for Sweden. In 2007 there were 571 new registrations, 6 of which were imports. Numbers have ranged from 550 to 787 in the last ten years, and it is believed that all Wheaten puppies born there are registered with the Swedish KC. Wheatens were ranked as the 29th most popular breed in 2007. There is a breed club which is open to everyone for a membership fee. Currently there are approx. 1700 members. General regulations for breeding are issued by the SKC. After 5 litters, stud dogs must have their offspring evaluated before siring more litters. Average inbreeding coefficient (over 5 generations) was 1.4 in 2007. Coefficients are published for each litter in the year book. The SKC recommends breeders to stay below 6%.

Margaret Gray, National Secretary, from Australia (*2nd from right*) gave figures for the numbers of puppies registered over 10 years which fluctuated considerably, the lowest being 7 in 1988 & 1991, and the highest 70 in 2005. 36 were registered in 2007. There are 3 formalised clubs, SCWT Society of NSW, the only affiliated club. SCWT Club of Victoria, the longest running group, and the SCWT Society of

Queensland, most recently formed as Wheaten numbers have grown. Each State Body has regulations for breeding.

Bjarne Jakobsen represented Denmark and said that only 40-45 puppies are registered each year. The first Wheatens arrived from Ireland in 1978-1979, followed by 2 dogs from England in 1979-1980. There is no breed club and you must be a member of the Danish KC in order to obtain a kennel prefix. In addition you need to be a member of the Danish Terrier Club if you wish to have some influence on breed-related matters. 51 DTK members are registered as Wheaten owners. There are some ethical DKK rules for breeding and the coefficient should stay below 6.25%.

UK representative Judy Creswick (*Centre*) was next and said there is only one Breed Club in the UK with a membership of 900+ families. In 2007 324 puppies were registered with the KC, with 10 imports from Ireland and 2 from Sweden. A ten year average for puppies born is 303. Not all Wheatens born are registered. She spoke of the pANCA Research Project currently underway with the RVC and that eye testing, hip scoring and blood testing is recommended for both sire and dam before breeding. Puppies should be eye and blood tested for kidney function before going to their new homes. Judy also spoke of the Puppy Waiting List and the system of Area Representatives which can help to ensure that all information possible can be given to prospective owners.

Karin Bergbom (*2nd from left*) did the Finnish presentation. In 1963 Finland was the first Nordic country to introduce SCWTs from Ireland and later from England. The first litter was born in 1965. Popularity increased rapidly in the 70s and settled between 150 & 200 registrations a year during the 80s. In the late 80s there was a rising influence from American dogs. The Finnish Breed Club is a joint club for Kerry Blue & Irish SCWT owners and breeders and the number of members exceeds 1,100. Breed type has become more even and today the profuse/dull-coated specimens are getting quite rare, even though there is still a lot of work to be done to get the correct silky coat.

Rob Hubner from the Netherlands followed. In 2004 a total of 174 puppies were registered in the Dutch KC, 169 bred by members of the breed club. The Breed Club ICSWT "De Wheatens" was formed in 1976 and covers many activities. There are 12 active breeders within the club and a kennel name is mandatory for club members who want to breed. All litters are chipped and examined by the Kennel Club. A health survey is currently underway.

The Norwegian presentation was given by Vigdis Hartberg. An average of about 175 Wheatens have been registered in Norway over the last 7-8 years. The breed club, The Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Klubben (ISWTK), was founded in 1988 and currently has about 400 members. The club has a Health Committee and in 1998 a major health survey was carried out in cooperation with the Norwegian Veterinary School. The Health Committee is presently preparing a new survey, hoping again to cooperate with the NVS.

Natalia Sidorchuk from Russia said that Wheatens are not a very popular breed. Over 14 years have passed since the birth of the first Wheaten litter there, and a total of about 120 litters have now been born, averaging 6 pups per litter. During that period only about 12 Wheatens have been imported. There is a National Breed Club and the activities of the club are overseen by the Russian Kynological Federation which receives and accumulates breeding data from litters registered

Beth Verner (*3rd from left*) represented the USA. In 2007 1,589 Wheatens were registered. The SCWTC of America currently has 379 members in the USA & Canada. In addition to general conduct, SCWTCA breeders must adhere to guidelines for Breeding delineated by the Code of Ethics. Coefficient of inbreeding calculation is not required by SCWTCA or AKC regulations, nor does either organisation offer recommendations regarding inbreeding coefficient values. Health testing for breeding stock includes hips, eyes, blood & urine testing. The choice to register a litter with the AKC is left to the breeder. Based on ****scwtbreederlistserv** comments, it appears that the demand for Wheaten puppies is dwindling but not to the point that breeders are unable to place puppies.

You can access most of the foregoing presentations from : <http://www.wheatenbreedersgroup.com/presentations>

**** Editor's note : scwtbreederlistserv is an email group in North America.**

Message from America

Dear Wheaten Owner:

The SCWTCA Endowment takes this opportunity to inform you of the many exciting Wheaten genetic projects that are currently underway. We have been raising money for many years waiting for projects like these to come along. Wheaten owners have been not only collecting funds to rid our breed of diseases that affect our dogs but they have courageously and unselfishly provided samples of their dogs' blood and tissues to aide in research. Collecting samples was the hard part but our work is not done. Now we must raise funds to process these samples.

This year we are pleased to offer to every person who donates \$100 to the SCWTCA Endowment a beautiful, limited edition Wheaten Trivet exclusively produced for us by Wilton Armetale. This trivet is designed in the shape of a heart to signify our love for our dogs and our breed. This unique, high quality trivet will only be available for the year 2009. For each donation of \$100 your tax deduction will be \$72. Your financial contribution will have a significant impact on Wheaten health. It will help fund activities associated with these on-going Endowment supported projects.

- **University of Pennsylvania:** A comparison of the DNA samples from over 300 affected and geriatric non-affected SCWT dogs by the newest SNP chip ("snip chip") technology available is currently underway. We hope finding differences will produce markers for "at-risk" genes, that is, genes that are found more frequently in affected dogs than in non-affected ones.(2009) Meryl Littman, VMD and Paula Henthorn, PhD.
- **National Institute of Health:** Lifetime Health Study of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier (2008) is currently underway. - Heidi Parker, PhD, Staff Scientist, Ostrander Canine Genomics Lab
- **University of Missouri:** Canine Phenome Project (2007) – Dr. Gary Johnson, Columbia – 991 DNA samples have been collected from Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers from all over the U.S. for future Wheaten related research projects.
- Sibling Pairs Study (2006) – A comparison study of affected and non-affected wheaten siblings. Dr. Gary Johnson, University of Missouri, Columbia
- **NCSU:** Longitudinal Clinical Study, Mode of Inheritance & Therapeutic Trial of Protein-Losing Enteropathy and Nephropathy (Colony Dog Studies) (1997) – Dr. Shelly Vaden, North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine

We are delighted to have you as a partner in the fight against canine disease. We urge you to continue to fight with us. To learn more about the Endowment, visit us at <http://www.wheatenhealthendowment.org>

Contacts

SCWT Club of America www.scwtca.org

The Spring Edition of "Wheaten Health News" is now up on the SCWTCA web site with a link on the homepage. Among the many articles featured are updates on current research, an interesting article on PennHip, information on the effects of Spay/Neuter from the American College of Theriogenologists (vets dedicated to animal reproduction) an article on hereditary eye disease and an excellent article on Ectopic Ureters by Vet Tech and Wheaten breeder, Diane Braunagel. Diane's article is very informative, easy to understand and includes drawings and photos.

Thanks to Cecily Skinner, Health Coordinator and Editor for this information.

Petition

There is a petition set up by Diarmuid Scullin of K9 Friends United and reads 'We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to do everything in his power to put puppy farms out of business.' The deadline is 8th June 2009.

If you would like to give your support the web site is

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Puppies/#detail>

WHEATEN LINKS

For those of you who are not aware of Wheaten email groups, there are two operating in the UK, WheatenLink & SCWTUK. Google these to join.



Fundraising

The Silent Auction held on our Website during
February raised £300.
Sincere thanks to everyone who supported this venture.

The Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier HEALTH HANDBOOK

Soft-Coated Wheaten Terriers are generally healthy and robust dogs, but they do have genetic predispositions to certain diseases and owners need to be aware of these.

This handbook, which covers hereditary diseases, genetics and incorporating our previous publication 'Medical Terms', will help you to understand these known hereditary diseases.

Other medical conditions which, as far as we are aware, are not hereditary but have occasionally been known to affect the SCWT, are also included.

This booklet is obtainable for a minimum donation of £5.50 from Barbara Penney, address on Page 2



Health Services available specifically for the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier at the ANIMAL HEALTH TRUST

This booklet gives full information for SCWT owners and their vets. The Blood and Urine Testing at the Animal Health Trust has been designed for the specific profile of tests required for Wheatens.

DNA Storage is free of charge at the AHT. If you do not already have a sample of your dog's blood stored at the AHT, your vet can take a little more at the next Blood and Urine test and that sample can then be sent for storage at the AHT. The necessary forms are included in this booklet.

Editor's note: WHI would like to make it clear that any test undertaken at the AHT is completely confidential between the AHT, the owner of the dog being tested, and their vet. WHI do not receive any printouts of these results. Owners should be able to obtain a copy of their dog's results from their vet on request.

This booklet is obtainable for a minimum donation of £2.50 from Barbara Penney, address on Page 2



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'Caring & Sharing'