

Cheers to a
new year and
another chance
to get it right.

Oprah Winfrey



The Petsense newsletter New year, new challenges

By Shannon Paille, RAHT

It seems as though 2010 is bringing the human-animal community some significant challenges already. The tremendous earthquake in Haiti has captured the attention of the world. I'm sure I speak for all of us, when I say our thoughts and prayers go out to the people and animals of Haiti.

During Hurricane Katrina, I assisted with animal rescue in New Orleans. I can't imagine the challenges that will face the animal rescuers in an environment like Haiti. Katrina taught us that our strength was in unity and some of the large rescue organizations have taken that to heart. The International Fund for Animal Welfare and the World Society for the Protection of Animals have formed the Animal Relief Coalition for Haiti (ARCH). Other groups

that have joined include the Humane Society of the United States, Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to name a few. That's some serious political and financial clout, let's hope they can do some serious good.

There is currently a team of animal responders in the Dominican Republic awaiting access to Haiti. They are setting up a mobile unit with medical supplies and vaccines and will await the go-ahead.

On top of the companion animals and wildlife that have been impacted, Haiti has an estimated 5 million head of livestock (mainly goats), and a large stray dog population.

For those of you interested, it is possible to follow the progress of these groups by

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visiting their various websites. Donations are also possible online:

www.wspa.ca

www.ifaw.org

www.humanesociety.org

www.bestfriends.org

www.aspca.org

Of course there are always charities that are working to help the animals in your own area. Consider donating a little something extra this month to the organization of your choice. There's never any shortage of need.

To all the rescuers near and far: don't ever lose faith in what you do. Stay safe.

Your Pet's World

Feeding Frenzy A look at EFA's

What exactly are EFA's, or essential fatty acids, and why does your pet need them?

Simply put, EFA's are fats that must be obtained from the diet because the body can't produce them. Common sources are salmon and fish oils, flax seeds/oils and hemp.

EFA's are critical for the growth and function of cells, muscles, nerves and organs as well as the production of hormone-like substances like prostaglandins. In human medicine, deficiencies of EFA's can be linked to a variety of health problems like heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

There are two families of fatty acids essential to your dog or cat: omega-6 and omega-3. We'll focus on omega-6's for a moment, specifically Linoleic acid (LA), or in the case of cats, arachidonic acid (AA). Omega-6's are important in

maintaining healthy skin and a shiny coat. Insufficient levels in the diet can lead to dull, dry hair, hair loss, greasy skin and a tendency for skin inflammation. However, there are inflammatory conditions that can be worsened by excessive omega-6 intake and symptoms of itching, scratching and licking can be increased.

Research has shown that omega-6's and 3's need to be in a correct balance for optimum health. In the right ratio with omega-6's, omega-3's will balance the adverse effect of too much omega-6.

Some of the optimum ratios of omega 6 to 3 are reported to be 10:1 (Iams), 5:1 (Eukanuba) or 2:1 (U of Minn).

The omega-3 that is important to your dog is alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), cats require eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) in order to benefit from omega-3 fatty acids. Omega 3 benefits neural

development during growth, the immune system, pregnancy and lactation and, of course, skin and coat health. Supplementing the diet with omega-6 and 3 can also aid in the treatment of skin allergies and joint pain/inflammation.

AAFCO and the pet food industry do not commonly recognize EFA's as essential ingredients for pet foods and many pets benefit hugely from supplementation. However, whether it's an ingredient in your pet's food, or you choose to supplement your pet's diet, consider the source of the oil. Salmon and fish oils provide the best sources of EFA's, vegetable oils are poorly converted to DHA in some animals and may not provide the desired benefits.

Quality is also important. Where does the oil come from, is it a by-product of another industry? Is it specifically for pets? Supplements are a poorly regulated, buyer beware industry. Petsense has a variety



"Dogs have owners, cats have staff"
Anonymous

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of choices. Our favorite is a high quality, wild Alaskan Salmon oil from LifeLine. It's filtered, tested, natural and is not an industry byproduct.
www.wildalaskansalmonoil.com

Contact us for ordering information.
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Best Behaviour Thinking *inside* the box

One of the most common behavioural problems with felines is inappropriate elimination in the house.

When a client laments about their litterbox, the first advice we give is the obvious: work with your vet to eliminate health issues as a cause. It's amazing how many cats are suffering from painful infections and "blame" the litterbox for their discomfort.

With a clean bill of health, we address environmental issues like: changing the type of litter (some clients successfully use potting soil as a litter - no more peeing in the plants!), moving litter boxes to different areas of the house and increasing the number of litter boxes.

Cats can develop aversions to a litter or location they've used for years. The goal is to find out why and sometimes, the simplest of changes

works, like buying a new, clean litterbox and disposing of the messy, stained box that's been around for 3 generations of cats.

Get rid of that covered box too. The lid traps in odors. Want to give Kitty privacy? Find a quiet spot for an uncovered box.

What about the size of the litter box? They only come in 3 sizes: small, smaller and smaller-yet don't they?

Overweight cats, cats with mobility issues and just plain finicky cats can benefit from a larger litter box. A simple addition to a litter re-training program should be a larger box like a RubberMaid storage bin (or even a small wading pool). Simply cut a hole in a large RubberMaid container and there is no worry about messing over the edge and there's lots of room to move around. It can make all the difference for a cat who feels uncomfortable or unclean in a smaller box.

**What
does
your
next
home
need?**



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Featured Product Nite Ize

Is your New Years Resolution to get more exercise? If you own a dog, chances are you'll keep your resolution. Dog owners are more likely to exercise than gym-goers!

Whether you live in the city, or in a country environment, safety should be on your mind, especially this time of year: it's cold, it's slippery, and it's dark.

Nite Ize has the solution for safety at night. Their leashes and collars are weather resistant, have stainless steel hardware, but more than that - they light up!

Their LED flashing or glowing illumination is incorporated into the nylon webbing of the collar or leash so

you can be seen up to 1000 feet away in the dark.

Each LED light source has a 100 000 hour life and a push button power switch.

The leashes are 5 feet long and the collars come in 3 sizes: Small (10-13"), Medium (13-18") and Large (18-27").

So, get out there and make good on that resolution. Bundle up and walk safe!

Contact us to order: by phone, by email or on the web:

www.petsense.ca



*There was a crooked man and he walked a crooked mile,
He found a crooked sixpence upon a crooked stile.
He bought a crooked cat, which caught a crooked mouse,
And they all lived together in a little crooked house.*



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Science Spotlight Obsessive Behavior

It is estimated that 2% of the dog population is living with CCD, or Canine Compulsive Disorder.

Compulsive behaviours appear abnormal, because they are performed out of context, are exaggerated and repeated in a constant manner. They can range from circling, flank sucking and tail chasing, to attacking inanimate objects, rhythmic barking and "seeing" imaginary objects (hallucinations). There is even a case of a dog who stopped drinking water because it's own shadow was a distraction.

Some breeds are more predisposed to compulsive behaviours. Dobermans (flank sucking), Bull Terriers (spinning), German Shepherds (tail chasing), Mini Schnauzers (checking hind end), Siamese/Burmese cats (wool sucking).

In order for a behaviour to be classified as CCD it must be performed while the animal is fully awake and aware of it's surroundings and does not include seizures. The behaviour is performed repeatedly and whether or not the owner is present and is often amplified by stressful situations. Cats, birds, horses, livestock and zoo animals can all display compulsive behaviours.

A study published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical

Association (Vol 221, No 10) found that the majority of dogs affected were male and the majority of cats affected were female. The compulsive behaviour surfaced in the adolescent years (20-28 months) and 60% of those afflicted came from breeders (both backyard and professional). Only one in ten came from a mixed breed/shelter background. Many of the animals had other behavioural issues as well. They also found that the animals tended to perform their behaviours in private and that "normal" animals in the household would avoid the OCD afflicted pet.

A recently published study (January 2010 edition of Molecular Psychiatry) shows a link between human Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Canine Compulsive Disorder (CCD).

Collaborators from Tufts and the University of Massachusetts collected blood samples from Dobermans over the course of 10 years. The dogs were either "healthy, unaffected" dogs or those who exhibited flank or blanket sucking. They identified a specific gene in the dogs that displayed the compulsive behaviour. This gene may also be implicated in the development of human OCD and autism spectrum disorders.

Treatment for CCD may include human drug therapies and often include exercise and behaviour modification.



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Fun Page

Bird Poop Quiz

Try out this months quiz and test your knowledge of bird droppings and guano. The answers are at the bottom of the page.

- Guano is made only from bird droppings.
 - True
 - False
- Besides the standard black and white mixture, what other colours can be found in bird droppings?
 - Purple
 - Virtually any colour
 - Brown
 - None
- Which of these can not be made with bird droppings?
 - Explosives
 - Seed distribution compounds
 - Shampoo
 - Fertilizer
- Which plant was thought to be grown from bird droppings
 - Tomatoes
 - Currants
 - Blackberries
 - Mistletoe
- How does guano differ from other bird droppings?
 - It doesn't, it's the same thing
 - Its colour
 - Where it is collected
 - Its composition
- In typical bird droppings, what are the black and white portions made from?
 - Different shades of feces
 - Dark and light foods
 - Feces and urine
 - Food waste and dead cells
- What are the active ingredients in guano?
 - All of these
 - Phosphorus
 - Nitrogen
 - Fungi
- What is the biggest negative consequence of collecting guano?
 - Loss of biodiversity
 - Loss of producer population
 - Cliff erosion
 - Climate change
- What bird is recognized as the best overall producer (quality and quantity) of guano?
 - Seagull
 - Pelican
 - Puffin
 - Guanay Cormorant

Vet Clinic Trivia Contest

This contest is for vet clinics only. All correct answers emailed to: info@petsense.ca are entered to win a pizza lunch. Please send in your answer along with your clinic name.

Question

At the Royal Veterinary College, Shiraz the cheetah is being studied for a variety of reasons. There is hope that studying the fastest land mammal will benefit animals and humans alike. How is she expected to benefit **human** medicine?



Cheetahs are a research subject for veterinary college studies with both human and animal benefits



Birds



S Q H R W O O D P E C K E R Q B S
 G P F B E A K C O F P I K W O E Z
 J X E N E S T U D N T Z I T O A S
 J P A T W A D C C G M U I M R G J
 W X T G P W T K Q C J J B G L L S
 E G H Y E R G O H Q M P S V E E E
 G G E D N H O O N S Y R E I H M U
 G X R P G U W B O P C C A N F S E
 Y H A T U M L I S A F R G B J Z H
 M W E D I M A R T R B A U O A P C
 K A A H N I F D R R J N L T P N U
 I P A B K N Z Z I O V E L N L Y P
 W I F P V G Y G C W J E W V C R F
 I G M S I B H B H A E P A D H Y C
 I E T Z O I L R W P P A R R O T C
 Z O Z E C R H P E L I C A N Y R P
 B N L P P D T W H A W K Y A H E K

beak

crane

cuckoo bird

eagle

egg
feather

hawk

humming bird

kiwi

nest

ostrich

owl

parrot

pelican

penguin

pigeon

seagull

sparrow

woodpecker

