



ETHICAL AGENTS
VETERINARY MARKETING

EA NEWS

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Springtime Changes

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Spring is often a time of turbulence, with more than just the weather being changeable.

We have long looked at our trans Tasman neighbours with amusement verging on disdain at the way their politicians behave.

However it seems that it is more than Myrtle Rust that can blow across the Tasman as our crowd seem to have caught the same bug.

The spring changes generally are more positive than such shenanigans however. A long cold winter has gone and we get the Dr Green effect as plant life comes awake,

animals shed their coats and even we humans become more happy and alive.

It is between seasons for the veterinary industry as dairy medicine shifts focus from the transition cow to mating programs, the racing and stud seasons get underway in the equine world and small animal clinicians are starting to think about allergies and fleas.

It is also a convenient time for pharmaceutical companies to launch new initiatives one of these,



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as detailed inside this issue, is that of Ethical Agents opening a branch in Dunedin.

It is also an opportune time to announce the highly important news that SteriGENE has gained TGA approval as a hospital grade disinfectant. The process and ramifications are also detailed inside on page 2.

Special points of interest:

- * SteriGENE is TGA approved, this is massive
- * UTIs, antibiotics or not?
- * Some points about veterinary corporates
- * WE ARE NOW IN DUNEDIN!

Other Issues

Alternatives to antibiotics are highly relevant especially as antibiotics have for so long been used as a crutch by all types of medical personnel.

Changing such mindsets can constitute a problem

and we discuss this in the main article.

What is turning into another huge issue, as evidenced by the October Vetscript, is the corporatization of the profession. This does concern many.

But are these concerns real worries?

We look at this issue and provide some background but, naturally, people will make their own minds up. It does seem that they are here to stay however.

SteriGENE Has TGA Approval

TGA, standing for Therapeutic Goods Administration, is an Australian standard for pharmaceutical products and medical devices. A high standard it is indeed. TGA is similar to our medical regulatory body, Medsafe.

In fact in 2012 both regulatory bodies looked closely at combining into one body but that ended up in the too hard basket in 2014 because of differences between them.

One of those differences is in the regulation of disinfectants; they do

"TGA approval took more than 5 years and thousands upon thousands of dollars."

we don't. We do have a series of approvals such asASUREQuality and MPI approvals

ASUREQuality Limited is a state-owned Enterprise fully owned by the Government of New Zealand.

The organization's expertise lies in the areas of Food safety and Biosecurity and they certify products, such as disinfectants, as fit for use.

They do not so much do an in depth analysis of efficacy but list the claims made by the company.

The different types of MPI approval can be quite confusing, there is dairy and non-dairy, food contact and non-food contact (where virtually

all disinfectants sit) and so on.

However the burden of proof is nowhere near that required by TGA, something we are well aware of at EA since SteriGENE has 8 MPI and ASUREQuality approvals in total, probably the only disinfectant to do so.

TGA approval took more than 5 years and thousands upon thousands of dollars.

This was done because, despite the fact that NZ does not register disinfectants, most hospitals will not approve their use unless they have TGA approval.

It is no wonder then that SteriGENE is used and recommended by MPI and DOC for environmental issues such as Kauri dieback, Psa in Kiwifruit, Myrtle Rust disease and now also recommended by MPI for M bovis disinfection.

It is also no wonder that it is the leading veterinary disinfectant in New Zealand, having hospital grade disinfectant approval by TGA.



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A Near Thing

A merchant banker, on a sailing holiday in the Pacific, leaned too far over the rail of his yacht and fell into the water.

Seconds later all his friends on board the yacht spotted the large black fin of a man eating shark scything through the waves towards the floundering financier.

Just as the shark was about to strike it abruptly changed course and veered away again and took off into the distance.

The banker climbed back on board, to the amazement and relief of his friends.

"What happened?" they chorused.

"Professional etiquette," replied the banker.



Changing a Mindset

Changing therapeutic regimes often means changing of mind-sets and this is very difficult in crucial areas such as anaesthesia or antimicrobial therapy. Dependency on antibiotics and antibiotic regimes can turn into a crutch, where antibiotics are relied upon as essential or even used as panaceas. Client demand is also a factor and it has taken the medical profession many years to wean themselves off the dispensing antibiotics for common viral infections.

The overselling of antibiotics as 'cure-alls' has led to public demand and also, especially in the farming sector, a general lowering of hygiene standards. This can be exemplified by the reliance of the antibiotic infusion when drying dairy cows off but veterinarians have not been immune to this mind-set over the years when indulging in field surgery. Like all habits, it is a difficult one to break.

Again, in dairy medicine, we have seen examples of how this can be successfully changed. The launch of Forcyl as a single injection short acting antibiotic relied on practitioners changing mentality to a one off dose rather than prolonged treatment. Teat sealants are the supreme example however and have helped with farmer education in hygiene matters as well.

In equine medicine the fact that procaine penicillin can be problematic in the performance horse has sent us back to the old days and we now realise that antibiotics are not really required for such things as stone bruises.

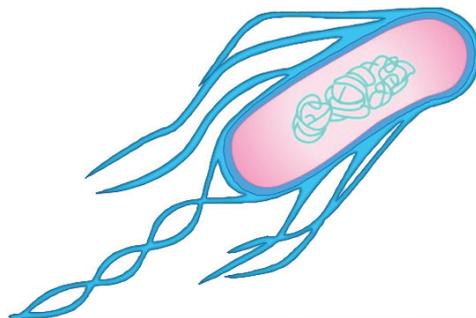
Small animal practice has not had such drivers but paradoxically, as it has become more and more sophisticated, there has developed a greater awareness of antimicrobial issues and alternatives to the dependence upon antibiotics. A lot of

the initiatives have come from human medicine where antibiotic overuse has been, over the years, more prevalent than in the veterinary profession.

The medical profession has embraced the concept of competitive inhibitors interrupting viral or bacterial activity. Perhaps the most striking example is acyclovir for herpes infections. Acyclovir triphosphate (AT) is the active form of the drug. It reduces production of viral DNA by competing with a natural compound, deoxyguanosine triphosphate, for the viral DNA polymerase enzyme. Incorporation of AT into the viral DNA completely prevents the synthesis of new DNA. Viral DNA polymerase binds 10–30 times more strongly to AT than the cellular DNA polymerase. This means acyclovir is not toxic.

Similarly, with E coli urinary infections, D mannose has proven very effective by competing with the fimbriae of the E coli for binding sites and thus preventing attachment.

These little fingerlike projections are made of an amino acid-sugar complex, the glycoprotein lectin, which makes them sticky. Lectin on the bacteria's fimbria binds to mannose and so the bacteria cannot adhere to the cell's wall.

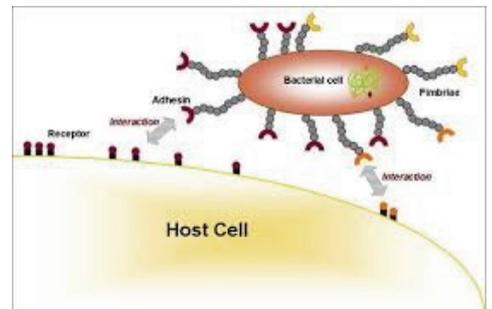


In a study of more than 300 women with a history of recurrent UTIs, researchers treated the women with either two grams of D-

"When the facts change I change my mind!"

mannose, 50 milligrams of an antibiotic, or no treatment daily for six months.

Only 15 percent of those taking the D-mannose had a recurrent UTI compared to 20 percent for the antibiotic group (both of which were significantly lower than the no-treatment group). However, the incidence of side effects was significantly lower in the D-mannose group than the antibiotics group. (Reference: BJU Int. 2014 Jan; 113 (1):9-10. Use of D-mannose in prophylaxis of recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women. Altarac S1, Papeš D.)



The buy in from the medical profession for the use of something like D mannose for urinary tract infections, especially in females, has definitely been greater than in the veterinary profession where the first approach has generally to reach for antibiotics immediately. When antibiotics have been the first port of call for generations it is not easy to switch outlooks.

What we do see with the increased professionalism of small animal practice is the realization that culture and sensitivity is crucial for both efficacy and AMR reasons. Clinicians are now well attuned to

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Changing a Mindset

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reaching for less critically important antimicrobials, such as amoxy-clav, and only going for more critical fluoroquinolones when indicated by the laboratory results.

It is another step altogether to sidestep antibiotics completely and depend on newer technology to remedy the problem. The seductive allure of antibiotic cure-all ability can be extremely strong.

"In the long run it is all about confidence"

Can the above work in humans be extrapolated to animals? One would think yes, and the fact that this study was a follow up from work already done in mice would reinforce that opinion.

It may take a leap of faith but it really is not a plunge into the unknown.

The options in the human study were D mannose alone, antibiotics alone or no treatment. Best results

were attained with the first option and definitely the worst with the last.

There is of course an alternative that has not been promoted and that is to use D mannose in conjunction with antibiotic cover, at least until laboratory results are in.

What would be the point of that? First of all it is a case of, 'to be sure to be sure', i.e. a security blanket for any trepidation with no antibiotic cover. Secondly there is the probability of a lower bacterial load, making the antibiotic itself more effective and less likely to induce resistance. Finally, and more importantly, it gives another option while waiting for laboratory results.

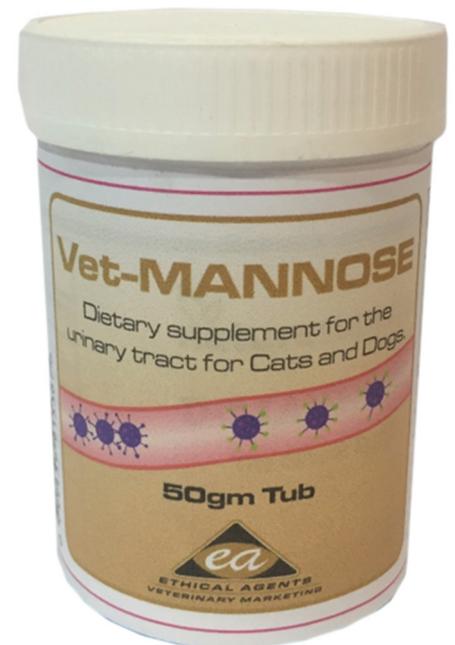
This could mean that the problem disappears whatever the results of culture and sensitivity are. Overall meaning a reduced probability of resorting to highly critical antibiotics.

In the long run it is all about confidence and once experiencing this form of therapy the clinician may well have the confidence to use D

mannose alone thus avoiding over-use of antibiotics.

There is also the extra benefit of prevention. Animals prone to UTI may have the risk dramatically reduced by being fed D mannose continually. Just as cerumenolytics infused regularly in dogs with pendulous ears may well reduce the incidence of otitis externa the regular consumption of D mannose can help prevent the onset of UTI. It certainly works in human medicine.

It really just takes a change of mindset and as the anonymous quote goes, "When the facts change I change my mind!"



Psychiatrist vs. Bartender

Ever since Nagy was a child, he has always had a fear of someone under the bed at night.

So he went to a shrink and told him, "I've got problems. Every time I go to bed I think there's somebody under it. I'm scared and I think I'm going crazy."

"Just put yourself in my hands for one year", said the shrink. "Come in and talk to me three times a week and we should be able to get rid of those fears".

How much do you charge?" asked Nagy

"Eighty dollars per visit", replied the doctor.

"I'll sleep on it", Nagy said.

Six months later the doctor met him on the street. "Why didn't you come to see me about those fears you were having?", he asked.

"Well, eighty bucks a visit, three times a week for a year is \$12,480.00." said Nagy.

"A bartender cured me for \$10.00. I was so happy to have saved all that money that I went and bought me a new pickup truck."

"Is that so?" The psychiatrist asked and, with a bit of an attitude, he said, "and how, may I ask, did a bartender cure you?"

"He told me to cut the legs off the bed." said Nagy, "Ain't nobody under there now!"

Living With Corporates

The October Vetscript focused on business and had some interesting articles, particularly one centred on the expansion of corporatization in veterinary practices.

It is a common question from many older practitioners, “What do you think of the growing number of corporate practices? Is it a good thing for the profession or a bad thing?” The bottom line is that it is irrelevant whether it is a good thing or a bad thing, just that it is a thing, i.e. it is happening anyway so adjust to it. As Darwin famously put it, “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.”

banks. It is also not new to the veterinary profession.

Veterinary clubs, being cooperatives, give an early example of corporates in the veterinary world. A cooperative is a special form of corporation that places ownership and/or control of the corporation in the hands of the employees or patrons of the corporation.

In essence a cooperative is a group of people who come together and voluntarily cooperate for their mutual, social, economic, and cultural benefit. By contrast a corporation is a legal entity formed by a group of people who contribute capital, but it exists as a separate legal entity having its own privileges and liabilities distinct from those

as franchises, meaning the parent company provides permission for

“it is irrelevant whether it is a good thing or a bad thing, just that it is a thing”

the local owner to use the parent company's name and products. Franchises, like corporations, bring buying power.

We have seen in the building industry how Australian owned franchises are able to purchase materials at much more advantageous rates leading to more economical building for the end consumer. The down side to this is the squeezing



The word corporate relates to a large company or group and the legal definition is of a large company or group authorized to act as a single entity and recognized as such in law. The Vetscript article uses the wording ‘mergers and acquisitions’ (M&A) but thus is purely semantics as this is merely the first step on the way and is how most corporates are initially formed. The Australian companies involved are listed in the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) so definitely fit the definition.

This sort of activity is not novel and corporates are part of everyday life, from supermarkets to

of its members. These members of a corporation are often termed the shareholders.

Many large corporates in other fields of endeavour are considered soulless by the general population, e.g. the recent claim that the noise about glyphosate is not based on any real science but driven by a dislike of Monsanto.

So what do corporates bring to the party? Cash flow and buying power are two obvious strengths. These can be both beneficial and detrimental to the consumer.

Many businesses, including some veterinary businesses, are owned

out of local builders from the market.

Another downside is seen in the pharmaceutical world. Corporate companies are profit driven and have to answer to shareholders.

This can mean, in a market the size of New Zealand's, that useful drugs are discontinued simply because the returns are not great enough. A blockbuster drench will outsell an antibiotic tablet any day of the week. Decisions affecting animal welfare in New Zealand are made atop sky scrapers in overseas capitals.

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Living With Corporates

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That is not to say that corporate veterinary practices will go down the same path, despite some initial fears of the corporate system. In fact corporate practices may be the long term future stability of general practice.

What is clear is that the model of gaining a partnership in a practice, paying that off and having an asset to capitalise in retirement may well be lost for younger generations of veterinarians. However that may already have been a thing of the past, with high student loans and housing mortgages meaning such opportunities are no longer realistic. In fact this may be

a key factor in the rise of corporates with long term practitioners having difficulty in succession planning.

This again is nothing new; the dairy world is seeing it at the moment with the previous pathway to farm ownership being 39% share milking, then 50% after buying a herd and then on to a farm with a high mortgage.

Many capable young milkers can now look forward to a lifetime in the shed with a manager's position being the best they can aspire to.

Considering that corporates are strong on image it is obvious that, in a field where animal welfare is

"Decisions affecting animal welfare in New Zealand are made atop sky scrapers in overseas capitals."

an overriding factor, the corporate image is, by necessity, a caring one and therefore customer or client care must be at the top of the list.

Whatever your political philosophy, in this instance prejudices about corporates should be put to one side and maybe, to paraphrase JFK's famous utterance, don't look for what the profession can do for corporates, look for what corporates can do for the profession.

The Sociologist

The sociologist on an African jungle expedition held up her camera to take pictures of native children at play. Suddenly the youngsters began to yell in protest.

Turning red the sociologist apologised to the chief for her insensitivity and she told him she had forgotten that certain tribes believed a person lost his soul if a picture was taken.

She explained to him, in long winded detail, the operation of a camera. Several times the chief tried to get a word in, but to no avail.

Certain she had put all the chief's fears to rest the sociologist then allowed him to speak.

Smiling he said, "The children were trying to tell you that you had forgotten to take the lens cap off."



The New Priest

The newly appointed priest was being briefed by the housekeeper on problems in the rectory that required immediate attention..

"Your roof needs repair Father," she said. "Your water pressure is bad and your furnace is not working."

"Now Mrs. Kelly," the priest said kindly, "You've been the housekeeper here for several years and I

have only been here for a few days. Why not say *our* roof and *our* furnace."

Some weeks later, when the priest was meeting with the bishop, and several other priests, Mrs. Kelly burst into the office terribly upset.

"Father, Father," she blurted. "there's a mouse in our room and it's under our bed!"



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Jeeves

Jeeves was called by Lord Ponsonby. "Jeeves, could you ride down to the village and fetch a bottle of whisky, a box of cigars and a few ounces of snuff. That free loading bishop will be calling in this afternoon."

Jeeves mounted his trusty bicycle and was off on his errand. It was not until he was on his return trip and he had pedaled up the long hill to the manor gates that he realized that he had forgotten the snuff.

What was he to do? It was too hot and too far to ride back down to the village.

By chance the problem was solved, right there on the nature strip three of those little white eggs that dogs leave in neat little clumps. When dried in the sun and ground

back to powder it looks for all the world like snuff.

Did he dare take the chance?

Jeeves quickly bent down, snatched up three portions and put them in his pocket.

"Did you get the whiskey Jeeves?"

"Yes M'Lord."

"And the cigars and the snuff?"

"Yes M'Lord." said Jeeves as he prepared to leave the room.

"I say Jeeves," said Lord Ponsonby sniffing the air, "You didn't be chance stand in something down in the village?"

"No M'Lord."

The bishop arrived soon after and headed for the Scotch. "You don't

mind if I have a drink, Ponsonby old boy?"

"Not at all Bishop, go for your life," but Ponsonby was pre-occupied with the pervading odour.

"I say Bishop, do you smell dog's doings in here?"

"Can't say I can, dear boy," said the bishop, "I happen to have a heavy head cold."

"In that case, take a pinch of snuff," said Ponsonby.

The bishop responded by taking two pinches and stuffing it up both nostrils.

"Gracious me," he said, "you always get the best snuff. That's cleared my head completely and I can smell that dog's stuff now!"