



NOVEMBER 2023

EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY

With a growing number of stray canines across the county, the Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force and Lee County Domestic Animal Services conducted a joint operation in an effort to educate residents regarding securing their pets.

In addition to the dangers associated with stray dogs roaming our streets and roadways, many of these animals find themselves at an already overburdened Lee County Domestic Animal Services shelter.



Stray animals are at risk of being struck by oncoming vehicles, can be injured or killed by local wildlife and may become

involved in dog-bite incidents. It is important to understand that pet owners can and will be held responsible for injuries caused and damages done by their dogs.

The Animal Cruelty Task Force and Domestic Animal Services remind pet owners of the importance of microchipping their animals. Inexpensive and painless, microchipping helps reunite lost pets with their owners.

Additionally, per county ordinance, all dogs (cats and ferrets) must have some form of identification, at all times, indicating the owner's name and current telephone number.

(Educating the community...continued)

Pet owners are reminded to regularly inspect fences used to secure their pets. Holes beneath the fence should be filled immediately. Metal barriers are available both online and in local home-improvement stores that can be used to prevent digging beneath the base of the fence. Gates and doors must be kept closed when used to contain an animal. If you utilize outside services such as landscaping or pool maintenance, please post signs on gates reminding service providers to secure the gate when they exit.

Tables, chairs or woodpiles near the fence line should be moved as canines utilize these structures to climb over fencing.



Many stray pets never find their way back home. Millions of lost dogs and cats enter shelters across the county each year; many never leave.

Please...be a responsible pet owner. Our animals are wholly dependent upon us for nearly all of their needs. Safety and security are two of the most important needs.

Should you wish to open your heart and your home to a shelter animal, please visit one of the many local shelters and/or rescues that serve Lee County.

IS YOUR PET IN PAIN?

Dr. Sharon Powell

Appointed by Governor DeSantis to the Board of Veterinary Medicine and winner of the 2023 FVMA Veterinarian of the Year Award, Dr. Sharon Powell is a veterinary wealth of knowledge and friend of the LCSO Animal Cruelty Task Force.

"Dogs and cats can be good at hiding their pain. Since animals can't verbally tell us when they are in pain it is our responsibility as pet owners to pay attention to subtle changes in our furry companion's physical condition, behavior or mobility that might give us a clue that they aren't feeling well.

One of the first indicators that your pet may be in pain is a noticeable change in their behavior. This change may include reduced activity, not being as eager to exercise or play, walking slower or refusing to walk, reluctance to jump or use stairs, trouble lying down or getting up, and of course limping. Other behavior changes that may suggest your pet is in pain would be vocalization such as whining, whimpering or yelping. Behavior changes such as becoming aggressive, snapping or growling can also indicate pain especially when touched. If your pet becomes restless, this may indicate they are unable to rest comfortably because of pain. And some cats and dogs may choose to hide or isolate themselves and become anti-social. Cats in particular may stop grooming themselves so their coat will look unkempt.

Watch the way your pet moves and stands. Standing with a rigid posture with the head down and reluctance to move can indicate a back or neck problem. Often the tail will be tucked under. Your dog may twitch or have tense muscles if they're experiencing muscle or nerve related pain or painful abdominal spasms.

Changes in eating and drinking habits may be observed in painful pets with a loss of appetite or reluctance to move to get to their food and water bowls, or refusing food for instance with teeth, jaw or oral pain. Excessive licking or drooling, increased heart rate and breathing rate and panting particularly when at rest can sometimes be an indication of pain.

Pain in pets can be caused by a variety of conditions

(Dr. Sharon Powell...continued)

including injury, trauma, or an underlying issue like arthritis. Pain can be acute (something that just happened) or chronic (like arthritis, dental problems).



Some signs of pain can vary widely ranging from blatantly obvious to incredibly subtle. If you see any signs that may indicate your pet is in pain, it is important to seek prompt veterinary attention. Some injuries causing pain can be totally cured if the cause is addressed quickly.

Your animal companion depends on your care and loving attention."

PET VACCINATION EVENT

Vaccinating your pet is, by far, one of the great gestures that we can do for our furry family members.

Many illnesses can be prevented and the lives of our pets can be dramatically extended when vaccines are kept up-to-date.

Sheriff Carmine Marceno and Lee County Domestic Animal Services offered another pet vaccination event...the latest in Saint James City.



All vaccines and microchipping were offered at no cost in an effort to ensure that no pet was left unprotected.

In the more rural parts of the county, the risk of contracting serious diseases from local wildlife, such as rabies and/or distemper, is significantly greater.

Q&A WITH DR. MEGAN DAVIS, DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL OPERATIONS AT CAPE CORAL ANIMAL SHELTER

Dr. Megan Davis joined the Cape Coral Animal Shelter as Director of Medical Operations in April of 2022 and oversees the veterinary care for patients at the shelter's veterinary clinic as well as their shelter animals.

Monthly, Dr. Davis kindly takes time out of her busy day to answer questions emailed to the Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force.

Question: "I read a study that stated that some pet owners are deciding not to vaccinate their pets. Is there a valid concern that we should know of?"



Dr. Megan Davis: "In recent years I personally feel I have seen an increase in canine vaccine hesitancy so the results of this study were unfortunately not surprising to me. Clients express they choose not to

vaccinate themselves or their children and want to make the same decision for their pets. Some feel vets recommend vaccines just to make money. Others think their pet is allergic to vaccines or had adverse health effects the last time they received them. Of those owners hesitant to vaccinate I often hear complaints of a pet not being accepted to grooming or to travel on a plane without an up to date rabies certificate. Rabies is a fatal disease for which there is no cure. We are privileged to live in a country where human rabies cases are almost unheard of. Endemic canine rabies has been eliminated thanks to vaccination and if exposed to wildlife or an unvaccinated pet we have easy access to post exposure treatment (a series of injections that stops the virus replicating before it reaches the nervous system). Others are not so blessed. Several years ago I volunteered in Malawi with an NGO that was vaccinating dogs against rabies. The region we were in had the highest rate of child rabies deaths in Africa, and almost all of them were due to dog bites. Studies show if you can vaccinate 70% of dogs in a community then after 3 years rabies should be eliminated, so we saved human lives through our work of vaccinating animals. 3 years

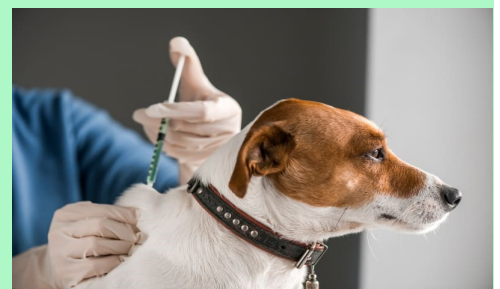
(Dr. Davis...continued)

after my trip this became a reality when the hospital reported they had not had a single rabies case that year. I will never forget that experience, of talking to people who walked miles and waited hours to have their dog vaccinated as they shared stories of a family member or friend that died from rabies.

I fear that in the future canine rabies will re-emerge in this country due to lower rates of vaccination. Wildlife in Florida serves as a reservoir for the virus so the risk of exposure to our pets is always there.

The other core vaccine for dogs is DAPP, which primarily protects against distemper and parvo viruses. When I first graduated vet school I used say distemper was a neurological disease we rarely saw any more and that parvo was the important component. Sadly I have seen several distemper cases in the past few years. Much like measles, I suspect we will see an increase in cases due to the anti-vaccine movement.

Access to distemper/parvo titers is becoming more common so may be an option if you're really hesitant to booster your adult dog. This test helps determine level of antibodies in the blood to estimate whether or not



your pet is still protected via previous vaccination.

Rabies titers can also be performed but it is important to note that most places do not legally recognize a passing titer in lieu of vaccination. If your dog/cat bit someone it would be considered unvaccinated in the eyes of the law. At best this could mean quarantine in an animal control facility instead of your home, and at worst it could mean euthanasia for testing.

It is important to note that soreness/limping and lethargy are somewhat common following any vaccination. These do not indicate an allergic reaction nor are they a reason not to vaccinate again in the future. These mild side effects are indicative of the pets

(Dr. Davis...continued)

immune system mounting a response to the injected material, this is exactly what a vaccine is supposed to do! If your pet seems sensitive you can always ask your vet if they feel a prescription for a few days of anti-inflammatories is appropriate.



Some pets may get localized swelling at the site of vaccine administration. In these dogs I find an injection of Benadryl prior to the next booster is often effective in stopping the problem from occurring again.

It is truly very rare for a pet to have a serious life threatening reaction that would prevent future vaccination. In my medical opinion there is a exponentially greater risk to not vaccinating than there is to giving a vaccine!"



GOLDENFEST XIII

Without question, one will never see more Golden Retrievers in one location as one does at each year's "Goldenfest" celebration.

Originally of Scottish decent, the Golden Retriever is one of the nation's favorite canine breeds...and for excellent reasons.

Incredibly obedient, excellent working

dogs and as loving and faithful as can be, these golden-furred canines make for wonderful family members.

The event, hosted by the Shell Factory in North Fort Myers, draws thousands of visitors...many with gold, flowing hair...along with vendors, first responders, animal trainers,



canine exhibits, food trucks, auctions and so much more.

The Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force was on hand, along with the LCSO Ice Cream

Response Team, Robbie the Robodog and other assets.

Local animal shelters and rescues shared information regarding the remarkable work that they do to care for and find homes for homeless animals. The event serves as an opportunity to raise funds and awareness for these agencies.

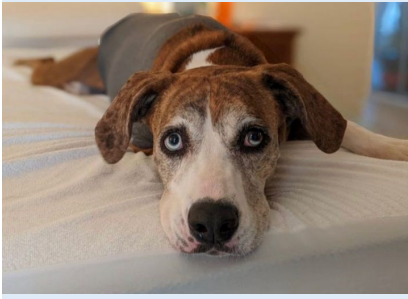
Other non-profit agencies were present, sharing information regarding their work in the community.

As is always the case, this year's event, the 13th of its kind, proved to be even more impressive than in years past!



"SENIOR OF THE MONTH"

Meet Ginger...a favorite with "Big Hearts for Big Dogs Rescue."



This Catahoula Leopard Dog - Hound Mix is a sweetie...she's affectionate, intelligent, gentle, house-trained and calm.

Reportedly good with children, Ginger is so deserving of a loving home of her own.

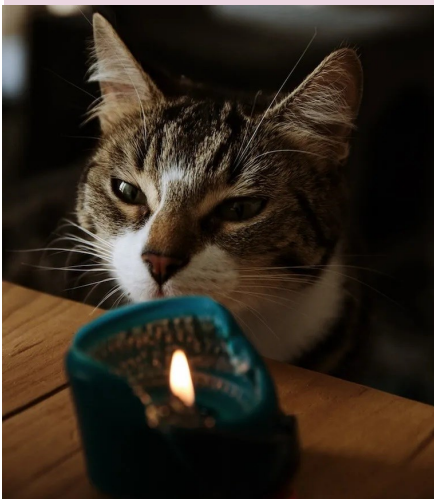
Healthy, spayed and up-to-date on all vaccinations, this girl is ready to begin her new life!

Fill out an online application at www.bigheartsbigdogs.com/adopt.



HOLIDAY DECORATIONS AND YOUR PETS

Many of us go to great lengths to decorate our homes for Halloween, Thanksgiving and, of course, for the many December holidays.



Consider your pets when decorating your home!

Candles are easily toppled and can result in burns or fire.

Many of the items that glow contain toxins, such as phosphors...all of which are harmful,

and potentially fatal, to your pets.

Costumes and decorations always pose a choking threat to our furry buddies. Be cognizant of small items and pieces that can be removed or broken off.

Too many pets are injured as a result of holiday décor. Please exercise caution!

A REMINDER FROM SHERIFF CARMINE MARCENO



TRUNK OR TREAT IN THE CAPE...

"Trunk or Treat" events are fun for children and adults alike. The Lee County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force, along with the LCSO Ice Cream Response Team,

participated in this Halloween event held in Central Cape Coral at Diplomat Elementary School.



Animal Cruelty Task Force staff answered questions and handed out LCSO swag to guests.

As always, the Animal Cruelty Task Force

appreciates the opportunity to share our message with residents of Lee County. Thanks for the invite!

PET FOOD RECALL

Mid America Pet Food, Mount Pleasant, Texas, is voluntarily recalling three lots of Victor Super Premium Dog Food, Select Beef Meal & Brown Rice Formula produced at its Mount Pleasant, Texas production facility because it has the potential to be contaminated with Salmonella. This voluntary recall was initiated after a third-party conducted random sampling and product associated with three lots tested positive for Salmonella. Salmonella can affect animals eating the products and there is risk to humans from handling contaminated pet products, especially if they have not thoroughly washed their hands after having contact with the products or any surfaces exposed to these products.

Healthy people infected with Salmonella should monitor themselves for some or all of the following symptoms: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramping and fever. Rarely, Salmonella can result in more serious ailments, including arterial infections, endocarditis, arthritis, muscle pain, eye irritation, and urinary tract symptoms. Consumers exhibiting these signs after having contact with this product should contact their healthcare providers.

Pets with Salmonella infections may be lethargic and have diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, fever, and vomiting. Some pets will have only decreased appetite, fever and abdominal pain. Infected but otherwise healthy pets can be carriers and infect other animals or humans. If your pet has consumed the recalled product and has these symptoms, please contact your veterinarian.

No human or pet illnesses have been reported to date.

Products were distributed to various distributors and

(Pet food recall...continued)

retailers in the United States. The affected product includes:

Victor Super Premium Dog Food, Select Beef Meal & Brown Rice Formula

Lot number 1000016890 5-pound bag with "Best By Date" 06/12/2024

Lot number 1000016891 15-pound bag with "Best By Date" 06/12/2024

Lot number 1000016892 40-pound bag with "Best By Date" 06/12/2024

Lot code information is found on the back of the bag.



No other products are included in this recall. This recall is separate from and unrelated to the Mid America Pet Food recall for Salmonella on September 3, 2023.

Retailers and distributors should immediately pull the recalled lots from their inventory and shelves.

Do not feed the recalled products to pets or any other animals. Destroy the food in a way that children, pets and wildlife cannot access. Wash and sanitize pet food bowls, cups and storage containers. Always ensure that you wash and sanitize your hands after handling recalled food or any utensils that come in contact with recalled food.

Contact Mid America Pet Food Consumer Affairs at info@mapf.com or 1-888-428-7544 from 8 AM to 5 PM Central Time, Monday through Friday for additional information.

**"I have zero tolerance for animal abuse
and I will seek justice for those who
cannot speak up for themselves."**

- Sheriff Carmine Marceno

