

In brief

■ **CARDIOLOGY CPD:**

Following a successful series of small animal cardiology CPD meetings throughout 2005, Intervet UK will be hosting its final course, in Crawley, on Wednesday, 7th December. Consisting of practical problem-solving interactive sessions and lectures on the diagnostic approach to the suspected cardiac patient and management of acute and chronic heart failure, the meeting will be given by RCVS recognised specialists Mike Martin and Dr Virginia Luis Fuentes and will contribute to five hours CPD. Anyone wanting further information, or a registration form, should telephone Intervet on 01908 685685.

■ **CUTE CARDS:**

Specialist pet photographer, phodographics, is offering veterinary surgeons a range of cards, suitable for use as welcome cards for new clients, booster reminder cards, etc. The collection offers an assortment of 24 prints featuring dogs, cats, small animals and horses and can be tailored to individual practices.

VETS REPORT INCREASE IN DOPED-UP DOMESTIC PETS

NEARLY half of the country's veterinary surgeons have treated domestic pets for drug-related incidents, according to a new survey.

The research was carried out by pet insurer, Petplan, and highlighted a worryingly-high incidence of animals suffering from the after-effects of substance ingestion throughout the UK.

Petplan's consultant vet, Scott Miller, told *Veterinary Times*: "About 50 per cent of vets have reported that they've seen an animal that has been suffering the ill-effects of recreational drugs, and 25 per cent of vets have seen between one and four cases this year alone, so it seems to be an alarming rise."

According to the survey, dogs are the most likely to be affected, which it says could be explained by a dogs' tendency

report by

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to eat items of household rubbish, including the remains of marijuana joints.

Experiments

However, the research also showed that some incidents, often involving young puppies, may be due to pet owners feeding substances to their pets in what they consider to be "amusing, harmless experiments."

Mr Miller said: "It's hard to know if these animals are given the drugs deliberately or if it's accidental consumption, but it seems to be on the increase so maybe it is as a result of people doing little experiments."

He went on: "In this survey,

cannabis was the number one culprit, but there was also a case of ecstasy tablet consumption, things like paracetamol and even birth control tablets."

Nick Mills, senior partner of Cinque Ports Veterinary Associates, in Hawkhurst, Kent, has seen two cases of cannabis ingestion this year.

He told *Veterinary Times*: "One was a Labrador that got hold of the client's stash of cannabis resin, the other one was a terrier, both of whom responded well to treatment."

He explained: "We induced vomiting in both of them, put them on a drip and observed them in a darkened room. The Labrador took about 24 hours to come back to health, but the terrier took a bit longer."

In the case of accidental consumption, Mr Mills said: "It's

one of these things where client confidentiality is important. As I understand it, the law is that one does not have to report it to the police, and certainly I wouldn't dream of doing so. I think if you start reporting your clients, it's a bit of a slippery slope," he said.

However, a spokesman for the Royal College said that any veterinary surgeon who suspects that an animal has been deliberately mistreated in this, or any other way, should contact the relevant authorities, in this case the RSPCA.

Advice

The spokesman went on: "We would also advise a veterinary surgeon in this situation to contact the professional conduct department for advice before passing on confidential information to the authorities,

so that a record of the enquiry exists on file in the event of any subsequent complaint."

A spokesman for the RSPCA said that veterinarians should report any welfare issues to the them, and that they would condemn anyone who intentionally endangered their pet's health in this way.

However, the spokesman added: "We have no evidence that owners are deliberately feeding pets drugs. We have had cases, particularly with young, inquisitive dogs, where they have discovered drugs like marijuana or tranquillisers that have been left around carelessly by the owner.

"Such drugs could have unpredictable and harmful effects on the pet. As with children, you should keep any drugs locked up away from inquisitive pets"