

# A THING OF THE PAST?

## *Boosters may put animals at risk*

**A GROUP of vets is calling on their profession to cease the policy of annual vaccination.**

They say that evidence currently available shows that vaccinations given after six months may be 'good for life'.

Annual boosters for parvovirus and distemper are unnecessary, they say, and subject the animal to risk of allergic reactions and autoimmune disorders, immunosuppression, infections and anaemia.

"Can we wonder that clients are losing faith in vaccination and researching the issues for themselves?" they write. "We think they are right to do so."

"Politics, tradition or the economic wellbeing of vets and pharmaceutical companies should not be a factor in making medical decisions."

They allege that promoting annual vaccination constitutes fraud and theft and recommend that booster vaccinations are given every three years.

cine is always indicated.

"Misunderstanding, misinformation and the conservative nature of our profession have largely slowed adoption of protocols advocating decreased frequency of vaccination," the report reads.

"Immunological memory provides durations of immunity for core infectious diseases that far exceed the traditional recommendations for annual vaccination. This is supported by a growing body of veterinary information as well as well-developed epidemiological vigilance in human medicine that indicates immunity induced by vaccination is extremely long lasting and, in most cases, life-long."

It says that evidence shows the duration of immunity for rabies, canine distemper and canine parvovirus vaccines, among others, is a minimum of seven years.

The vets wrote: "We fully accept that no single achievement has had greater impact on

nation and will ultimately suffer the consequences. Do we need to wait until we see actions against vets such as those launched in the state of Texas by Dr Robert Rogers? He asserts that the present practice of marketing vaccinations for companion animals constitutes fraud by misrepresentation, fraud by silence and theft by deception.

### **Deserving**

"The oath we take as newly-qualified vets is 'to help, or at least do no harm'. We wish to maintain our position within society and be deserving of the trust placed in us as a profession. It is therefore our contention that those who continue to give annual vaccinations in the light of the new evidence may well be acting contrary to the welfare of the animals committed to their care."

The signatories are care of an

address in Lodsworth, West Sussex.

The letter was welcomed by Catherine O'Driscoll, who through her group Canine Health Concern has been campaigning to end annual vaccinations for many years.

She said this week: "We and others whose dogs have suffered vaccine reactions and whose beloved friends have died and suffered unnecessarily have been pilloried and castigated for speaking the truth for long enough now."

"Time to take this letter to your vet and to post it to other vets in your neighbourhood; time to show this letter to all the dog lovers you meet in the park or at classes."

"Time to get the truth out there once and for all and time to stop our animals suffering. My respect and gratitude go to the courageous vets who signed the letter."

### ***Promoting annual vaccination constitutes fraud and theft, they say, and recommend booster vaccinations are given every three years.***

The 31 vets, writing in the *Veterinary Times*, cite the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee's recent report which states that annual re-vaccination recommendations are based on 'historical precedent, not scientific data'.

They say there is no proof that yearly vaccinations are necessary, that protection may be life-long and that 're-vaccination of patients with sufficient immunity does not add measurably to their disease resistance and may increase their risk of adverse post-vaccination events'.

A recent report by the American Animal Hospital Association Canine Vaccine Taskforce said that: "... no vaccine is always safe, no vaccine is always protective and no vac-

the lives and wellbeing of our patients, our clients and our ability to prevent infectious diseases than the developments in animal vaccines.

"However, we fully support the recommendations and guidelines ... to reduce vaccine protocols for dogs and cats such that booster vaccinations are only given every three years and only for core vaccines unless otherwise scientifically justified."

"In the light of data now available showing the needless use and potential harm of annual vaccination we call on our profession to cease the policy of annual vaccination."

"It is accepted that the annual examination of a pet is advisable. We undervalue ourselves, however, if we hang this essential service on the back of vacci-

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Links to recent articles in this topic

It appears that the letter written by those UK veterinarians and published in the Veterinary Times in January subsequently was picked up by the Dog World then the Dog Training Weekly in the UK. Then, last Thursday, it seemed like most of the mainstream media picked up on it.

The below three links will take you to 3 of those.

It was also in the Daily Express, the Daily Mail, The Times and I don't know what else.

Also below is the article in the Times, and if you go to this BBC site there is a video interview:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/zthursday\\_20040401.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/zthursday_20040401.shtml)

Under April 1st, click on the 0640 timeslot "a group of vets....."

[http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk\\_news/story/0,3604,1184067,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1184067,00.html)

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3588457.stm> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2004%2F04%2F02%2Fnpet02.xml>

### **Times article The Times Newspaper April 02, 2004 Annual pet jab is waste of money, vets claim By Sam Lister**

DOG and cat owners are spending millions of pounds on unnecessary and potentially dangerous vaccines for their pets, according to a group of veterinary surgeons.

More than 30 vets have signed an open letter accusing the pharmaceutical industry of encouraging annual vaccinations, although doses last much longer. The advice being given to vets by drug companies, and passed on to pet owners, amounts to "fraud by misrepresentation, fraud by silence and theft by deception", the group says.

Annual vaccination boosters, which cost up to #50, are given to dogs and cats to protect them against potentially life-threatening conditions such as distemper, leptospirosis and several strains of flu.

In the letter to the Veterinary Times, the vets point to American research that links the overuse of boosters to "adverse post-vaccination events", including auto-immune disorders and transient infections. "It is our contention that those (vets) who continue to give annual vaccinations in the light of new evidence may well be acting contrary to the welfare of the animals committed to their care," the letter concludes.

The pharmaceutical industry defended the advice given on its products yesterday. Members said that they were bound by rules from licensing authorities. Because of a lack of general research into the long-term efficacy of the drugs, a minimum 12-month period of immunity had to be recommended. John Saxton, one of the letter's signatories, described the level of vaccinations given to Britain's 13 million dogs and cats as "complete overkill". Mr Saxton, from Leeds, added: "All the research is saying the same thing, that annual boosters are not necessary. But vets cannot give impartial advice because they are not being passed on impartial advice from the drug companies. "The information they are working on may have been valid 20 years ago, but things have moved on." A primary course of two vaccinations is normally given to puppies and kittens between the age of eight and 14 weeks, followed by annual boosters. Pet owners can expect to pay more than #700 for vaccinations over the lifetime of the average pet. The boosters, which cost from #20 to #50, are central to the annual income of most veterinary clinics, with a large practice likely to see in excess of 5,000 cases a year.

Bruce Fogle, a vet and broadcaster based in West London, said that after studying research from Europe and America he had decided to stop giving annual vaccinations for some conditions. "As the number of diseases against which dogs and cats were being vaccinated increased during the 1970s and 1980s, so the culture changed to an annual booster inoculation for everything," he said. "I have now switched back to vaccinating every three years against the diseases where I was confident that the efficacy was