



THE HUMANitarian

The Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Summer 2016

EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA

What is Equine Infectious Anemia?

Equine infectious anemia (EIA), also known as "Swamp Fever" is an incurable, potentially fatal viral disease affecting all equines (i.e. horses, ponies, donkeys, mules and zebras). There is no vaccine available. EIA is caused by a blood-borne virus that affects the horse's immune system. The virus is transmitted by large biting insects, primarily horse- and deerflies; however, virus transmission occurs when blood-contaminated products, such as needles and surgical equipment, are used on multiple horses.

What are the symptoms?

Clinical signs of EIA vary and are generally non-specific. They can range from being absent, to a horse having a transient mild fever, to sudden death. Three phases of EIA can be identified: the acute phase is the most infective and the horse may display symptoms such as fever and anorexia. Chronic infection is characterized by recurring bouts of clinical disease with asymptomatic periods in between. The signs displayed during the symptomatic chronic phase include: anemia, weight-loss, depression and petechial haemorrhaging on the mucous membranes. Many horses infected with EIA never display any symptoms yet remain infectious, endangering the lives of other horses.



How is EIA detected?

An agar gel immunodiffusion test, commonly called the Coggins test, used to be the first-line of testing for EIA. Recently Coggins testing has been replaced as the primary test for EIA by a faster ELISA-based assay; however, a Coggins test remains the gold standard for testing and is still used to confirm a positive result. The process of testing for EIA is still generally known as "getting a Coggins".

Is my horse at risk?

Horses are at increased risk of contracting EIA when they live in close proximity to outbreak areas, in swampy areas, in close proximity to feral horses and/or at facilities where there is a high turnover rate of horses, particularly if the facility does not require a negative EIA test certificate. Horses are also at increased risk if they travel to shows, rodeos, sales etc.; this risk increases if a negative EIA test certificate is not required by the event.

How can I protect my horse?

Since there is neither a vaccine nor a cure for EIA protection through management practices is critically important. You can take the following measures to help protect your horse from contracting EIA:

- Test all horses on the property for EIA at least annually
- Do not re-use needles or syringes
- Sterilize surgical and farrier equipment in between uses
- Test all newly purchased horses prior to bringing them on to your premises
- Isolate new horses for at least 45 days and monitor them for signs of illness
- Manage your stable and pasture areas to discourage insects from breeding
- Facility owners and event organizers should require a negative EIA test certificate from all horses on their property

What is the EIA situation in Canada?

Equine infectious anemia is endemic in the Canadian horse population and is a federally reportable disease. Canada has a program in place aimed at eradicating EIA from the Canadian herd by breaking the cycle of disease. The program relies on owners to voluntarily pay for their horse(s) to be tested. In the event of a positive test the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will respond by quarantining the premises on which an

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EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA...

infected horse resides as well as any horse(s) who have come into contact with an infected horse within thirty days of the positive test result. Horses who are infected and are showing symptoms of the disease are humanely destroyed; asymptomatic carrier horses are either placed in quarantine for life or are humanely destroyed.

There has been considerable success with EIA eradication programs in Eastern

Canada; however disease outbreaks continue to occur in Western Canada and progress in disease eradication has been slow due to poor participation in surveillance programs. Since 2011, Saskatchewan has had the highest number of individual cases of EIA in Canada. Voluntary testing of horses has increased in Saskatchewan in recent years. Current numbers estimate that 2,742 of Saskatchewan's 100,000 horses are voluntarily tested for EIA.

COMPANION ANIMAL OBESITY

What is obesity?

Obesity is an accumulation of excessive amounts of body fat to a point where your pet's body-weight exceeds the optimum for his or her body size by at least 15%. Obese pets do not live as long as their non-obese counter-parts and are at increased risk of a number of health conditions, including: diabetes mellitus, orthopaedic problems, cardio-respiratory disease, heat intolerance, and some cancers.

Why do pets become obese?

Obesity results when your dog or cat consumes more calories than they expend. Certain breeds of dogs and cats have a recognized genetic propensity for becoming obese. Also, there is evidence that spaying or neutering your pet increases their risk of becoming obese. Following alteration, your pet's energy expenditure may be reduced by as much as a third. As a result, obesity occurs from failing to adjust your pet's feeding regimen accordingly.

How do I know whether my pet is obese?

The first step in treating your pet for obesity is recognizing that there is a problem in the first place. Unfortunately, the media is rife with images of cats and dogs that are overweight or obese, making it

difficult to determine what a healthy weight looks like. Methods for identifying obesity in pets include weighing and body condition scoring (BCS). BCS involves appraising your pet visually and by palpation and subjectively ranking your pet on a scale from one to nine, where one is very thin and nine is very obese.

How can I treat my pet's obesity?

Targets for weight reduction are generally in the neighbourhood of 1% to 2% of body-weight per week. The primary treatment for obesity in companion animals is dietary modification. Experts recommend feeding a diet specifically formulated for weight loss. These diets are designed



Photo credit: flickr.com / las - initially

to reduce caloric intake and promote satiety. Combining dietary restriction with an exercise regime further promotes fat loss, while maintaining lean tissue mass. Additionally, lifestyle changes such as not feeding table

scraps, feeding fewer treats and not making energy-dense, highly palatable foods available free-choice can play a vital role in your pet's successful weight-loss program.

Your veterinarian can help you devise a weight-loss program for your pet and will help you to monitor the program to ensure that your pet stays on track. It is also important to continue to weigh your pet regularly once his/her ideal weight has been achieved to ensure that the weight that was lost is not regained.



SASKATCHEWAN SPCA ANNOUNCES THE ADDITION OF A NEW GOLF EVENT

The Saskatchewan SPCA now has two opportunities for you to hit the greens this summer. Enjoy a round of golf at two of Saskatchewan's beautiful golf courses while supporting animal welfare!

The first ever Critter Classic North features a \$50,000 Hole-in-One contest and takes place at the stunning Moonlake Golf and Country Club in Saskatoon. This 27-hole course offers an experience that will keep you coming back.

Green Acres Golf Club welcomes back the Saskatchewan SPCA's Critter Classic South. Located 10 minutes east of Regina, Green Acres offers a challenge to golfers of all skill levels.

For more information on both editions of the Critter Classic, visit our website at ssPCA.ca/golf. You'll find all the information you

need to know about both tournaments, including registration fees, prizes, tee-times, and more. We'll see you on the links!



Visit ssPCA.ca/golf for more information on both editions of the Critter Classic.

CFHS CONFERENCE EXPLORES CERTIFICATION OF ANIMAL RESCUES

The new registration program for animal rescues being developed in Saskatchewan was the focus of a presentation at a recent national animal welfare conference. Frances Wach and Sandra Anderson from the Saskatchewan SPCA spoke on this topic at the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS) Animal Welfare Conference in April.

In their presentation to delegates at the CFHS conference, Wach explained the development of a registration and certification program will help ensure that all rescue groups provide proper care to animals.

The Saskatchewan SPCA noted that a working group has been formed, with representatives from SPCAs/Humane Societies, rescue groups, the veterinary community, enforcement, and the provincial government. The working group is presently drafting a code of ethics for rescue groups and developing guidelines to ensure the humane care of rescued animals.

Delegates attending the CFHS presentation expressed strong support for the Saskatchewan program, viewing it as a positive step to deal with problems that are emerging in some rescue groups across the country. These issues included overcrowding, substandard housing, a lack of veterinary care, and animal hoarding. Delegates also noted the need to build stronger relationships between rescues, shelters, and enforcement agencies.

The Saskatchewan SPCA's presentation on animal rescues was one of more than 45 sessions offered during the three-day CFHS conference. Topics included chicken welfare, dog management programs in northern communities, and pet safekeeping programs. One of the many highlights of the conference was a presentation by Dr. Bettina Bobsien, who explored the myths and the reality of horse slaughter in Canada.

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SASKATCHEWAN SPCA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

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#SKAWC

Mark your calendars and join us for the 2016 Saskatchewan SPCA Animal Welfare Conference.

Conference topics (Sept. 23-24):

Behavioural assessment and enrichment in shelters: Scott Johansson

Variety is the spice of life, and that is certainly true for animals kept for extended periods in a shelter environment. Learn more about enrichment techniques that will help meet each dog's need for social interaction, sensory stimulation, and exercise.

Old dogs, new tips: What you need to know about geriatric pet care: Dr. Sandra Neumann

Pets are living longer now than they ever had before. As a consequence, owners and veterinarians are faced with a whole new set of age-related conditions that may be present in older animals. Dr. Neumann discusses illnesses and conditions common to geriatric pets, and shares tips for their care.

The importation of rescue dogs – What are the potential animal health, human health and animal welfare implications: Dr. Dennis Will

There are ever increasing numbers of dogs being imported into Canada each year. We see them as dogs in need of rescue. The people from their originating communities see them as street dogs and part of the local landscape, no less so than the wild birds, trees, or grass. Dr. Will explores the potential zoonotic, food animal, and companion animal related disease concerns associated with the importation of these dogs.

The Link between interpersonal violence and animal abuse:

Frances Wach, Tracy Knutson, and Crystal Giesbrecht
A new report released by the Saskatchewan SPCA, STOPS to Violence, and PATHS explores how concern for animal safety acts as a barrier to individuals fleeing domestic violence. The report also looks at the availability of animal safekeeping resources for the pets and livestock of the victims.

Humane housing for chickens: Dr. Karen Schwean-Lardner
Animal welfare issues relating to laying chickens continue to be top-of-mind for both consumers and producers. Learn more about the pros and cons of various types of housing systems for chickens, including free-run, free-range, conventional battery cages, and enriched cages.

Health and welfare issues in dairy cattle: SaskMilk
Learn about the proAction program being used in the dairy industry to improve animal care, health, and welfare, while ensuring milk quality and safety.

Handle with care: Considerations in planning a large-scale animal seizure: Kaley Pugh, Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan
Hours of detailed planning go into the seizure of neglected or

abused animals. Pugh discusses the legal considerations that must be addressed before, during, and after the seizure, as well as the planning required to capture, transport, and care for large numbers of pets or livestock.

Rabies in Saskatchewan: What you need to know: Dr. Betty Althouse, Ministry of Agriculture
Dr. Althouse will discuss all aspects of rabies, a viral disease most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. She will discuss occurrence of rabies in the province, when to suspect rabies, the Saskatchewan Rabies Response Plan, employers' responsibilities to protect staff, and rabies prevention.

The many roles of a vet tech: Lorraine Serhienko, RVT
Lorraine will be speaking about how RVTs play a role in animal welfare from the veterinary clinic and through volunteering. She will also speak to how the veterinary staff can be involved in and assist with Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan cases and SPCA work. Lorraine will speak to the types of welfare concerns seen in veterinary practice, and how client communication plays a huge role in the awareness of the welfare of animals.

The new certification and registration program for animal rescues: Saskatchewan SPCA

The Saskatchewan SPCA, in partnership with stakeholders in the animal welfare sector, is spearheading a new program aimed at improving the welfare of rescued animals. A voluntary registration and certification program is now being developed, with input from rescues, shelters, enforcement, veterinarians and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Working with victims of interpersonal violence: Crystal Giesbrecht, Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan

Wet Labs (Sept. 25):

Polly wanna cracker? A beginner's guide to parrot care: Trenea Cheveldayoff

Health assessment of shelter dogs and cats: Dr. Sandra Neumann

Registration fees:

2-day (Fri & Sat)	\$175
1-day (Fri or Sat)	\$125
Wet lab	\$ 44

Discounts are available for Saskatchewan SPCA members. Fees include continental breakfast and lunch.

Find updates and more information at: sspsca.ca/conference

WHEN ANIMALS SAVE LIVES: THE STORY OF REX

On Christmas Eve 2015, Santana Hawman and her family left their Aberdeen-area acreage to meet her husband Mitch for a family gathering in Saskatoon. Although that night would change their lives forever, it would reveal a canine hero.

Rex, a malamute-shepherd cross, was adopted from the Saskatoon SPCA in September 2007. The Hawman family was attracted to Rex because of his size and breed; however Rex did not bond with Mitch immediately. According to Santana, "Rex didn't seem to like being around men for the first year he was with our family." Eventually that would change and the bond between Mitch and Rex would see them become the best of friends. Over the next eight years, Rex would develop a strong relationship with all members of the Hawman family, serving as a guardian for the couple's young children.

On December 24th, Mitch's mother, Noreen Lucas was staying with the family for the holidays. That evening, as the family left for dinner in Saskatoon, Noreen decided to stay home after coming down with an illness. Having trouble sleeping, Noreen took a sleep aid that would help her get some rest. As Noreen slept on the couch, a fire broke out in the Hawman house. Rex jumped into action attempting to wake Noreen from her slumber. Noreen initially ignored Rex's panicked barking and turned over to fall back asleep. It was at this moment that Rex grabbed Noreen's pajama pants in his teeth and pulled her off the couch and towards the door. The jarring bump to the floor was enough to wake Noreen, who realized the danger she was in. Noreen, along with Rex's help, tried to save as many family pets as possible. Unfortunately, a cat, two rabbits, and a hamster succumbed to the fire.

While Noreen was able to make it out of the house safely, she was treated in hospital for smoke inhalation. It was not until the next morning that Mitch and Santana learned of Rex's heroic actions. Noreen showed the family her pajama pants that had a small hole where the dog's teeth had punctured the fabric, and a small bruise on her leg. After the terrifying ordeal, Noreen would be able to celebrate Christmas with her family thanks to the brave actions of Rex, the family dog.

In the days following the fire, Rex was still concerned for the safety of his family. Although he had seen each of the seven members of the family at one point or another, it was four days after the fire that Rex was able to see the entire family all together in one room. Rex's familiar malamute howls of worry were traded for happy tail wags and friendly licks.

In May 2016, Rex was recognized for his actions as the latest inductee into the Purina Animal Hall of Fame, an annual event "that honours life-saving pet heroes." The Hawman family, including their four-legged hero, travelled to Toronto for Rex to take his place in the Hall among Canada's animal heroes.

The Hawman home was a total loss; however, this disaster could have been a lot worse if Rex had not been there to save Grandma Noreen. As the family begins the process of rebuilding their lives and their home, Santana has one important reminder for those looking to add a furry member to their family: "Shelter animals aren't just animals at a shelter. They are animals in need of a home. They need a family. They need to be loved."



Nine year-old Rex saved Noreen Lucas from a house fire

RIP, ASTRO



Retired PSD Astro and his partner, Corporal Drohomereski

The Saskatchewan SPCA extends our condolences to RCMP Corporal R.P. Drohomereski and his family on the recent passing of retired Police Service Dog Astro.

Astro served with Drohomereski from October 2009 until April 2015 in various detachments in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. After retirement, Astro continued to live with Drohomereski and his family.

Astro developed a rapidly-spreading form of cancer and was put to rest in May. He spent his final weekend saying goodbye to friends and eating cheese burgers and ice cream.

In a letter to the Saskatchewan SPCA, Drohomereski noted that assistance from the Stryker K-9 Care Fund helped make Astro's last six weeks of life happy and memorable.

Donations to the Saskatchewan SPCA's Stryker K-9 Care Fund may be made by calling 1.877.382.7722 or donating online at www.sspca.ca.



A NEW WAY TO HELP RESCUED ANIMALS

The Saskatchewan SPCA is working to develop a voluntary registration and certification program that will help improve and standardize the work being done by animal rescues in the province.

At present anyone can claim to be an animal rescue. There is no registration process; no special training is required to set up a rescue and there are no processes in place to monitor conditions in the rescue.

The Saskatchewan SPCA is very pleased to be working in partnership with stakeholders from across the province in order to develop a ground-breaking new registration and certification program. (This will be one of the very first programs of its kind in Canada.) We thank the Saskatchewan

Veterinary Medical Association, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Protection Services, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, and individual rescues and animal shelters for their expertise and their support.

Animal Rescue Registration and Certification Program

Working collaboratively, we are developing standards of care and other resources needed to help launch, operate, and promote the program. Together, we can make a tremendous difference in the lives of rescued animals in the province.

Help us get this program up and running! Every contribution helps us move one step closer to the launch of this new registration and certification program. Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued for donations of \$10 or more. The animals thank you for your support.

REPORT EXPLORES THE LINK BETWEEN VIOLENCE TO ANIMALS AND HUMANS

"She came into the shelter with her three children. Lots of physical abuse. She feels really guilty for having to grab her kids and leave the animals behind ... it makes her feel even more guilty because not only have the kids lost their home, but they've lost the one thing that was comfortable to them and that was really important. It's like they lost their home and they lost their friend, their pet."

A new research study demonstrates how concern for the safety of animals serves as a barrier to individuals fleeing domestic violence in Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan SPCA worked in partnership with Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) To Violence and the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) to complete the study.

Representatives from 39 animal welfare organizations and 56 human service agencies shared their experiences working with the victims of domestic violence where there were concerns about animal care and safekeeping.

Participants noted that abusers were able to exercise control over victims and children with threats to harm or kill animals. Victims were often afraid to leave,

fearing that something would happen to the pets or livestock left behind.

The study revealed that there are only a limited number of options available to care for the animals of individuals fleeing domestic violence. Most women's shelters do not allow pets. A small number of animal safekeeping programs are available to care for pets but these programs are typically short-term in nature.

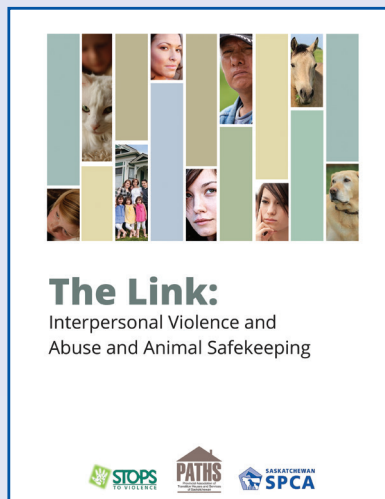
Individuals living in rural areas are often dependent on livestock for their financial security and livelihood. Victims may stay in an abusive situation, feeling they have no other option.

Frances Wach, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan SPCA notes that it is important to help ensure the victims of

domestic violence have better access to the resources they need to protect their pets and livestock.

"The Saskatchewan SPCA is seeking funding that will make it possible for us to move forward with the recommendations generated in this report," says Wach.

Read the full report under "The Link" on the Saskatchewan SPCA website: sspc.ca.



Recommendations from "The Link: Interpersonal Violence and Abuse and Animal Safekeeping":

- Develop education and training workshops regarding the connection between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal abuse.
- Establish partnerships between animal welfare agencies and human service organizations to better provide services.
- Provide information about services available for both animal welfare and human service providers in urban and rural areas.
- Train service providers in supporting individuals to plan for animal safekeeping when leaving situations of violence and abuse
- Create a list of resources and services for animal care and safekeeping currently offered within Saskatchewan resource book, central registry
- For domestic violence services, ensure that the intake process involves asking whether or not animal abuse is occurring/has occurred within the home.
- Formulate policies among animal welfare and human service organizations to ensure a clear understanding of what each sector is responsible for. Establishing clear guidelines will remove ambiguity that may arise when working in collaboration.
- Generate specific and focused action plans for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse who are concerned about animal care and safekeeping, in both urban and rural regions of the province.

GET TO KNOW THE SASKATCHEWAN SPCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name: Carol Thomson



Saskatchewan SPCA board member, Carol Thomson

Board position: at-large

How long have you served on the Board?

Officially since January I think, but unofficially as a volunteer since last spring.

How long have you been a member of the Saskatchewan SPCA?

I'm a newbie. I joined last April.

Tell us a little about yourself and how you got involved with the Saskatchewan SPCA:

I am a reporter and news anchor for Saskatoon Media

Group, which includes CJWW, 92.9 The Bull, 98 Cool, and www.saskatoonhomepage.ca. I have worked in radio for many years and was an announcer (deejay) for most of my career until news caught my fancy.

I have been in contact with the Saskatchewan SPCA over the years, working on different stories. My love of animals must have been apparent, because I was contacted by the Executive Director, Frances Wach and Program Director, Sandra Anderson. We had a coffee one night and then made a pinkie swear to work for the welfare of animals together (okay, maybe that last part didn't happen).

Name: Ken Krause

Board position: Member (Director)

How long have you served on the Board?

I joined as a board member in September 2007.

How long have you been a member of the Saskatchewan SPCA?

Since April 2007.

Tell us a little about yourself and how you got involved with the Saskatchewan SPCA:

I am a body shop Administrative Assistant. I was a volunteer and board member with the Meadow Lake and District Humane Society (MLDHS) since it started in 2002. I retired from volunteering [at MLDHS] in July 2008, but I stayed on as a member of the board. I wanted to join the board of the Saskatchewan SPCA to bring my local experience to a higher level.

What is your favourite thing about being involved with the Saskatchewan SPCA?

It has given me a clearer picture of the amount of animal abuse and domestic violence, at more than a local level. They have been a wonderful and supportive group to work along side of.

What is your favourite thing about being involved with the Saskatchewan SPCA?

I love the idea of meeting new people that I wouldn't have met otherwise and possibly helping in some small way. Have I mentioned I'm an animal lover? I'm allergic to cats and yet I have two of them.

Are there any highlights you would like to share about your time as a member of the Saskatchewan SPCA Board of Directors?

Since I'm new, I'm sure there are many highlights on the horizon, but I am glad I was able to volunteer to help with defining our new direction. The decision had already been made and was public when I came on board, but working as a group on the wording and final sculpting of the goals and direction helped to introduce me to what the Saskatchewan SPCA is all about.

What do you think is the biggest animal welfare issue?

I think that depends on your interests. Depending on how large scale you want to go, it could be ensuring humane treatment of animals on each leg of their journey as they make it to your grocery cart. Maybe it's the seemingly endless number of puppy mills, or the lack of education from some prospective pet owners who want a pet that looks a certain way but don't realize they might actually take some work, and then the pet ends up in a shelter.

Do you have any advice for our readers who may be interested in becoming a Saskatchewan SPCA Board member?

Welcome! We are a friendly bunch and our hearts, I think, are in the right place. Just pick up the phone, or hit "send" on that email.

Are there any highlights you would like to share about your time as a member of the Saskatchewan SPCA Board of Directors?

1. The launch of the Stryker K-9 Care Fund
2. The Saskatchewan SPCA Animal Welfare Conference, held annually, the conference features top-notch speakers and topics. There's always something new each year.
3. The Society's new focus on ensuring the humane treatment of animals through education and prevention initiatives.

What do you think is the biggest animal welfare issue?

1. The link between animal abuse and domestic violence.
2. A shortage of qualified rescue groups. The Saskatchewan SPCA is working towards registration and guidance for groups.

Do you have any advice for our readers who may be interested in becoming a Saskatchewan SPCA Board member?

It is a very educational experience if you love animals.

NOTICE OF AGM

The Saskatchewan SPCA Annual General Meeting will be held:

Date: **Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016**

Time: **5:00 p.m.**

Place: **Travelodge Hotel, 106 Circle Drive West, Saskatoon**

Everyone is welcome. The AGM is open to the public.

Questions? **1.877.382.7722 or info@sspsca.ca**

EUTHANASIA: A DIFFICULT DECISION

Submitted by Dr. Sandra Neumann

Euthanasia has been at the forefront of public discussions lately. While it has always been an emotionally charged topic within the animal welfare community, ever since human medicine began looking into end of life decisions and physician assisted death, euthanasia has been pushed further into the spotlight.

The word *euthanasia* originated in ancient Greece. It is a composition of *Eu* and *Thanatos*, meaning *good death*. What exactly does that mean? Is death ever good?

While most of us agree that a life should never be taken casually, there are circumstances where the decision to euthanize is the right one. But what is a legitimate reason and who decides? Me? You? Society? The law?

The fundamental questions are whether taking a life is ever justifiable, and whether death can ever be preferable to life, no matter what that particular life looks like.

This is exactly where we reach the great divide, the Grand Canyon that separates different attitudes, beliefs, and convictions.

Does every living thing have an inherent right to live? Can we decide who lives and who dies? If so, on what basis? Objective science or subjective opinion? Ask the patient? This is possible in human medicine, yet impossible when we face members of the animal kingdom.

We cannot talk to our pets to find out what they consider a good quality of life. We are unable to ask them whether or not they are still enjoying their life if they cannot move around freely, cannot play, are incontinent, blind, and deaf. We can only try to assess their quality of life by watching them. Yes, in the end, based on our own experiences and our knowledge of what they enjoyed throughout their lives, we do make quality of life judgements for them. Then we make a decision that is, hopefully, based on empathy and compassion.



No one wants their pets to suffer and yet this is another dilemma. Just as quality of life is something different for everyone, so is suffering. In addition to physical suffering, mental suffering should also be considered.

The decision to euthanize an animal, especially one we have shared our life with for years, is one of the most difficult decisions there is.

In regards to mental suffering, how distraught is a dog who was housetrained and suddenly loses the ability to let her owner know when nature calls and begins messing in her house, one she was trained to keep clean? We can't know. And we never will.

When is euthanasia an option? I don't have a universal answer. Actually, in this case, I don't believe there is one. We all have to find our comfort zone within our own framework of philosophical attitudes, moral values, and ethical belief systems.

As pet owners we should not shy away from this decision and our pet's best interests should guide us.

The decision to euthanize an animal, especially one we have shared our life with for years, is one of the most difficult decisions there is. I believe that in the end we owe them a *good death*. Just as we have provided them with the best possible life.

In my opinion, euthanasia is a viable end-of-life option. It is acceptable, and yes, even preferable if the alternative would be an unacceptable quality of life. As a veterinarian, if I cannot help my patients in any other way, I am very proud and, yes even happy, to at least be able to provide them with a good death.