

Regional VMA Meetings in April

The Southern Illinois VMA 2010 Spring Meeting will be held on April 1, 2010 at the Ramada Inn in Fairview Heights, IL. Allan J. Paul, DVM, MS will speak on, "Tick Borne Disease and Zoonoses." The meeting qualifies for 6 hours of CE credit. A copy of the [meeting brochure](#) and [online registration](#) are now available online.

The KVVMA is holding its 2010 Spring Meeting on April 7, 2010 in Joliet, IL. Rosemary LoGiudice, DVM, CCRT will be speaking on, "Sense and Cents of Canine Rehabilitation in Your Practice." The meeting qualifies for 3 hours of CE credit. A copy of the [meeting brochure](#) and [online registration](#) are now available online.

EPA to Host Public Webinar: Evaluation of Pet Spot-on Flea and Tick Products and Next Steps

(AVMA; SCHAUMBURG, ILL) March 4, 2010 - Last spring, [JAVMA News reported](#) that the EPA was increasing its evaluation of spot-on flea and tick products after reports of adverse reactions to these products spiked in 2008. On Wednesday, March 17, from 4 to 6 p.m. (EDT), the EPA is hosting a free, public webinar where it will present an overview of its evaluation of these products and its plans to further protect pets. Participants will have the opportunity to submit questions. Visit the [EPA's Web site](#) to learn more about the webinar. Visit the [AVMA's Web site](#) for advice on the safe use of flea and tick products in pets.

USDA Announces Surveillance Program for Stallions *Illinois Sampling Provided through July 2010*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) program announced a plan to test 3,000 stallions for *Taylorella equigenitalis*, the bacterium that causes Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) beginning in February 2010. CEM is a highly contagious sexually transmitted disease among horses that may cause vaginal discharge and infertility in mares, although stallions typically develop no signs of illness. Stallions and mares can become chronic carriers of CEM and be sources of infection for future outbreaks.

Test results from the additional stallions will be used to increase national and international confidence that the overall prevalence of *T. equigenitalis* in the United States is very low, if it is present at all. APHIS is confident that the results of this survey will aid in its efforts to return to CEM-free status, and reduce or remove the testing requirements for exported horses and semen for which horse owners are bearing the cost.

Enrollment of eligible stallions will be voluntary. However it will provide a great opportunity for horse owners to test their stallions with fewer costs incurred. All samples must be collected by accredited equine practitioners. APHIS will pay for laboratory diagnostic testing costs and for shipment of samples to an approved CEM laboratory, but will not pay for sample collection costs. Any stallion found positive for *T. equigenitalis* as part of this voluntary testing effort will be quarantined, then treated and re-tested at APHIS' expense (including practitioner fees) until determined to be negative.

Illinois has been designated to sample 59 stallions by July 2010. Contact Dr. Anna Ruman at (217) 547-6041 for enrollment information.

Information on the CEM outbreak that occurred recently in the US, plus detailed information about the sampling and testing plan, can be obtained online at www.aphis.usda.gov.

Studies Detail Possible Benefits of Omega-3 Fatty Acids for Dogs with Arthritis

(AVMA: SCHAUMBURG, Ill.) March 4, 2010 - A series of studies published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA) offers new insights into the possible benefits derived from feeding foods containing high omega-3 fatty acid concentrations to dogs with

osteoarthritis.

The results of the three studies, according to contributing author Dr. Kevin Hahn, director of research and chief medical officer at Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc., show that the dogs that were fed the foods experienced less pain associated with the disease and greater mobility.

"Many of us write off mobility problems in dogs as a part of the aging process," Hahn said. "These studies demonstrate that feeding a food containing omega-3 fatty acids to a dog with osteoarthritis significantly improves mobility and quality of life. All three studies showed significant mobility improvement as assessed by either pet owners, veterinarians, or both."

The studies, published in the January 1, 2010, and March 1, 2010, issues of JAVMA, included 274 dogs with osteoarthritis that took part in clinical studies at dozens of privately owned veterinary clinics and two university veterinary clinics. The researchers focused on three areas: the effects of omega-3 fatty acids on clinical signs of osteoarthritis in dogs; the effects of omega-3 fatty acids on weight bearing in dogs with the disease; and the effects of omega-3 fatty acids on nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) dosage in dogs with osteoarthritis.

In the first study, dogs with chronic pain associated with osteoarthritis showed improvements in their ability to play and rise from rest at six weeks after being switched to a diet containing high concentrations of fish oil omega-3 fatty acids. The second study showed that limb strength in dogs improved with omega-3 dietary intervention, Hahn said.

In the third study, veterinarians were able to reduce the dosage of carprofen, a common NSAID used for pain relief in dogs with osteoarthritis, while still providing pain relief to dogs that were fed food supplemented with omega-3 fatty acids.

These studies show that omega-3 fatty acids provide pain relief and improve mobility in dogs with osteoarthritis. They also indicate that proper use of a food containing a sufficient amount of omega-3 fatty acids may result in a lower dosage of medication required to manage joint pain and improve mobility in a dog with osteoarthritis. This finding is especially important because it allows veterinarians to better understand that complications that may arise from pain relief medications could be reduced when the medications are used in combination with proper nutrition.

"First and foremost, dog owners should always rely on their veterinarian when making decisions regarding their pet's health," Hahn said. "But it's also very important for dog owners to know that osteoarthritis can be a silent and unrecognized problem that affects both the pet's and the owner's quality of life. With proper nutritional intervention, we can enrich and lengthen that special relationship between people and their pets."

About the Photo

The [American Redstart](#) (*Setophaga ruticilla*) is a unique warbler. The male is black with orange patches on each wing, on the sides of its breast, and at the base of its tail on either side. The male's throat is black, but its breast and belly are white. The female is gray where the male is black, and yellow where the male is orange. The female also has a white eye-ring. Juveniles and first-year males look like females, although first-year males generally have some black on the upper breast or head. The American Redstart has a relatively short, wide bill.

American Redstarts breed in North America, across southern Canada and the eastern USA. They are migratory; wintering in Central America, the West Indies, and northern South America (in Venezuela they are called "candelitas"). They are very rare vagrants to western Europe.

Although American Redstarts are still widespread and common throughout their range, they have experienced declines in many regions. Some of these declines may be from habitat loss due to natural maturation of forests, but others may be directly or indirectly related to habitat degradation from fragmentation. Fragmentation creates more edges, which initially attract more American

Redstarts because of the increased brush in these areas. Later, however, predators and nest parasites are also attracted to edges, resulting in reduced productivity at forest edges. In a study in British Columbia, over 63% of American Redstart nests were parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds. In the West, many streamside forests have been eliminated or degraded, which may account for significant declines seen in western populations. Habitat destruction on the wintering grounds is also a conservation concern. In addition to natural forests, American Redstarts use shade-coffee plantations during the winter; supporting shade-grown coffee may help protect some of their winter habitat.

I photographed this immature male American Redstart in Rochester, IL.

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