

LEPTO'! THE FRIGHTENING REEMERGENCE OF MUD FEVER

PARTS 1 AND 2

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Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease. And a terrible one. It's also widespread! And zoonotic. In fact, Lepto' is the most widespread global zoonosis. The frequently fatal condition is diagnosed pretty much everywhere on earth where there are people, animals, and most warm to hot environments.

The single best source of veterinary information related to Leptospirosis is the consensus statement or set of recommendations on dealing with Leptospirosis prepared by infectious disease experts for the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM). Despite the name, this organization isn't a university or school, but rather the group that represents board-certified internal medicine specialists in our veterinary profession. You can bet that when the ACVIM issues some guidance on a given disease or condition, it is well worth looking at it!

With that in mind, here's a link to that ACVIM Leptospirosis consensus statement:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3040842/>

And here is a link to a fairly recent article about Leptospirosis:

<https://todaysveterinarypractice.com/canine-leptospirosis-a-perspective-on-recent-trends/>

Have you ever had a Lepto case in your hospital? How was it diagnosed? How was it treated? Did the patient survive and recover? How is it doing today?

Do you think there may've been other sick but undiagnosed dogs that were treated and recovered? It's certainly possible. After all, there's an old saying that "Lepto sees us more than we see it."

This presentation will cover a lot of ground and hopefully be very interactive. The bottom line is that as the demographics of society have changed and rural areas, farm fields, and meadows are now subdivisions with lots of potentially infected "carrier state" wildlife populations living comfortably amongst them, the demographics of Leptospirosis have also changed. Keep in mind that Lepto can also be an urban disease, simply because many wildlife species, and rodents like rats and mice, too, have become quite tolerant of humanity and are now living in close proximity to our pets and us in cities. These animals form a reservoir for the bacteria.

As for prevention, which is critical for many dogs if we correctly risk-assess them and their lifestyles, there are many different stand-alone and combination vaccines to help protect dogs against this

disease. Pick one, or several if you prefer, and use it (or the few you've selected to align yourself with). Consistently risk assess your patients and their lifestyles and maximize the appropriate vaccination of dogs against this infectious condition. The Leptospirosis vaccines of today have come a long way from the cruder and perhaps more adverse event-prone products of the past. Today's vaccines are both very safe and very effective in helping protect dogs against this tragic and potentially fatal disease. As one of our colleagues once said, "I've never had a dog die from a Lepto vaccine, but I have had them die from the disease."

Please also note that while the manufacturers want you to think that there are profound differences between their vaccine and the other guy's, in this author's opinion, having worked for several of these companies, those differences are largely academic and with few exceptions have not been proven in rigorous head-to-head trials between vaccines to provide different or additional benefit.

To a large extent, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), which oversees animal vaccines, or "biologics," tends to agree. Going back now roughly five years this agency began working to establish a so-called "single tier" labeling system for animal vaccines. This policy basically says that all vaccines for a given disease are very similar and thus should all have identical label indications and wording. To address possible differences or advantages, however, if the manufacturer feels compelled to wave the flag or brag about their particular product(s) they can do so, sharing with the public key data or studies within a specific accessible zone in the USDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) website.

Again, please take Leptospirosis seriously in your pets, your patients, and in regard to you and your teammates and families. From farm and field to suburbia and the city, we all need to be vigilant, testing sick dogs appropriately – sometimes with newer, handy bedside test kits – to monitor for this zoonotic scourge. Yes, Leptospirosis may be rare in your neck of the woods, but when it does occur it can be exceedingly nasty and fairly often even fatal. Don't take chances and ignore this dangerous disease!

Thank you for everything each and every one of you do every day to help keep animals healthy!