

# TIMBERCREST VET GAZETTE



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## Railsplitter Veterinary Wellness Center Update

In the last issue of the Timbercrest Vet Gazette, we announced that the opening of our second location, Railsplitter Veterinary Wellness Center, was just around the corner. On Monday, November 1, the Timbercrest team gathered with the Lincoln/Logan County Chamber of Commerce and our friends and family for a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. It was a highly anticipated day to celebrate everyone's hard work and our opportunity to serve the Lincoln community.

A lot has happened during Railsplitter's first month. We have seen multiple wellness appointments, performed several surgeries, and have had the opportunity to provide our clients with the latest technology advancement by using our new digital radiograph machine. Most importantly, we have all enjoyed getting to meet all of our new clients and patients from the Lincoln area. As with any new business, there has been a bit of a learning curve while we all get settled in. We would like to thank all of our clients for their patience during this time. From learning our new software and credit/debit processing system, to getting our boarding areas completely set up, your patience and loyalty has been much appreciated. We are currently planning on Open House event to thank our clients and give them the opportunity to tour the entire hospital and get to know our team.

For those who have not yet visited Railsplitter, please stop by. It has the same doctors and staff as Timbercrest Veterinary Service. Our new software enables us to access the same records and schedules from both clinics, so we can schedule your pet or refill a medication at whichever location is most convenient for you at any given time. For our large animal clients, we have a very limited supply of food animal drugs for your convenience. Please call us in advance to see if we have the products you need.

We have had a multitude of calls from clients wanting to schedule grooming appointments. We are working diligently to hire a groomer. We want to make sure we hire someone who is experienced and is great with both our clients and patients.

Again, we encourage you to stop in to see the facility and browse our retail area while you have a cup of coffee and warm up by the fireplace.

If you no longer wish to receive a printed newsletter, send us an email to [timbercrest@timbercrestvet.com](mailto:timbercrest@timbercrestvet.com) and you can receive an electronic copy. If you no longer want to receive our quarterly newsletter, send us an email or give us a call and we can take you off of our mailing list.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Railsplitter update	1
Featured Employee	1
Newsletter notice	1
Upcoming Events	1
Pets have teeth too!	2
Canine Hypothyroidism	2
Doggie Diabetes	3
Your Pets Golden Years	3
Buyer Beware	3
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure	4
Calving Season disaster preparedness	4
Activities Page	5
Comfortis	6

## Featured Employee

~Michelle Godziewski

Michelle graduated from Michigan State University in 2007 with a Bachelor of Science Degree majoring in Veterinary Technology. After taking the board exams she became a Certified Veterinary Technician and began working in a busy small animal practice near her hometown in Michigan. In November 2009, she moved from Michigan to join the Timbercrest Veterinary Team.

She is the small animal technician at Timbercrest and Railsplitter. Michelle has a wide range of duties that includes client education, prep, monitoring and post-op care for all surgical and hospitalized patients.

Michelle is the youngest of three girls. She has two nephews and two nieces. In her free time she enjoys rollerblading, swimming, shopping and spending time with friends and family. Michelle has two cats, Trail Mix and Daisy, who live at home with her parents in Michigan. Although they are mother and daughter; they couldn't be more opposite. Trail Mix is sassy and wants things her way all the time. Daisy is docile and scared of everything, including her own shadow. Michelle finds it hard living in a home with out any pets, so she is always eager to pet sit for her friends.



## Upcoming events...

Saturday, March 5, 2011 (8am – 12pm)

Timbercrest Veterinary Service and Railsplitter Veterinary Wellness Center are proud to offer an opportunity for professional pet pictures. Professional photographer Mary Lieferman, owner of Art Photography by Mary, will be at our Railsplitter clinic to capture images of your family, children, and pets. A backdrop and props will be available to help get just the right shot. There is no fee and a complimentary 4x6 print will be given to everyone. You will also have the opportunity to purchase additional prints. Check out our website, [www.railsplittervet.com](http://www.railsplittervet.com) for more details.

## February is National Pet Dental Month: Pets have teeth too!!



By: Michelle Godziewski

Dental disease is something that both humans and pets have in common. The progression, clinical signs, treatment and prevention are practically the same. The only difference is the importance of dental hygiene has been drilled into our brains since we were young children. Unfortunately, most pet owners haven't been informed that their pet's oral hygiene is just as important as their own. For this reason, almost 75% of dogs and cats are already showing signs of dental disease by age three.

### Dental Disease Progression

Dental disease starts with a sticky substance known as plaque. Plaque forms when food particles and bacteria collect on the surface of the teeth and along the gum line. If plaque is not removed in time, minerals found in saliva will combine with it and cause it to harden. In both humans and in pets, plaque can start hardening into tartar in as little as 12 hours. With each meal our pets eat, the food particles and bacteria accumulate in the pockets in the gum line. These bacteria continuously release toxins that start eating away at the ligaments that hold each tooth in place, called the periodontal ligament. The collecting bacteria can cause an infection called an abscess, which is essentially a pocket of pus. Eventually, the entire tooth root and periodontal ligament is destroyed by the infection. Without the root or ligament holding it in place, the tooth will fall out on its own.

### Prevention

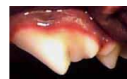
Switching your pet to a dry kibble, offering dental treats such as Greenies, CET Chews, Science Diet T/D, or dental approved bones are small and easy changes that can be made to improve your pet's dental health. As your pet chews on these products, it helps break down and remove the plaque or newly formed tartar from their teeth.

The most important part of your pet's dental care is regular brushing of their teeth. In the perfect world, you would brush your pet's teeth as many times a day as you brush your own; twice a day, every day. However, we live in the real world and some days we're lucky to find the time to brush our own teeth some days. Since brushing can't be done twice daily, the next best thing is to brush their teeth every other day or every third day. Brushing will be a huge challenge if you try to rush it. Approach brushing your pet's teeth the same way you would as if you were training them to do a new trick. Short training periods with positive reinforcement works the best.

Unfortunately, brushing your pet's teeth or giving them dental treats will not help if your pet has a significant amount of tartar build up on the teeth or beneath the gum line. In some cases, your pet may need to have a dental prophylaxis (cleaning) in order to remove the heavy tartar, repair the gum line and remove any loose teeth. A dental cleaning also gives you a "fresh" slate to begin your brushing routine. A dental cleaning is not a complicated procedure, but unfortunately most pets will not sit still long enough to have tartar chipped off and their teeth polished. For this reason, all pets are put under general anesthesia during a dental cleanings. Extra precautionary measures such as pre-anesthetic blood work and intravenous catheters can be taken to minimize the risk of general anesthesia. A dental prophylaxis for pets is very similar to what we have done biannually when we go to the dentist. It includes charting, probing, cleaning with both a hand scaler and an ultrasonic scaler above and below the gum line, and polishing to smooth out any uneven surfaces.

### Summary

Dental disease is more than bad breath and losing a couple teeth; it can lead to more serious problems such as heart, kidney or lung disease. Prevention is easy! Nothing can replace brushing your pet's teeth regularly, but dental treats such as Greenies or Science Diet T/D can be given to supplement brushing. With a few small changes, you can prevent your pet from being part of the 75% of dogs and cats that have dental disease by age three. Don't be afraid to ask the staff at Timbercrest or Railsplitter for other dental tips or help picking out the proper dental treat for your furry friend!



Beginning of plaque build up along the gum line



Moderate tartar build up and the beginning stages of gingivitis.



Gingival recession (separation of gingiva from the tooth surface).



Severe dental disease. Heavy tartar build up with severe gingivitis.

## Canine Hypothyroidism

By: Dr. Jay Miller

Did you know that approximately one half of the canine population is overweight? The most common cause of obesity in the canine is an excess of caloric intake vs. the amount of calories that are used on a daily basis. However, there are a few medical conditions that do explain the extra pounds in our canine friends.

Thyroxin is a hormone secreted by our thyroid gland at the base of the neck that controls the metabolism of the body. Hypothyroidism is a lack of thyroxin in the blood which leads to a decreased metabolic rate, allowing the animal to not be as metabolic active as they should. Hypothyroidism is seen in larger breed dogs usually from the ages of 4 to 10 years. Hypothyroidism will lead to a significant weight gain. However, the weight gain is not the only clinical sign. Almost all canine hypothyroid dogs have multiple clinical sign that include exercise intolerance, thin hair coat, dry flaky skin, poor thermal regulation, and many more associated with a decreased metabolism.

The primary cause of hypothyroidism in dogs is the destruction of the gland itself. It is thought to be an autoimmune dysfunction. Diagnosis is a simple blood test that takes about three days. The good news is treatment is very simple. Hypothyroidism dogs can live a very long productive life with a daily supplement of thyroxin. Almost all of the owners are remarkably surprised the difference the medication makes in their pet.

## Doggie Diabetes

By: Dr. Teal Summitt

Diabetes mellitus is a common disease that affects millions of people in the United States. Not unlike their owners, dogs are susceptible to the disease as well. Although there is a genetic factor in whether or not a dog



is susceptible to diabetes, there are steps that owner can take to prevent or slow their dog from crossing over into a true diabetic condition. Diabetes is a condition where the pancreas does not produce enough or any insulin. Because insulin's job is to transfer sugar from the bloodstream to the organs, a diabetic patient is not able to use the glucose they ingest.

The cause of canine diabetes is uncertain – genetics, obesity, immune disorders, and other endocrine diseases can all play a part. Signs to look for if you think your dog has diabetes include drinking and urinated more than normal, eating more than normal, weight loss, and weakness. Cataracts can also be evident as a general white or blue haze in the center of the eye. Diagnosing diabetes is typically simple. A blood test and urinalysis are generally enough to confirm simple cases of the disorder and usually show a blood sugar of above 300 (normal is 75 – 120).

Treatment is possible but it is important to remember that diabetes is a manageable disease, NOT a curable one. The best treatment is a combination of insulin therapy, proper diet, and exercise. Most dogs require two injections of insulin per day so their glucose levels to not rise and fall too drastically. Insulin shots should be given at the same time(s) each day so fluctuations are kept to a minimum. A diabetic pet should also be eating regular meals as the goal is keeping glucose at a steady level throughout the day. Diets high in simple sugars (such as semi moist foods) should not be fed. Diabetic pets should be switched to a prescription diet that is designed to stabilize glucose and maintain a healthy weight. We recommend Hill's Prescription Diet W/D or Hill's Prescription Diet R/D.

Preventing diabetes can be a tricky task, especially in adult patients. Keeping your pet at a healthy body weight is by far the most important thing you can do. It is possible for a dog to be prone to diabetes, be kept at a good weight, and never actually have a "diabetic condition." Exercise has been proven to lower insulin requirements and therefore is another great prevention.

If you are concerned your pet is prone to or might have diabetes mellitus do not hesitate to call us at Timbercrest Veterinary Service 217-648-5800 or Railsplitter Veterinary Wellness Center 217-732-5700. We are happy to help you with any of your pet's needs.

### Buyer Beware:

We know it is tempting to bring home that cute baby calf from the sale barn that seems like a good deal. However, they are often commingled with calves from other farms and exposed to many different pathogens which can make them sick. We would like for you to make an educated decision before bringing them home. Several days after you bring them home, some of the signs and symptoms you may see are: diarrhea, lethargy, respiratory distress, fever, anorexia, and nasal discharge. These signs come from diseases caused by high stress from the sale barn environment and low immunity because of their age (probably from not receiving enough colostrum). If you are interested in purchasing some bucket calves, the staff at Timbercrest can recommend some reputable sources.

## Your Pet's Golden Years

By: Dana Daugherty

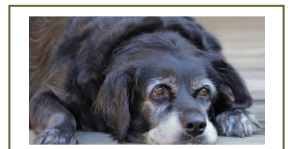
"Old dogs, like old shoes, are comfortable. They might be a bit out of shape and a little worn around the edges, but they fit well." Dr. Bonnie Wilcox, author of *Old Dogs, Old Friends: Enjoying Your Older Dog*, very nicely sums up the senior years of pets. While still our loyal friends and family members, our pets are not exempt from the effects of aging. Veterinary medical advances and client education have allowed doctors to lengthen the life spans of companion animals. Along with this, however, come complications and diseases that require owners to work closely with their veterinarian to ensure a comfortable life for their senior pet. This simplest definition of a "senior" is any pet over seven years of age. However, this number is only a starting point and needs to be adjusted for each individual pet, breed, and species.

As pets age, a variety of diseases and problems can arise. Organ system decline, hormonal disorders, osteoarthritis, obesity, loss of sensory perception, behavioral problems, and cancers should all be concerns of any senior pet parent. Regular veterinary wellness exams are recommended for all pets, not just seniors. But for seniors, these exams are vital to prevention, early detection, or treatment of any problems. Additionally, laboratory testing might be recommended to gain a complete "picture" of your pet's health.

Exercise and pain management are also vital parts of a senior wellness program. Short intervals of low-impact exercise help keep joints and muscles healthy. Short walks for dogs and toys or scratching posts for cats will keep pets mobile and encourage youthful play. This is also a great way to help ward off obesity. If you notice your furry friend seems stiff or painful at certain times of the day or after exercise, please contact Timbercrest Veterinary Service or Railsplitter Veterinary Wellness Center to discuss a pain management program and what can be done to slow the onset of osteoarthritis.

Nutrition is also a necessary, yet often overlooked part of a mature pet's life. At the appropriate "senior" age for your pet, usually age seven, we recommend changing your cat or dog's diet to one designed just for geriatric needs. Hills Science Diet offers nutritional options for seniors of all breed sizes and needs. Want a formulation for your toy breed senior dog? We can do that. Want a hairball prevention diet for your elderly cat? We have that, too. There are also prescription senior diets that our doctors might prefer for your pet. Prescription diets for cognitive function, joint health, kidney disease, and liver disease are all designed for senior cats and dogs.

If you have any questions about what you should be doing for your senior pet, please do not hesitate to call Timbercrest Veterinary Service or Railsplitter Veterinary Wellness Center. Our doctors and staff want to help you make the most of your loyal friend's golden years. Please contact us today for a customized senior wellness plan.



## An ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure

By: Dr. Teal Summitt

We sometimes forget how far a little preventative medicine can go. The recent outbreaks of Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis in the Midwest and Eastern part of the country have given a glimpse into the consequences that can result from ignoring the easy steps taken to avoid disease. Spring is a very common time to do vaccinations, teeth floating, and other “maintenance” issues on your horses. The “core” vaccine for adult horses in central Illinois includes three vaccines – a 2-way Equine Influenza/Rhinopneumonitis vaccine, a 4-way Eastern/Western Equine Encephalomyelitis/West Nile Virus/Tetanus vaccine, and a rabies vaccination. These should ideally be done anywhere between January and June. For horses with no history of vaccinations, these should be boosted in 3-6 weeks. Some should be repeated throughout the year if your horse travels frequently and is at an increased risk of exposure.



Pregnant mares have a different protocol for vaccinations and should **never** be given modified live vaccines as it may cause abortions. The “normal” booster vaccinations (EEE/WEE, Influenza, and West Nile) are given 30 days prior to foaling. Rhinopneumonitis is given at 5, 7, and 9 months of gestation. This gives protection to the foal when it is born and exposed to several diseases.

It is not uncommon to also deworm horses at the time of vaccinations from a convenience standpoint. Gastrointestinal parasites can cause a dull/rough haircoat, depression, and decreased stamina. If severe enough, infestations can cause colic or diarrhea. There are several families of worms including roundworms, large strongyles, small strongyles, and tapeworms. Deworming protocols are specific to your herd and should be made with your veterinarian after fecal egg counts are performed. Age and lifestyle of your horse also plays into frequency and types of dewormers. Pregnant mares should be dewormed 30 days before foaling.

A Coggins test can also be performed at this time for your convenience. This is a test that is required to transport horses and many times is required to enter a horse into a sale or show. It is a simple blood test sent to the state lab and checks for Equine Infectious Anemia, a reportable disease transmitted by blood sucking insects. Once negative, the test results are good for 6-12 months depending on the destination and age of the horse. Keep in mind it can take up to 2 weeks to get the results of this test back so if you know you are taking your horse somewhere, plan ahead to get the results back in time!

Dental floatation is also another important part of preventative medicine. Signs of dental disease in horses include not eating or slow to eat, dropping excessive amounts of grain, pocketing food in cheeks, foul odor in mouth, nasal discharge, facial swelling, undigested grain in feces, and behavioral changes (especially with a bit in the mouth). A thorough examination of the mouth can determine what if any treatments need to be done. The most common is “floating” or filing of the teeth. Horses continuously grow teeth throughout their adult lives and can develop “points” at certain locations on the teeth. These can lead to pain when chewing, ulcerations and cuts on the inside of the cheek, and more severe complications if ignored. The older a horse gets, the slower its teeth grow and the less you will have to float your horse’s teeth.

Preventative medicine for your horse may seem simple enough but is not to be ignored. A small preventable problem can quickly turn into a big (and costly) problem if ignored too long. If you have any questions about your horse’s needs, please don’t hesitate to call us at Timbercrest Veterinary Service 1-217-648-5800.

## Calving Season Disaster Preparedness

By: Dr. Jay Miller

As a beef producer, have you ever made an investment in an asset to your operation to find out a year later that you lose everything. This is the mindset producers need to think about with their brood cow operation. Time after time producers do not take the proper approach to managing the assets to assure a profitable year. The largest loss to an operation is the newborn calf. The number one cause of death loss in newly arrived calves is a lack of planning. There is not a single disease that a newborn is faced with that is as lethal as the challenges they face with the environment they arrive into. Therefore, I would challenge all producers to be prepared for the upcoming calving season.



The first step starts with the heifers. Select the proper heifers with the proper frame, genetics, and body condition that are going to make good sound cows. The next step is to breed heifers to calve 30 days ahead of cows and work with a nutritionist make sure heifers are fed properly from selection until they are bred for their second calf. It is common for producers to feed their heifers along with their cow which results in poor conception rates for the second calf heifers.

As for the cow herd itself, nutrition plays the biggest role in maintaining a healthy cow herd. Again, it is common to see cows fed strictly the traditional “round bale” as a harvested forage. Unfortunately this does not meet their nutritional demand!!! Nutrition is the biggest expense to the cow herd and it is imperative that producers work with an outside source of information to manage the cow’s nutritional demand.

As for the newborn calves, the most common condition that causes death is called Failure of Passive Transfer. This is a condition when the newborn calf does not receive or absorb the proper amount of colostrum. Colostrum is the very first milk that the cow produces and a newborn calf must receive. Colostrum is comprised of an excess of antibodies that are required for a calf to combat infections the first 6 weeks of life. To ensure proper consumption, the producer needs to provide adequate facilities for cows during the calving process. The calves should be provided a clean dry warm area with excellent footing to allow the calf to gain access to the cow within 4-6 hours after arrival. The calf must consume colostrum within the first 24 hours of life or they will lose the ability for the gut to absorb the antibodies. Even with proper consumption, Failure of Passive Transfer can still occur if the gut is challenged and the antibodies are not absorbed. Proper nutrition to the cows will also improve the quality of the colostrum produced.

The take home message for the upcoming calving season is to start planning now to be prepared. If at any time you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Timbercrest Veterinary Service.

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# COMFORTIS®

The harvest is over and winter is officially upon us. Even though it is freezing outside, our houses are cozy and warm. Unfortunately for us, fleas love this environment too! It takes a lot to kill fleas outside, but the truth is fleas and other parasites live a good majority of their life cycle in the comfort of YOUR home. In your carpet, on your couches, and even along your base boards! YUCK!

Though your dog or cat is less likely to bring parasites in from the outside in winter, untreated pets enable fleas to thrive year-round indoors. Our doctors at Timbercrest Veterinary Service and Railsplitter Veterinary Wellness Center highly recommend that pets be treated for fleas every month, regardless of the season. In addition to treating the pet, it is also essential that the environment be treated as well. Frequent vacuuming and immediately disposing of the vacuum contents can be very beneficial.

Excellent protection for year-round flea prevention in dogs is the FDA-approved *Comfortis tablet*. It protects without the mess. No separating pets from children or other pets. Plus *Comfortis* won't wash off in the bathtub. *Comfortis* lasts for 30 days and kills fleas before they lay eggs, protecting your home from infestations. Just give your dog the beef flavored tablet once a month with a meal and consider yourself safe from fleas for yet another month!

While *Comfortis* is not approved for use in cats, topical products *Frontline* and *Advantage*, are still great ways to keep fleas at bay during these winter cold months.

*Comfortis*, *Frontline*, *Advantage*, and *K9 Advantix* are available at Timbercrest Veterinary Service and Railsplitter Veterinary Wellness Center in Lincoln, IL.

We look forward to helping you keep your house FLEA FREE!!!!

**Check us out on Facebook!!**



Timbercrest Veterinary Service  
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Railsplitter Veterinary Wellness Center

**Elanco**



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