

Hans Lehtinen – 70 years on 4 June 2007

Mr Hans Lehtinen, one of the most famous Finnish allrounders will celebrate his 70th birthday on 4 June 2007.

“Hans Lehtinen fund” will be established to honour Mr Lehtinen’s career on his birthday. The fund is run by the Helsinki Kennel Club. The donated funds will be used for a book about Mr Lehtinen and his career. The incomes from the sales of the book will be channelled to a fund from which young Finnish judges can apply grants for training.

The Finnish Dog Show Judges’ Society is responsible to govern established fund and has opened an account for donations. The account number is Nordea Bank, Finland IBAN FI5424981800252606 and Bank BIC/SWIFT is NDEAFIHH. The Helsinki Kennel Club (Helsingin Seudun kennelpiiri), Rakuunantie 4 A 8, 00330 Helsinki. When making donations please use as the reference identifier 5005.

The donations should be made by 27 May 2007. Mr Lehtinen will receive on his birthday a list of all contributors. Please mark your name clearly on the transfer.

The Helsinki Kennel Club



Generally Speaking ..

As so often happens when it is time to go to press, I have run out of time! So many issues in this edition deserve your attention and I did intend to highlight them for you, so please read it thoroughly.

The first and foremost one that springs to mind is the situation concerning the Australian Canine Eye Scheme - a very confusing and very scary development of which we will no doubt hear a great deal more! Paranoid we may be, but like the proposed compulsory DNA testing which thankfully we averted, we have to ask “Is there a hidden agenda” in all this? It reeks of the Animal Rightists in that the more they can do to make it hard for us to breed purebred dogs, the happier they will be. This scheme has the potential to cost the breeders thousands of dollars, because there is a “clear and present danger” that it will not be restricted to eyes alone - and even so far as eyes are concerned there is grave doubt that the methodology is in fact justified - and if we are not vigilant, it will so easily become another tip of the iceberg to spread to those of us whose breeds DO NOT SUFFER TO A RECORDABLE DEGREE from many of the hereditary diseases known to the canine race.

There has been yet another tragic death of a dog in transit - this time on a Qantas flight to Singapore, a beloved family pet who died from heat stress during a five-hour flight delay at Melbourne’s Tullamarine airport. The six-year-old female Golden Retriever the family pet of Dr Fred Prata, a former CSIRO senior scientist re-locating to a new job in Norway had been loaded into the cargo hold of a Qantas flight to London. Phoebe, was left unattended during the delay, with temperatures above 30degrees recorded on the airport tarmac.

The dog was discovered dead in its transport crate on arrival at Singapore airport. An autopsy later confirmed she had died from heat stress most likely from over-heating in the cargo hold before the aircraft’s departure. A Qantas spokesman said the airline accepted responsibility for the dog’s death, blaming a “breakdown in communication” and admitting the aircraft hold “should have been opened once the full extent of the delay was known.” The airline had expressed “sincere regret” to the family. Big woop!

There appears to have been an outbreak of herpes virus in Australia - very little being said by the vets, other than a few of them have admitted to losing puppies from their own breeding bitches to similar catastrophic problems, but the more you dig the more you find. See below, and we would welcome feedback on this “new” killer of apparently healthy newborn babies.

Wendye Slatyer Editor

Decline in pet numbers blamed on shrinking backyard

Fewer backyards and overly restrictive local government regulations could be behind the latest figures showing a decline in pet ownership in Australia according to the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA).

A report released by the Australian Companion Animal Council reveals that estimated dog and cat populations are both in decline.

The estimated dog population of 2.43 million has been in decline since 2002, and the estimated population of 3.75 million cats has been in decline for more than 10 years. However, pet ownership by Australians remains high compared to other countries, with an estimated 63 per cent of households owning some kind of pet, and 53 per cent owning a cat or dog.

President of the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA), Dr Kersti Seksel said that the trend should be of concern, because pets add to the quality of our lives.

“Many Australians grew up on quarter-acre blocks where there was plenty of room to

run around the backyard with a pet. Modern suburban dwellings are much less likely to have a big backyard, which tends to restrict choices about pet ownership,” Dr Seksel said. “Australian children these days are much more likely to be sitting inside playing with video games than running around the backyard, which I think is a shame. Keeping a pet also teaches us about caring for others.

“There is a vast array of evidence pointing to health and other benefits enjoyed by pet owners. But perhaps more importantly, owning a pet is a simple joy and encourages everyone to enjoy a more active lifestyle,” Dr Seksel said.

Dr Seksel said that local governments could do more to provide pet friendly environments.

“While there may be fewer dogs around these days, many people are having them trained as pups, so that they are not a nuisance to the general public. A range of new services are now available, such as animal day-care, pet walkers and groomers that have emerged to meet their needs. Local governments should recognise this trend by offering more public access for people and their pets.”

People For The Ethical Treatment Of Insects?

People For The Ethical Treatment Of Insects? A tip of the Consumer Freedom hat goes to the editors of Salvo, a Chicago-based cultural journal with a wry sense of humor. The magazine’s inaugural issue was sprinkled liberally with advertising parodies, including one aimed squarely at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA):

STOP THE INSECTICIDE! One million ants are slaughtered every month by careless missteps, cruel young children with magnifying glasses, and newspapers wielded in ignorance and fear. Feeling bugged? To learn what you can do to help stop the insecticide, or to sponsor an orphaned pupae, call 1-800-555-PETI. People for the Ethical Treatment of Insects.

The ad hints at a fair question. Why doesn’t PETA invest considerable time and money

fighting the senseless slaughter of bugs? There are 900,000 known insect species (three times more than the rest of the animal kingdom combined). That’s 80 percent of the world’s species, and surely some of them are capable of feeling pain as they rocket into our windshields.

We think we know the answer: PETA doesn’t regularly crusade for cicadas, strip for scarabs, or counsel kindness to crickets because it would instantly be ridiculed as silly. (Of course, this has never stopped the group before.) But if PETA, the Humane Society of the United States, and other like-minded groups get their way, and global “rights” are established for animals, will there really be a legal difference between cows and cockroaches? Fish and fruit flies? Turkeys and termites? In a world where some insects are already nutritional staples, these questions may already be buzzing around PETA’s headquarters.

From an email to us

We received a phone call from our vet to advise that the biopsies have confirmed the babies had Canine Herpes virus.

If like us, you didn’t know about this insidious virus, we can only emphasise that you look it up and be just as devastated as we were by what you read. Basically, there is no vaccine (except in Europe), you can only test for antibody levels in your dog and this won’t necessarily prevent the virus, as it can be passed from dog to dog and apparently 85% of dogs have had it at some time, but its signs are nothing more than a runny nose or temp for a day or so. Like human viruses and immunity, the dog’s immune system brings it under control and that’s the end of it. Unfortunately, it is most lethal for pregnant bitches and their babies. If the bitch doesn’t abort, reabsorb or produce stillborn (in our case), the pups likelihood of survival after 48 hours is around nil. Those pups who ‘may’ survive, could develop chronic long-term illnesses - related mainly to the renal, liver, respiratory and nervous systems.

Our aim now is to get this information out to as many people as possible (please forward to whoever you know in the dog world), as we took all the precautions with Kel. We have to try to find out the ‘how’s’ now, given that Kel had all her physicals/swabs done, ultrasounds, temps etc., throughout the pregnancy and everything was normal. Unless specifically targeting antibodies with titer levels, it is unlikely any detection would be made and then, on the off-chance that you did find an abnormality, there’s no vaccine available and therefore you are relying solely on the mother’s immune system to prevent damage to her young. In Kel’s case, her age ‘may’ have meant a mildly compromised immune system due to lowered thyroid levels and hence, the virus was able to beat the natural barriers. Again, this too, will require more investigation. This is all supposition at this point, but we will pursue this to the end in the hope that more owners will not have to face anything like our last week.

As a matter of interest, some reports suggest that the virus can be carried on your clothes and passed on to the dog. Given this is an airborne, heat-sensitive virus, its life span (in the environment) is not much more than 30 mins., so again, detecting where this came from is our next goal. Kel had been isolated from all other dogs (excluding our pack) for the full-term and the pack have not left the premises during the period of the pregnancy, so we believe they’re clear - they will however, all be tested. On the occasions of vet visits, other dogs would have been near (both in the surgery and outside) and we can’t rule out a stray dog at our fence and one of our guys bringing it back to Kel. Also, the crucial (total) isolation period is the last tri-mester and the first three weeks after birth - not just the one, as we had believed.

My aim is to follow this all the way through, as I believe other lost litters could be attributed to this virus. The only way it can be confirmed is via autopsy - there is no other way. If you know of any other breeders/friends or associates that have lost whole or part litters, please email me. The animal research/science community appears only to be mildly interested in this virus as it adversely affects a limited population - i.e. pregnant bitches. My suspicion is that there are more cases than any of us would like to believe and that further research or at least the introduction of the vaccine may be overdue in this country. Worth noting, even if the girl has lost a litter, this does not preclude her from whelping in the next or later seasons.

There is much more water to pass under the bridge before we put this to bed, but PLEASE read up and feel free to send any information you think may be of interest to others and back to us, particularly any ‘lost’ litters, whole or partial.

Kel has recovered well from both the surgery and loss of her bubs - in fact, if you didn’t know, you would find it hard to believe that ten days ago she was pregnant. Her speed of recovery further indicates a girl in good health, which in turn makes this whole event even more difficult to comprehend and accept.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and pass it on. Hopefully, knowledge will mean action in the broader arena of both research and treatment, but if not that, your awareness may prevent a tragic event from happening. Thanks again for your time,
Wendy and Rhonda <mailto:wendaru@bigpond.com>