



DBKC NEWS!



February already!

In this month's DBKC News we're going to celebrate our latest Training Graduations and find out all about the Maine Coon in breed profile. This cat breed is the gentle giant of the feline world and is truly beautiful.

Vets Corner looks at the topic of Hip Dysplasia. This genetic abnormality can lead to crippling lameness and painful arthritis and is usually more prevalent in large breed dogs.

And in this month's Ask Pauline we look at the key, non-emotional factors involved in deciding whether to get a pet, and ensuring that the decision you make is one appropriate to your family and lifestyle.

We hope you enjoy this month's edition. If you have any ideas for future topics, please email us at newsletter@delmonkennels.com

Tracy Whelan



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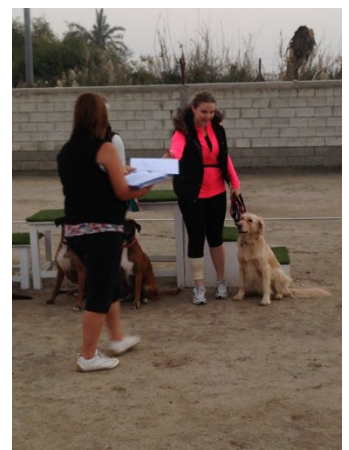
Monthly Breed Focus – This month we find out about the Maine Coon

This month, Vets Corner looks at the topic of Hip Dysplasia



Latest Graduations!

On the 25th January we held our latest graduation ceremony for those owners and dogs that have passed Stage 1 and Stage 2, and we even had our first graduates from Stage 3! Many congratulations to all. More courses will be starting in February, so to sign up for your next Stage, or to join Stage 1, please give us a call on 17694066.





Monthly Breed Profile Maine Coon

Last month we looked at one of the giants of the dog world and this month we're going to look at a cat breed that is known as the gentle giant of the feline world, the Maine Coon.

This lovely, large cat is the official Maine State cat and although some myths exist regarding its origins, it is thought to have come about as a result of breeding between the domestic shorthair and longhair cats introduced from overseas. They are thought to date back to the 1890's although they became less popular as show cats with arrival of Persians in the early 1900's. During this time they remained a favourite breed in Maine, however didn't start to gain widespread popularity again until the 1950's.

One of the things that can be said about the Maine Coon is that they are big in size and even bigger in character! They are often described as playful, loyal, goofy, patient, intelligent and loving. They are also affectionate cats, but are not overly dependent on their families. They will happily sit next to you, or on a chair nearby and don't need to be a 'lap cat'. Even though they are large, they can make good apartment cats. They love to play and are incredibly patient, therefore are a great choice for families with children or other pets.

They have a long, glossy coat that is heavy and water resistant and is like no other cat coat. It is longer on the ruff, stomach and britches to protect against wet and snow, and shorter on the

back and neck to limit tangling, and it's almost maintenance free. They also have a long, bushy tail which they wrap around themselves to keep warm. They need a weekly comb to stop matting, have heavily furred ears to protect from the cold, and big, round, tufted feet which serve as 'snow shoes' in the wintery snows of Maine.

Maine Coons develop slowly and don't achieve full size until they are between 3-5 years old. Males can weight up to 18 pounds and females up to 12 pounds. When you add the 2-3 inches of winter coat, you can see why they are called the giants of the feline world. They have a distinctive voice that is more of a chirping trill than a meow, which they generally use for everything. On the rare occasion they do meow, it is a soft, tiny voice which doesn't match their size! Middle aged Maine Coons can have weight issues, so switching to a low calorie diet as they age is recommended. Many Maine Coons love water, so keep a good supply of clean, fresh water available.

The breed can suffer from inherited health problems, the most common of which are hip dysplasia, which can produce lameness and cardiomyopathy which can produce anything from a minor heart murmur to severe heart trouble. Any breeder should be willing discuss whether they have had any of these health problems in their litters, so ask before you buy.

Ask Pauline

In a lot of cases the decision about whether to get a pet or not is mostly an emotional one. So in this month's Ask Pauline we look at all the non-emotional factors to consider. This will help ensure you are prepared for pet ownership and the commitment it brings.

One of the first decisions to make is whether you are looking for a long-term pet to join your family and to travel with you, if you leave Bahrain. Or, are you looking to care for a pet whilst you are here and then rehome it when you leave. Homing a pet for a few years and caring for it at least gives that pet a home for a period of time and helps prepare them for a future home. The key point is ensuring that you are honest with yourself about what you are able to offer the animal. Rehoming a pet when you leave isn't always easy though, so if this is your plan you need to take steps well in advance of you leaving to find a new home. And in the worst situation where you have to leave at short notice, never dump an animal on the street. It is not what a responsible owner would do and could end up being a death sentence for the animal. There are emergency options available to provide support.

So let's look at what else you need to consider before choosing the pet that is right for you and your family. The next thing to consider is where do you live, how much space do you have and what is your lifestyle? For instance, if you live in an apartment, then having a large breed of dog wouldn't be the best choice. There are lots of different breeds of dog, so choosing the right one that will be happy in your home is important. You also need to consider how much time you have to spend with the animal. Do you go out to work? Have you chosen a pet that will sleep a lot during the day, such as a cat, or do you have a pet that needs attention? When home from work, do you like to go out a lot? Pets like spending time with their owners and can become unhappy, bored and destructive if left of their own for long periods of time.

Avoid impulsive decisions. Match a pet to your home and lifestyle. Keep only pets you can afford to provide food, water, health care, companionship and shelter for. Recognise that pet ownership requires an investment of time and money. Provide appropriate exercise and mental stimulation. Clean up after your pet. Socialise and train your pet. Limit their reproduction. Ensure your pet can be identified as yours. Make alternative arrangements if you can no longer care for your pet.



*What you know you know,
what you don't know you*

Ask Pauline!

Exercise is also very important. Do you have the time to exercise them? Large dogs often have large exercise needs! Are you prepared to get up early every day and walk them before work or before it gets too hot in the summer months? You may get away with a quick 15 minute walk with a small dog, but larger dogs need more, and if not exercised enough often become bored and destructive. Do you want to come home to chewed furniture?! Are you also prepared to spend time training them and socialising them? People often see pets as 'children substitutes' thinking that having a pet is less work than having a child. This isn't the case. Pets are as much work as children. They need to be active and challenged as well as cared for and loved. You wouldn't leave a child home alone all day would you?

It's also worth considering the financial aspect. Can you afford a pet? Did you know that it costs an average of 12,500 Dinars to look after 1 dog over 10 years! And as the average lifespan is 12 years, you will likely end up spending even more. This amount does not include the costs of relocating your animal if you move countries and this should therefore be factored in if you have decided that your pet is with you for life. The costs of relocating are difficult to tie down because there are so many factors to consider; size of pet, health of pet, airline, distance of travel, import/export costs etc. So if you are taking your pet with you when you leave, why not start a savings account now that you contribute to regularly so that you are prepared for these costs when they arise. There is nothing worse than having to move at short notice, possibly because of job changes, and then not having the money available. This causes stress to both owners and animals and if this can be avoided, then it's worth doing.

Pets are fun and give unconditional love and it's easy to be carried away with this when you visit pet stores or shelters but before making a commitment to one, think through the non-emotional factors and ensure the decision you make is the responsible one.

Vets Corner

In this month's Vets Corner we're going to explore the topic of Hip Dysplasia. Although this is normally associated with dogs, it can occur in humans and also in cats, as we found out in this month's breed profile about the Maine Coon. However for the purposes of this, we're going to look at it occurring in dogs.



Let's start by understanding more about what it is. The simplest way to explain it is that Hip Dysplasia is the failure of the hip joints to develop normally, gradually deteriorating until there is a loss of function of the hip joint. As you can imagine, this can be very painful. Another key point is that it is the most common skeletal disease seen in dogs. The photo at the bottom of the page shows how the joints deteriorate over time.

Gender does not affect whether your dog will, or won't, suffer, however some breeds do have a genetic predisposition for it. Large, and giant breeds are more commonly affected. These include Great Danes, Saint Bernards, Labrador, Golden Retriever, Rottweiler and German Shepherd. Typically, it begins while a dog is still young and after they have reached 4 months old.

There are a range of symptoms you may see including

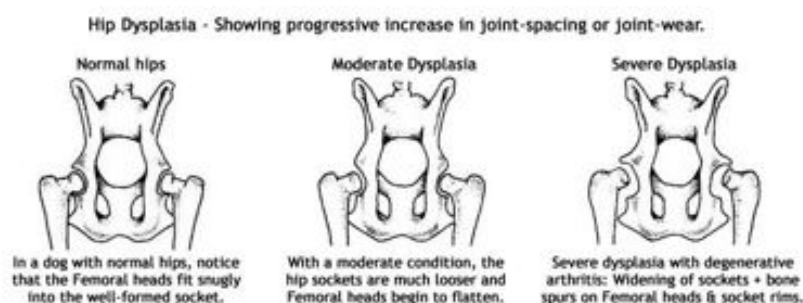
- Difficulty rising,
- Decreased activity,
- Reluctance to run, jump or climb stairs
- Intermittent, or persistent, hind limb lameness
- A 'bunny hopping' or swaying gait
- Back legs unnaturally close together
- Grating with joint movement
- Decreased range of motion in the hip joint

- Enlargement of shoulder muscles due to more weight being put on the front legs as they try to avoid putting weight on their hips

Definite causes of Hip Dysplasia are difficult to determine, but are generally as a result of genetic history, rapid weight gain and obesity or nutritional factors. If you think your dog is showing any of the symptoms mentioned above, you should see your Vet as soon as you can. He will conduct a full examination of your dog. However, to get a definite diagnosis of Hip Dysplasia, x-rays will need to be taken and they can't be done until the dog is over 12 months old. These x-rays can then be examined and a 'score' calculated to determine how severe it is. If you are looking to buy a puppy from a breeder you can ask the breeder for the hip score for the parents. This would give you advance notice of any possible genetic issues to come. If your dog does have Hip Dysplasia, it's also very important not to breed them as the condition can be passed on genetically.

Let's now look at what treatment can be offered for dogs with Hip Dysplasia. Depending on the severity of the illness, surgery may be required. Your vet may also prescribe anti-inflammatory drugs to help reduce the swelling and pain medication to manage the pain. Swimming is also great therapy because it allows the dog to exercise without putting pressure on the joint, yet continues to build the leg muscle. Managing weight is also very important.

If you have any questions on this topic or any other vet related topics, write to us at newsletter@delmonkennels.com.



Wordsearch

Hidden in the wordsearch below are 20 'Dog Jobs'. See if you can find them all. Send the ones you get by email to newsletter@delmonkennels.com and the highest number received by 23rd February will win a mud bath for your pet.



- ACTING
- CADAVER DOGS
- COMPANION
- DETECTION
- DRUG SNIFFER
- GUARD
- GUIDE
- HEARING
- HERDING
- HUNTING
- MASCOT
- POLICE DOGS
- PROTECTION
- RACING
- SEARCH AND RESCUE
- SEIZURE ALERT
- SHOW DOGS
- SLED DOGS
- THERAPY
- TRACKING

*What do you get if you cross a Beagle and an Australian Dog?
Dingo Starr!!*



Feedback & Suggestions

If you have any feedback, suggestions for articles, or questions for Ask Pauline, please write to us at newsletter@delmonkennels.com



Delmon Boarding Kennels