



Talking Terriers

New England Terrier Club

Issue 1

Feb - Mar 2010

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By Larry Venezia DVM

Skin Allergies
A brief overview

Some of the most common maladies we see in dogs and often the most frustrating to treat are skin allergies. The most common question most vets hear from dog owners when we advise them that their canine companion is suffering from an allergic skin condition is, "What is he/she allergic to?" Unfortunately, most allergies manifest themselves similarly, so we cannot make a diagnosis of the type of allergy based on looking at skin lesions. Most allergic skin lesions look similar regardless of what causes the allergy. Distribution and location of the dermatitis may help in deducing certain types of allergies but not always. We often can say, with reasonable certainty that a particular skin lesion is caused by an allergic skin reaction but cannot with any degree of certainty know what the allergy is to. However, having said this, there are some generalizations that are accepted tenets in diagnosing skin diseases in dogs. This article discusses my observations and diagnostic approach with regard to skin allergies seen in my patients.

One point that should be established from the start with regard to recurring, chronic skin problems in dogs is that unless the lesions are caused by mites or fleas, resolution of symptoms will require a concerted effort by the owner and will likely require periodic treatment through out the dog's life. Some dogs have an occasional flare-up of an allergic skin condition once or twice a year especially in late summer and fall. These can often be managed with short term, intermittent therapy and are not to be confused with the dog that suffers continually and has severe repeated flare-ups.

When examining a canine patient with skin problems, my first step is to determine if he/she is itchy or not. If itchy, where are the lesions? Most itchy lesions over the back behind the rib cage, and affecting the groin and back legs, are caused by flea allergy dermatitis. My favorite treatments for flea allergy dermatitis are Advantage and Capstar, and if not complicated by infection, short term, low dose of short acting corticosteroids. Corticosteroids often get a bad rap because they are over-used, over dosed, or used continuously. They should not be used indiscriminately and should be monitored closely by you and your veterinarian. Flea insecticides like Capstar can be used twice weekly and if necessary, Advantage can be applied every two weeks. Both products can be used concurrently. Treatment of the premises is imperative and should include a flea growth inhibitor. Continuous use of Advantage or Advantix on a monthly basis will often prevent flea infestations. Often, infestations happen because we become lax in applying our dog's monthly flea treatment.

If feet and ears are constantly the problem, atopic dermatitis (inhalant or environmental allergies) are most likely the culprit and include allergens from house dust, molds, weed/tree pollens, house mites, various fabrics and various grasses. Long term effective treatment involves desensitization with allergy extract injections or the administration of Atopica. Both are usually lifelong treatments and can be



Upcoming Events

- ❖ **NETC Winter Match – Feb 28th Silver City Canine Training Ctr., Walpole, MA**
- ❖ **2010 NETC Dues are due before Mar. 1st.**
- ❖ **Earthdog Seminar with AKC Date & Place TBA**
- ❖ **Memorial Day Match May 31st Norfolk Cty. Agri. High School, Walpole, MA**
- ❖ **Labor Day Match Sept 6th at Rococo Farm, Uxbridge, MA**



Brags and Wags



Carol Ballard, Cairn Terrier - Karill's Sand Dollar (Mya) obtained her CD on November 15th at the Concord Dog Training Trial. Sandpiper's And So It Goes (Zack 14 years old) received his Rally Novice Title at the South Windsor KC Rally Trial.

Arlene & Richard Grant ,Cairn Terrier – CastleRock Night Hawk went BOB and Grp. 3 at Lewiston-Auburn KC
CastleRock Notorious went WB/BOS at Lewiston-Auburn KC

Judy Hunter, Wire Fox Terrier – Am. Ch & Int'l Ch. Starring Briggs got 2 5point majors via two group wins and 1 4 point major at Hatboro with BOW. Also earned his last point in Springfield for his Am. Ch.

Carleen Farrington, Russell Terrier – Mitern Little Gamble finished in UKC in 5 shows with 5 Group placements.

NETC Welcomes New Members

Cooper, Sue & Rick Tinker-Tavern Terriers
Stamford, CT 06903 Parson Russell Terriers

Farrington, Brian
Raynham, MA Parson & Russell Terriers

Lopes, Tamelea & Kasie Jo Kotane
Parson Russell Terriers

Lunn, Nancy E Rosecainr
N. Providence, RI 02911 Cairns

Smith, Scott Glencoe Smooth Fox Terriers
Plainville, MA

President's Report

2009 has been very busy year for NETC. We have held two successful Matches, the Winter Match, very ably chaired by Gerry Walsh, and Memorial Day Match, which Judy Hunter organized beautifully. Many thanks to both our Match Chairs!

We also held a Spring Earthdog Fun Day which was extremely well attended, with close to 100 people and about 80 dogs participating! Thanks to Jan Silva for all her hard work planning, handling entries, and doing the event flyer, and to Scott Smith for hours and hours of digging trenches for the Earthdog dens. Unfortunately our fall Earthdog day had to be cancelled due to dreadful weather.

Our Annual Meeting was held at Carleen Farrington's home and included a wonderful pot luck lunch as well as a delicious barbecue done by member Katie Heikkila's husband, Kris. YUM!!! Thanks to Carleen for hosting us and to Katie and Kris for the wonderful barbecue. In September, we held a special general membership meeting at Glencoe Farm where the club voted to pursue AKC licensing. Many enjoyed an Earthdog practice after the meeting. The Board has formed a committee charged with overseeing the AKC application. They have begun the process of gathering the club's history and other information required for the application. The first step in the process should be completed soon.

I am very happy to announce that this coming year we will again be holding a Labor Day Match a Scott Rutherford's beautiful farm in Uxbridge, MA.

The board has plans "afoot" for ways to celebrate 2010, which will be our 40th Anniversary as a club. Stay tuned for what will be a very busy and fun filled year!!!

Mary B. Smith
President, NETC

Annual Holiday Dinner

The annual Holiday Dinner was held on Saturday, Dec. 12th at the Chateau Restaurant in Norwood, MA. We had a very good attendance with 32 members and friends present. Our traditional Yankee Swap was lively as usual with a dog bed, a dog blanket, and a collection of dog coats being among the “must have” items! Great fun !!

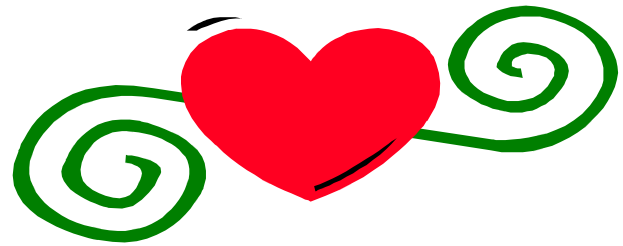


Just because it's winter doesn't mean you can't Earthdog!



REMINDER!!

NETC due for 2010 are due before March 1st. This year, the renewal form includes questions about information that we will need for the AKC application process. Thanks in advance for completing the questionnaire carefully!!



Newsletter Deadlines

The following are the deadlines for “Talking Terriers”, the NETC newsletter. If you have brags, photos, new litters or articles of interest, please get them to Marti Hopkins by the 25th before the issue date. Please be sure to put NETC in the subject line. E-mail to capecodmarti@yahoo.com
Issue dates are Feb. 1st, Apr. 1st, Jun. 1st, Aug. 1st, Oct. 1st, and Dec. 1st.



From the Whelping Box

Fraya Katz – I have 3 Norwich Terrier puppies for sale. Call 603-465-2774

costly. Due to financial constraints, I generally will prescribe Atopica for the small dogs and allergy extract injections for our larger patients. Often we get great results with both approaches but treatment is costly and precautions should be noted. Allergy extract injections usually take months to work, and may be successful 50-70% of the time. Atopica can have gastrointestinal side effects which usually can be eliminated or managed successfully.

Food allergies are usually seen in dogs of less than one year or dogs over five years old, common in German Shepards, often accompanied by gastrointestinal upsets and skin lesions are often seen around the rectal area. (Keith A. Hnilica DVM , MS , DACVD)

About 15% of allergic dogs are reported by various sources to be caused by food. A three month food trial with a novel diet is recommended and should be monitored by your veterinarian. Food trials are tricky because care must be taken to stick strictly to a novel diet and offer the dog nothing else for three months including dog treats. A novel diet is a diet with ingredients in it that your dog has never experienced. thus he/she would not have allergies to. Allergies can only occur if there has been previous exposure. Examples of novel diets are those containing only fish and potato, venison and potato, rabbit and potato, duck and potato, etc. No other ingredients should be available in the diet. Another approach is Hills Z//D ultra-allergen free diet which contains hydrolyzed proteins purportedly incapable of inducing food allergy. You can Google Hills Z/d for a more complete description.

The most common allergy we see in veterinary medicine is flea bite allergy. Typically lesions are manifested over the rump, back of the pelvic limbs and on the dog's abdomen. One flea bite can initiate a systemic reaction in susceptible dogs; hence strict flea control is essential for all our canine companions. It always amazes me how hard it can be to convince owners that their dog is allergic to fleas or that their dog could possibly have fleas. Fleas are very elusive and can be difficult to find unless there are many. If in doubt, always rule out flea allergy first before looking for a more exotic cause of itching in your dog. Treatment is outlined above.

Atopic dermatitis is also a very common form of allergic dermatitis in dogs. Lesion distribution is most often the feet, ears, around the eyes, and the face. Breed predilection include Golden and Labrador Retrievers, Bichons, Poodles, all the Terriers, Bull Dogs and many other breeds. Allergens can be grasses, trees, molds, house dust, dust mites, household fabrics, dander, and many other proteins. Intradermal skin testing by a veterinary dermatologist is the goal standard for diagnosing this condition but a blood panel taken by your veterinarian for various allergens is also considered an effective method of diagnosis. Most often we find dogs suffering from inhalant or environmental allergies are allergic to several or many items and once this is established, a desensitization plan can be initiated.

Unfortunately, according to most leading veterinary dermatologists, food allergies cannot be diagnosed by these methods. Most times, veterinarians can get a good idea that atopic dermatitis is the culprit by history and pattern distribution of the skin lesions.

Many times allergies are complicated by yeast and staph infections. These conditions should be diagnosed and treated. It is conjectured that 80% of the pruritis and discomfort in dermatitis can be caused by these organisms. Many times, resolution of yeast or staph infections, even those initiated by allergies, can control the dogs' dermatologic symptoms. Identification of yeast and/or staph or infections can be made by skin swabs of affected areas. Effective treatment consists of oral medications, topical anti-microbial treatment and anti-microbial shampoos. I find Chlorhexidine shampoos and leave on lotions to be effective. Dogs should be wet thoroughly; the shampoo worked well into their skin, the shampoo should be allowed to stand for five minutes or more and then rinsed off completely. Pour on hypoallergenic rinses can be left on after the bath.

Another option for stubborn recurrent allergic dermatidities in dogs, besides allergy testing and desensitization, is Atopica. This medication, which is a proprietary form of cyclosporine, is an immune

modulator and works very effectively in many allergic dogs. I find it very effective but expensive. Gastrointestinal problems, if they occur, can usually be managed effectively and the drug usually works very well with minimal side effects. It is my treatment of choice in smaller dogs especially the Terriers, Poodles and Bichons that have chronic, year-round allergic dermatitis. It is expensive; especially for larger dogs. Once it becomes generic, I suspect cost will drop and its use will escalate.

One skin condition that causes our dogs to be very itchy, although not very common, but must be recognized is scabies. This is caused by an allergic reaction to the Sarcoptic mite. We see this in any age dog but often see it in pups less than a year old. It may come from exposure at the pup's kennel of origin or be picked up from another animal especially wildlife. It is very commonly seen in our fox and coyote populations. It can be transmitted to people although we are only a transient host. Symptoms for us include an intense rash around our belt line, bra lines for women or where-ever we may have tight fitting clothing. Treatment for us includes a thorough bath with one of these old fashioned brown bar soaps or consult your physician. Treatment for the dog involves several Ivermectin doses given at two week intervals in dogs that are tolerant to Ivermectin therapy. Others such as Collies are best treated with Lime Sulfur dips. Revolution is another effective scabies treatment and is my treatment of choice. It can be used in Collies and other Ivermectin sensitive dogs. Eighty percent of dogs that have scabies demonstrate what we call a pedal reflex. That is, when you scratch the back of your itchy dog's ears, if scabies is present, he/she will phantom scratch with his/her back leg.

It is always wise to rule out hypothyroidism as an underlying cause of recurrent itchy skin. Skin scrapes for mites, skin swabs for yeast and bacteria, and sometimes skin biopsies are other useful tools in trying to resolve the causes of our itchy patients. Diagnosing skin disease can be problematic and sometimes time consuming. Work with your vet as causes of itching can be elusive. Your feedback is important and persistence on your part and that of your veterinarian most often brings very satisfactory results. In very frustrating or unusual cases a skin biopsy and submission to a qualified dermatopathologist will provide the diagnosis. Then a treatment plan can be formulated.

I often get anecdotal reports from dog owners of various diets, supplements and topical remedies available through mail order or the internet that work for their itchy canine. Thus far, I haven't found any one product that on a consistent basis resolves dogs' itchy skin. One nutritional supplement that I've found to promote skin health (and general health) is the omega three fatty acids found in fish oil. I like Trader Joe's fish oil supplement found in that store's nutrition section. It's molecularly distilled to remove any heavy metals and comes in 1100 or 1200 mg size. One capsule added to the diet of an up to thirty pound dog daily and two capsules for a large dog seem to work. Cost is very reasonable.

Good hygiene, clean bedding, frequent brushing, vigilant parasite control, medicated baths as needed, balanced diet and exercise and good genetics go along way in insuring good skin health.

Often, causes of allergies can be very elusive and frustrating even when owners are very conscientious about maintaining good hygiene and husbandry. Generally, with persistence on the part of you and your veterinarian very satisfactory results can be obtained. For the occasional seasonal or short term allergies, treatment may consist of an antihistamine, a medicated bath, short-term, intermittent use of a corticosteroid and anti-microbial therapy if the allergy is complicated by infection. For the patients that suffer from year-round and/or severe allergic dermatitis, a more definitive plan based on therapies previously discussed like Atopica, desensitization, or hypoallergenic diets need to be instigated. Work with your veterinarian until the cause and a treatment plan can be initiated.



New England Terrier Club

Annual Winter Match

*For all Terriers including Rare Breeds
All Breed Obedience Show and Go (mixed breeds welcome)*

Brewin Trophy for Best in Sweeps

Weiner Trophy for Best in Match

SUNDAY, February 28, 2010

at

Silver City Canine Training Center

480 John Hancock Rd, Taunton, MA 508-822-4364

See reverse for fees and directions

PRE-ENTRIES UNTIL 2/23/2010 ENTRIES WILL BE TAKEN FROM 8:00 -11:30!

Obedience Show and Go

Open to ALL DOGS – (mixed breeds too)

Judges: 2 rings (see below)

Time: 8:30 (Individuals can be scored if desired)

Classes: Utility A, B; Open A, B: Sue Ellen Healy, Quincy, MA

Novice A, B: Deb Smith, Wrentham, MA

Sub-Novice: To follow with first available judge

For Terriers only – Dogs with one major accepted or for exhibition only

Sweepstakes -cash prizes

Judge: John Healy, Quincy, MA

Time: 10:30

Classes: 3-6, 6-9, 9-12, 12-18 months

Junior Handling immediately following Sweeps -

Judge: John Healy, Quincy, MA

Classes: Peewee: under 9, Jr: 9-11, Intermediate: 12-14, Sr: 15-17

(Novice and Open in all but Peewee)

Conformation

Airedales to Westies

Judge: Susan Kenny, Kingston, RI

Time: 12:30

Classes: 3-6, 6-9, 9-12, 12-18, Amateur-owner-handled, Open

Very brief general meeting around noon



PRE-ENTRIES DEADLINE: Feb. 23, 2010

MAIL TO: Ann Schliemann 40 Beacon St #2 Arlington, MA 02474

Pre-entry Fees: \$8.00 per dog. Max. of \$40 for conformation only!

At the Door, fee will be \$10.00 per dog. Max. of \$50 for conformation only!

Additional Obed. runs same dog will be \$5.00 pre-entry, \$7.00 at the door.

Junior Handling \$2.00 pre-entry, \$3.00 at the door.

MORNING: Coffee

LUNCH: Available from Rescue

100% of the profits will go to Rescue

For more information you may contact:

Mary Smith, Match Co-Chair

mary.smith@umb.edu 508-695-3685

We have a new website: newenglandterrierclub.org!

Check it out for the latest updates and news!


Download flyers and entry blanks from there!

Please protect your dogs and puppies with appropriate vaccinations.


If you have sick dogs at home, Please do NOT Attend!

Directions to Silver City Canine Training
in the Taunton Industrial Park


From Route 495

 Merge onto BAY ST via EXIT 9 toward INDUST. PK. RD. / TAUNTON. 0.6 miles

 Turn RIGHT onto INDUSTRIAL PARK RD. 0.3 miles

 INDUSTRIAL PARK RD becomes MYLES STANDISH BLVD. 1.2 miles

 Turn LEFT onto JOHN HANCOCK RD. 0.9 miles

 End at **Silver City Canine Training**
480 John Hancock Rd, Taunton, MA 02780, US

No chalking on premises

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR 40TH YEAR!