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CHALLENGE

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VETERINARY



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THE PERFORMANCE YOU EXPECT FROM A TOPICAL, IN AN EASY-TO-USE COLLAR.

*Achieves 100% efficacy against fleas within 2 days of treatment and maintains efficacy above 90% for over 7 months. After day 2, 97.7 – 100% efficacy against *I. scapularis* (dog) and *A. americanum* (cat) was achieved for 8 months.¹

- » Bayer's sustained release technology combines two effective active ingredients, **IMIDACLOPRID + FLUMETHRIN**
- » Kills ticks on **DOGS OR CATS** within 48 hours and repels and kills reinfesting ticks on dogs in as quickly as 6 hours
- » Quickly kills fleas on **DOGS OR CATS** within 24 hours and reinfesting fleas within 2 hours

¹Data on file.



seresto®

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An ailing profession: TEAM PAY



Our first of four Leadership Challenges focuses on team members' pay and the practice's health, including largely stagnant salaries and the decline in benefits as the demand for veterinary services drops. **page 15**

Also in this issue:

Do more, earn more

Team members share tried-and-true tips and tools to help your practice make more money—and pay you more. **page 19**

Why you do it

Whether you're the compassionate voice at the front desk or a member of the clinical or management team, your work improves the lives of pets and their owners. **page 22**

By Donna Recupido, CVP

5 steps to build your career

Take the next step to make your job a career with these tips. **page 23**

By Jennifer Graham



WHAT'S NEW on **dvm360** Find it all here.

The best (manager) around

Does your hospital manager "wow" you daily? Nominate him or her for the *Veterinary Economics* Practice Manager of the Year award, sponsored by VPI, at dvm360.com/PMOY. Winner gets free registration and a trip to CVC Kansas City as well as a spot on the board of *Veterinary Economics* or *Firstline*.



NexGard™ (afoxolaner) Chewables

CAUTION: Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Description:

NEXGARD™ (afoxolaner) is available in four sizes of beef-flavored, soft chewables for oral administration to dogs and puppies according to their weight. Each chewable is formulated to provide a minimum afoxolaner dosage of 1.14 mg/lb (2.5 mg/kg). Afoxolaner has the chemical composition 1-Naphthalenecarboxamide, 4-[5-[13-chloro-5-(trifluoromethyl)-phenyl]-4,5-dihydro-5-(trifluoromethyl)-3-isoxazolyl]-N-[2-oxo-2-[(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)amino]ethyl].

Indications:

NEXGARD kills adult fleas and is indicated for the treatment and prevention of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*), and the treatment and control of American Dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*) infestations in dogs and puppies 8 weeks of age and older, weighing 4 pounds of body weight or greater, for one month.

Dosage and Administration:

NEXGARD is given orally once a month, at the minimum dosage of 1.14 mg/lb (2.5 mg/kg).

Dosing Schedule:

Body Weight	Afoxolaner Per Chewable (mg)	Chewables Administered
4.0 to 10.0 lbs.	11.3	One
10.1 to 24.0 lbs.	28.3	One
24.1 to 60.0 lbs.	68	One
60.1 to 121.0 lbs.	136	One
Over 121.0 lbs.	Administer the appropriate combination of chewables	

NEXGARD can be administered with or without food. Care should be taken that the dog consumes the complete dose, and treated animals should be observed for a few minutes to ensure that part of the dose is not lost or refused. If it is suspected that any of the dose has been lost or if vomiting occurs within two hours of administration, redose with another full dose. If a dose is missed, administer NEXGARD and resume a monthly dosing schedule.

Flea Treatment and Prevention:

Treatment with NEXGARD may begin at any time of the year. In areas where fleas are common year-round, monthly treatment with NEXGARD should continue the entire year without interruption.

To minimize the likelihood of flea reinfestation, it is important to treat all animals within a household with an approved flea control product.

Tick Treatment and Control:

Treatment with NEXGARD may begin at any time of the year (see **Effectiveness**).

Contraindications:

There are no known contraindications for the use of NEXGARD.

Warnings:

Not for use in humans. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children. In case of accidental ingestion, contact a physician immediately.

Precautions:

The safe use of NEXGARD in breeding, pregnant or lactating dogs has not been evaluated. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures (see **Adverse Reactions**).

Adverse Reactions:

In a well-controlled US field study, which included a total of 333 households and 615 treated dogs (415 administered afoxolaner; 200 administered active control), no serious adverse reactions were observed with NEXGARD.

Over the 90-day study period, all observations of potential adverse reactions were recorded. The most frequent reactions reported at an incidence of > 1% within any of the three months of observations are presented in the following table. The most frequently reported adverse reaction was vomiting. The occurrence of vomiting was generally self-limiting and of short duration and tended to decrease with subsequent doses in both groups. Five treated dogs experienced anorexia during the study, and two of those dogs experienced anorexia with the first dose but not subsequent doses.

Table 1: Dogs With Adverse Reactions.

	Treatment Group			
	Afoxolaner		Oral active control	
	N ¹	% (n=415)	N ²	% (n=200)
Vomiting (with and without blood)	17	4.1	25	12.5
Dry/Flaky Skin	13	3.1	2	1.0
Diarrhea (with and without blood)	13	3.1	7	3.5
Lethargy	7	1.7	4	2.0
Anorexia	5	1.2	9	4.5

¹Number of dogs in the afoxolaner treatment group with the identified abnormality.

²Number of dogs in the control group with the identified abnormality.

In the US field study, one dog with a history of seizures experienced a seizure on the same day after receiving the first dose and on the same day after receiving the second dose of NEXGARD. This dog experienced a third seizure one week after receiving the third dose. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. Another dog with a history of seizures had a seizure 19 days after the third dose of NEXGARD. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. A third dog with a history of seizures received NEXGARD and experienced no seizures throughout the study.

To report suspected adverse events, for technical assistance or to obtain a copy of the MSDS, contact Meril at 1-888-637-4251 or www.merial.com/nexgard. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or online at <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth/ProductSafetyInformation>.

Mode of Action:

Afoxolaner is a member of the isoxazoline family, shown to bind at a binding site to inhibit insect and acarine ligand-gated chloride channels, in particular those gated by the neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), thereby blocking pre- and post-synaptic transfer of chloride ions across cell membranes. Prolonged afoxolaner-induced hyperexcitation results in uncontrolled activity of the central nervous system and death of insects and acarines. The selective toxicity of afoxolaner between insects and acarines and mammals may be inferred by the differential sensitivity of the insects and acarines' GABA receptors versus mammalian GABA receptors.

Effectiveness:

In a well-controlled laboratory study, NEXGARD demonstrated 100% effectiveness against adult fleas 24 hours post-infestation for 35 days, and was > 93% effective at 12 hours post-infestation through Day 21, and on Day 35. On Day 28, NEXGARD was 81.1% effective 12 hours post-infestation. Dogs in both the treated and control groups that were infested with fleas on Day 1 generated flea eggs at 12- and 24-hours post-treatment (0-11 eggs and 1-17 eggs in the NEXGARD treated dogs, and 4-90 eggs and 0-118 eggs in the control dogs, at 12- and 24-hours, respectively). At subsequent evaluations post-infestation, fleas from dogs in the treated group were essentially unable to produce any eggs (0-1 eggs) while fleas from dogs in the control group continued to produce eggs (1-141 eggs).

In a 90-day US field study conducted in households with existing flea infestations of varying severity, the effectiveness of NEXGARD against fleas on the Day 30, 60 and 90 visits compared with baseline was 98.0%, 99.7%, and 99.9%, respectively. Collectively, the data from the two studies (one laboratory and one field) demonstrate that NEXGARD kills fleas before they can lay eggs, thus preventing subsequent flea infestations after the start of treatment of existing flea infestations.

In well-controlled laboratory studies, NEXGARD demonstrated >97% effectiveness against *Dermacentor variabilis* 48 hours post-infestation for 30 days.

Animal Safety:

In a margin of safety study, NEXGARD was administered orally to 8- to 9-week-old Beagle puppies at 1, 3, and 5 times the maximum exposure dose (6.3 mg/kg) for three treatments every 28 days, followed by three treatments every 14 days, for a total of six treatments. Dogs in the control group were sham-dosed. There were no clinically-relevant effects related to treatment on physical examination, body weight, food consumption, clinical pathology (hematology, clinical chemistries, or coagulation tests), gross pathology, histopathology or organ weights. Vomiting occurred throughout the study, with a similar incidence in the treated and control groups, including one dog in the 5x group that vomited four hours after treatment. In a well-controlled field study, NEXGARD was used concomitantly with other medications, such as vaccines, anthelmintics, antibiotics (including topicals), steroids, NSAIDs, anesthetics, and antihistamines. No adverse reactions were observed from the concomitant use of NEXGARD with other medications.

Storage Information:

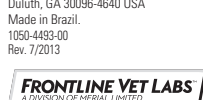
Store at or below 30°C (86°F) with excursions permitted up to 40°C (104°F).

How Supplied:

NEXGARD is available in four sizes of beef-flavored soft chewables: 11.3, 28.3, 68 or 136 mg afoxolaner. Each chewable size is available in color-coded packages of 3 or 6 beef-flavored chewables.

NADA 141-406, Approved by FDA
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firstline®

Mission

To inspire receptionists, credentialed technicians, practice managers, and veterinary assistants to build strong relationships with co-workers, improve their communication skills, and educate clients with confidence in order to enhance their contributions to a veterinary practice and maximize every patient's well-being.

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NEW!

*It's a soft chew.
Kills BOTH fleas and ticks.
It's prescription only.*



NexGard™ (afoxolaner) is the protection you asked for, and patients will beg for.

NexGard is FDA-approved to kill fleas, prevent flea infestations, and kill the American dog tick. NexGard is available only with a veterinarian's prescription, and features anti-diversion technology monitored by Pinkerton® Consulting & Investigations.



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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: For use in dogs only. The most common adverse reaction is vomiting. Other adverse reactions reported are dry/flaky skin, diarrhea, lethargy, and anorexia. The safe use of NexGard in pregnant, breeding, or lactating dogs has not been evaluated. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures.

See brief summary on page 2.



HELP THIS READER: A question from dvm360.com/community

Communicating our protocols to **UNHAPPY CLIENTS**

Lately I've noticed there's a disconnect between what our clients expect and the practice's protocol. For example, Client X requests a refill for her pup's heartworm medication but the practice learns it has been six months since the pet received his last pill. The practice's policy is to perform a heartworm test before calling in the prescription. The client wants the medicine. The result? The client is not happy! Any pointers for managing client expectations to ensure happier and calmer clients?

RESPONSES

Up-front education on your standards to clients is key. You will probably have to tell them the same thing at least seven times, in different ways, from different sources. You can use your staff, veterinarians, literature, reminders, emails, social media and so on.

If they still don't remember, which is possible (or they don't care to), you might need some plain-language talking points to help them understand why, beyond "because it's our policy." To address your situation as an example, consider these steps:

1. Reiterate the importance of heartworm prevention in general.
2. Remind clients of the many ways you've educated them on this topic (the seven or so times from above).
3. Explain what could happen to the pet if she gives heartworm prevention and her pet is heartworm-positive.
4. Give recommendations for compliance with prevention and offer ideas for remembering to give it.

Hope this helps!

—Jana

When an issue like this arises—and it can often—I will explain why the clinic has the policy. As with heartworm, if we give a preventive and the patient is heartworm-positive—and the in-house test confirms the presence of adults—then this can lead to a fatal situation. I stress the medical reasons why we do this, not just that it is our policy.

The same goes for a vaccine, such as rabies. I explain that we will always do an exam for a rabies vaccine. Clients may say, "But my dog was just there three months ago because he had an ear infection. You saw he was healthy." My reply is, "Yes, we saw him, but the exam and questions we ask with a wellness exam are different. And he was here for an ear infection, which means I can't say he was healthy." If that doesn't work, I fall back on "It's the law, and our doctor could lose her license." Most people just want to know why we insist on things, and it usually calms them down—not all, but most.

—vlblock

Share your answer: Visit dvm360.com/protocoltalk to answer this question and read other responses. While you're there, find out what experts say about discounts at dvm360.com/protocoltips.





Stay well is the new get well.

V.P.I.SM P&WS helps you offer preventive care plans to your clients as part of a healthy practice. Our comprehensive system tracks, sends reminders and automatically bills clients for you. And our expert advisors train your team to manage your practice's customized plan, which means you have more time to do what you do best: take care of pets.

V.P.I.SM P&WS – Healthy Pets. Healthy Practice.

Receive 50% OFF your one-time setup fee when you call 888-681-3345 or visit VPIpaws.com today.





Ask Shawn

DOG DIS TIRED OF RESPECT



There doesn't seem to be appreciation for kennel technicians at my practice. We do a lot of the dirty work and are treated like we aren't as good as everyone else. How can I make my fellow team members value my work?—**In the dog house**

Dear Dedicated Team Member:

There are many kennel workers who go unappreciated, and I am sorry that you are experiencing this. Building awareness of what you contribute to the team is the best way to gain back respect. And there are three ways to increase awareness.

Step 1: Have a list of duties and responsibilities that are delegated to kennel staff and make the rest of the team aware of the types of jobs that the rest of the team would be doing if there were no kennel staff members.

Step 2:

Share numbers on the revenue and services generated by the kennel staff

compared to the rest of the hospital. For example, in my own hospital kennel and boarding account for 20 percent of revenue. The medical team members were surprised to see this level of contribution.

When we are aware that we are hurting other people, we tend to be willing to change.

Step 3: Ask each kennel team member to make a list of ways they have felt disrespected and share that with the rest of the team. Make sure the list includes only behaviors as examples and not specific team members. When we are aware that we are hurting other people, we tend to be willing to change.

Good luck!

—Shawn

Need help now?

Get answers—fast—with Firstline Hotline. You can email us at firstline@advanstar.com or direct-message us on Facebook at [facebook.com/FirstlineMag](https://www.facebook.com/FirstlineMag) or Twitter at [@firstlinemag](https://twitter.com/firstlinemag).

Got a question? Ask Shawn.

Maybe you're tired of babysitting your team members. Perhaps you're looking for strategies to beat a bully. Shawn can help. **Shawn McVey, MA, MSW**, is a member of the *Firstline* and *Veterinary Economics* Editorial Advisory boards and CEO of McVey Management Solutions in Austin, Texas. Email your questions for him to firstline@advanstar.com, then visit dvm360.com/mcvey to read McVey's advice on other hot topics.

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TEAM MOTIVATOR:

3 ideas to BOOST TEAM SPIRIT

Simple gestures can improve team morale.

By Kyle Palmer, CVT

Motivating team members sometimes means getting outside the workday routine and seeing another side of your coworkers. Expanding your work relationships can help the entire team work better together. Consider these ideas:

1. Once a year, we let the team know that we are going to do an event together, but it's only for the team, rather than spouses and other family members. We'll meet somewhere, then give everyone final directions for our destination. We pick a shopping destination like a local mall or an outlet

mall. Once there, we hand each employee a \$100 bill and tell them they have one hour to spend it, with only two stipulations: They must spend it on themselves and whatever isn't spent has to be given back. We really like to do this in late November, as there are often employees who are saving every cent for the holidays and would not otherwise spend a cent on themselves.

2. Periodically, we like to take the team somewhere for an activity that is out of their comfort zone—bowling or paintball, for example. Both events have helped us strip away the hierarchy of the practice and

remind everyone that regardless of initials behind names, we are all really the same outside of veterinary medicine.

3. For our holiday party, I save all the free stuff that we get with orders or special deals over the year, and we do the drawing game where you can open a present or steal one that's already opened. We end up with an iPad occasionally, weekends at the coast, jackets and gift cards. It's a fun way to use some of the clinic's resources.

Kyle Palmer, CVT, is a Firstline Editorial Advisory Board member and practice manager at Silver Creek Animal Clinic in Silverton, Ore.

Tasty tips for FEEDING FIDO

Are the pooches around your practice looking positively portly? Help educate pet owners about their pets' weight—and how to drop the pounds—with the form at dvm360.com/helpfido.



**Get paid for your
great idea**

Have a pearl to share? Send it to firstline@advanstar.com. We'll pay **\$30** for every tip we publish.

10-MINUTE DRILL: Build on BEHAVIOR

Discussing behavior with pet owners is important to catch problems early, when they're easier to change, and preserve pet owners' bond with their pets. To prepare your whole team to tackle common behavior issues, spend a few minutes at your next team meeting on these activities:

1. Take the elimination or house soiling quiz.

House soiling is a major frustration for cat owners, and if you know the facts about common differences between cats that are house soiling or eliminating, you'll be better prepared to talk to clients about this behavior before kitty's life is on the line and clients are ready to give up on their cat. Visit dvm360.com/housesoil to test your house soiling IQ.

2. Read and discuss "10 life-threatening behavior myths" at dvm360.com/behaviormyths to review some of the top misconceptions clients have about their pets. Then practice role-playing answers so you're prepared to respond next time clients voice these misconceptions.

3. Distribute the article "10 ways any team member can help improve animal behavior" at dvm360.com/teambehavior to review ways to safely handle pets in your practice and contribute to behavioral wellness.

4. Know when to refer.

Great resources are available for those particularly challenging behavior cases. If your doctor doesn't offer behavior services, make sure your team members are prepared with the name of a qualified behavior expert in your area to offer client referrals. Visit dvm360.com/behaviorreferral for tips to identify experts in your area.

5. Offer handouts.

Download free client education behavior handouts on a variety of topics, from how to house train a dog to feline and canine behavior questionnaires and more at dvm360.com/behaviorforms.

Heartgard® Plus (ivermectin/pyrantel)

CHEWABLES

CAUTION: Federal (U.S.A.) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

INDICATIONS: For use in dogs to prevent canine heartworm disease by eliminating the tissue stage of heartworm larvae (*Dirofilaria immitis*) for a month (30 days) after infection and for the treatment and control of ascarids (*Toxascaris canis*, *Toxascaris leonina*) and hookworms (*Ancylostoma caninum*, *Uncinaria stenocephala*, *Ancylostoma braziliense*).

DOSAGE: HEARTGARD® Plus (ivermectin/pyrantel) should be administered orally at monthly intervals at the recommended minimum dose level of 6 mcg of ivermectin per kilogram (2.72 mcg/lb) and 5 mg of pyrantel (as pamoate salt) per kg (2.27 mg/lb) of body weight. The recommended dosing schedule for prevention of canine heartworm disease and for the treatment and control of ascarids and hookworms is as follows:

Dog Weight	Cheewables Per Month	Ivermectin Content	Pyrantel Content	Color Coding On Foil Backing and Carton
Up to 25 lb	1	68 mcg	57 mg	Blue
26 to 50 lb	1	136 mcg	114 mg	Green
51 to 100 lb	1	272 mcg	227 mg	Brown

HEARTGARD Plus is recommended for dogs 6 weeks of age and older. For dogs over 100 lb use the appropriate combination of these chewables.

ADMINISTRATION: Remove only one chewable at a time from the foil-backed blister card. Return the card with the remaining chewables to its box to protect the product from light. Because most dogs find HEARTGARD Plus palatable, the product can be offered to the dog by hand. Alternatively, it may be added intact to a small amount of dog food. The chewable should be administered in a manner that encourages the dog to chew, rather than to swallow without chewing. Chewables may be broken into pieces and fed to dogs that normally swallow treats whole.

Care should be taken that the dog consumes the complete dose, and treated animals should be observed for a few minutes after administration to ensure that part of the dose is not lost or rejected. If it is suspected that any of the dose has been lost, redosing is recommended.

HEARTGARD Plus should be given at monthly intervals during the period of the year when mosquitoes (vectors), potentially carrying infective heartworm larvae, are active. The initial dose must be given within a month (30 days) after the dog's first exposure to mosquitoes. The final dose must be given within a month (30 days) after the dog's last exposure to mosquitoes.

When replacing another heartworm preventive product in a heartworm disease preventive program, the first dose of HEARTGARD Plus must be given within a month (30 days) of the last dose of the former medication.

If the interval between doses exceeds a month (30 days), the efficacy of ivermectin can be reduced. Therefore, for optimal performance, the chewable must be given once a month on or about the same day of the month. If treatment is delayed, whether by a few days or many, immediate treatment with HEARTGARD Plus and resumption of the recommended dosing regimen will minimize the opportunity for the development of adult heartworms.

Monthly treatment with HEARTGARD Plus also provides effective treatment and control of ascarids (*T. canis*, *T. leonina*) and hookworms (*A. caninum*, *U. stenocephala*, *A. braziliense*). Clients should be advised of measures to be taken to prevent reinfection with intestinal parasites.

EFFICACY: HEARTGARD Plus Chewables, given orally using the recommended dose and regimen, are effective against the tissue larval stage of *D. immitis* for a month (30 days) after infection and, as a result, prevent the development of the adult stage. HEARTGARD Plus Chewables are also effective against canine ascarids (*T. canis*, *T. leonina*) and hookworms (*A. caninum*, *U. stenocephala*, *A. braziliense*).

ACCEPTABILITY: In acceptability and field trials, HEARTGARD Plus was shown to be an acceptable oral dosage form that was consumed at first offering by the majority of dogs.

PRECAUTIONS: All dogs should be tested for existing heartworm infection before starting treatment with HEARTGARD Plus which is not effective against adult *D. immitis*. Infected dogs must be treated to remove adult heartworms and microfilariae before initiating a program with HEARTGARD Plus.

While some microfilariae may be killed by the ivermectin in HEARTGARD Plus at the recommended dose level, HEARTGARD Plus is not effective for microfilariae clearance. A mild hypersensitivity-type reaction, presumably due to dead or dying microfilariae and particularly involving a transient diarrhea, has been observed in clinical trials with ivermectin alone after treatment of some dogs that have circulating microfilariae.

Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children.

In case of ingestion by humans, clients should be advised to contact a physician immediately. Physicians may contact a Poison Control Center for advice concerning cases of ingestion by humans.

Store between 68°F - 77°F (20°C - 25°C). Excursions between 59°F - 86°F (15°C - 30°C) are permitted. Protect product from light.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: In clinical field trials with HEARTGARD Plus, vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours of dosing was rarely observed (1.1% of administered doses). The following adverse reactions have been reported following the use of HEARTGARD: Depression/lethargy, vomiting, anorexia, diarrhea, mydriasis, ataxia, staggering, convulsions and hypersalivation.

SAFETY: HEARTGARD Plus has been shown to be bioequivalent to HEARTGARD, with respect to the bioavailability of ivermectin. The dose regimens of HEARTGARD Plus and HEARTGARD are the same with regard to ivermectin (6 mcg/kg). Studies with ivermectin indicate that certain dogs of the Collie breed are more sensitive to the effects of ivermectin administered at elevated dose levels (more than 16 times the target use level) than dogs of other breeds. At elevated doses, sensitive dogs showed adverse reactions which included mydriasis, depression, ataxia, tremors, drooling, paresis, recumbency, excitability, stupor, coma and death. HEARTGARD demonstrated no signs of toxicity at 10 times the recommended dose (60 mcg/kg) in sensitive Collies. Results of these trials and bioequivalency studies, support the safety of HEARTGARD products in dogs, including Collies, when used as recommended.

HEARTGARD Plus has shown a wide margin of safety at the recommended dose level in dogs, including pregnant or breeding bitches, stud dogs and puppies aged 6 or more weeks. In clinical trials, many commonly used flea collars, dips, shampoos, anthelmintics, antibiotics, vaccines and steroid preparations have been administered with HEARTGARD Plus in a heartworm disease prevention program.

In one trial, where some pups had parvovirus, there was a marginal reduction in efficacy against intestinal nematodes, possibly due to a change in intestinal transit time.

HOW SUPPLIED: HEARTGARD Plus is available in three dosage strengths (See DOSAGE section) for dogs of different weights. Each strength comes in convenient cartons of 6 and 12 chewables.

For customer service, please contact Merial at 1-888-637-4251.



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SAMPLE CONVERSATION TREE: Introduce your wellness plan to pet owners.

When pet owners call or visit your veterinary practice, it's important to describe the wellness care plan options your team offers pets so they understand the value of your service. Review the wellness checklist at dvm360.com/wellnesschecklist, then rehearse this conversation tree during your next team meeting to prepare for some of the common conversations you'll have with pet owners. If you need help creating your own tiered wellness plan, visit dvm360.com/wellnessplan.

Client: I got a reminder from you that Rex is due for his wellness exam. How much does it cost?

You: Thank you for calling about Rex's healthcare needs. Rex's wellness exam is an important part of our preventive health plan to keep Rex healthy and detect any problems early, when they're easier to treat. We're happy to schedule Rex's wellness exam for you today, and we also offer some wellness plan options to help you affordably offer comprehensive medical care for Rex. Can I explain the options we offer?

Client: That sounds expensive. I'd rather just bring Rex in for the care he needs now.

You: I'll schedule your appointment. Then I'll ask our technician to give you a call to walk through a treatment plan for wellness care to review the services Rex needs and the cost. If it's alright, I'd also like to send you a handout we've created to explain our wellness plans, the cost and how they work. Then if you have any questions, we can talk them over when you visit for Rex's exam.

Client: I guess.

You: We've created several tiered wellness plans to help clients plan their pet's care to fit into their monthly budgets. It's important to us because we know you love Rex and want to give him the best care to keep him healthy. I'm going to send you a copy of our tiered wellness plans and then ask a technician to call you and walk you through the options. In the meantime, let's schedule Rex's appointment.

Client: That sounds like a rip-off. I only want Rex's vaccinations.

You: Thank you for sharing your concerns with me. We appreciate the opportunity to offer Rex the care he needs, and that is always our first priority. We will never recommend any care your pet doesn't need. With your permission, I'd like to ask a technician to create a treatment plan for you and call you back to walk you through the care we recommend and the cost and answer any questions you have. Is that alright?

Once you've finished your conversation with the client, make sure to follow up with a call, email or note that offers any information you promised and includes a message about how much you appreciated the chance to share your wellness options. Then invite them to call or write you with any additional questions or concerns they have.

Client: I guess that's OK.



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THERE'S A **NEW** **CHEWABLE** IN TOWN.

Introducing new **Sentinel® Spectrum®**
(milbemycin oxime/lufenuron/praziquantel) chewables—
protection against six parasites, including tapeworms.



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spectrum[®]**
(milbemycin oxime-lufenuron-praziquantel)

HEARTWORMS

ROUNDWORMS

HOOKWORMS*

+

WHIPWORMS

FLEAS**

TAPEWORMS

**Heartgard[®]
Plus**
(ivermectin/pyrantel)

HEARTWORMS

ROUNDWORMS

HOOKWORMS



**sentinel[®]
spectrum[®]**
(milbemycin oxime-lufenuron-praziquantel)

Dogs should be tested for heartworm prior to use. Mild hypersensitivity reactions have been noted in some dogs carrying a high number of circulating microfilariae. Treatment with fewer than 6 monthly doses after the last exposure to mosquitoes may not provide complete heartworm prevention. For more information, please see product insert on the back side.

*A. caninum

** Prevents flea eggs from hatching; is not an adulticide.

NOVARTIS
ANIMAL HEALTH



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sentinel[®]
spectrum[®]
(milbemycin oxime • lufenuron • praziquantel)

Caution

Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Indications

SENTINEL[®] SPECTRUM[®] (milbemycin oxime/lufenuron/praziquantel) is indicated for the prevention of heartworm disease caused by *Dirofilaria immitis*; for the prevention and control of flea populations (*Ctenocephalides felis*); and for the treatment and control of adult roundworm (*Toxocara canis*, *Toxascaris leonina*), adult hookworm (*Ancylostoma caninum*), adult whipworm (*Trichuris vulpis*), and adult tapeworm (*Taenia pisiformis*, *Echinococcus multilocularis* and *Echinococcus granulosus*) infections in dogs and puppies two pounds of body weight or greater and six weeks of age and older.

Dosage and Administration

SENTINEL SPECTRUM should be administered orally, once every month, at the minimum dosage of 0.23 mg/lb (0.5 mg/kg) milbemycin oxime, 4.55 mg/lb (10 mg/kg) lufenuron, and 2.28 mg/lb (5 mg/kg) praziquantel. For heartworm prevention, give once monthly for at least 6 months after exposure to mosquitoes.

Dosage Schedule

Body Weight	Milbemycin Oxime per chewable	Lufenuron per chewable	Praziquantel per chewable	Number of chewables
2 to 8 lbs.	2.3 mg	46 mg	22.8 mg	One
8.1 to 25 lbs.	5.75 mg	115 mg	57 mg	One
25.1 to 50 lbs.	11.5 mg	230 mg	114 mg	One
50.1 to 100 lbs.	23.0 mg	460 mg	228 mg	One
Over 100 lbs.	Administer the appropriate combination of chewables			

To ensure adequate absorption, always administer SENTINEL SPECTRUM to dogs immediately after or in conjunction with a normal meal.

SENTINEL SPECTRUM may be offered to the dog by hand or added to a small amount of dog food. The chewables should be administered in a manner that encourages the dog to chew, rather than to swallow without chewing. Chewables may be broken into pieces and fed to dogs that normally swallow treats whole. Care should be taken that the dog consumes the complete dose, and treated animals should be observed a few minutes after administration to ensure that no part of the dose is lost or rejected. If it is suspected that any of the dose has been lost, redosing is recommended.

Contraindications

There are no known contraindications to the use of SENTINEL SPECTRUM.

Warnings

Not for use in humans. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children.

Precautions

Treatment with fewer than 6 monthly doses after the last exposure to mosquitoes may not provide complete heartworm

prevention. Prior to administration of SENTINEL SPECTRUM, dogs should be tested for existing heartworm infections. At the discretion of the veterinarian, infected dogs should be treated to remove adult heartworms. SENTINEL SPECTRUM is not effective against adult *D. immitis*.

Mild, transient hypersensitivity reactions, such as labored breathing, vomiting, hypersalivation, and lethargy, have been noted in some dogs treated with milbemycin oxime carrying a high number of circulating microfilariae. These reactions are presumably caused by release of protein from dead or dying microfilariae.

Do not use in puppies less than six weeks of age.

Do not use in dogs or puppies less than two pounds of body weight.

The safety of SENTINEL SPECTRUM has not been evaluated in dogs used for breeding or in lactating females. Studies have been performed with milbemycin oxime and lufenuron alone.

Adverse Reactions

The following adverse reactions have been reported in dogs after administration of milbemycin oxime, lufenuron, or praziquantel: vomiting, depression/lethargy, pruritus, urticaria, diarrhea, anorexia, skin congestion, ataxia, convulsions, salivation, and weakness.

To report suspected adverse drug events, contact Novartis Animal Health at 800-637-0281 or the FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS.

Manufactured for: Novartis Animal Health US, Inc.
Greensboro, NC 27408, USA

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THE VHMA FILES:

Salary report: 2013

MANAGER COMPENSATION

Get the inside scoop on managers' pay and benefits.

By Christine Shupe, CAE, Executive Director, VHMA

T rue confession: Managers love their jobs, but many are curious about how their salary and benefits compare to other practice managers. The VHMA's 2013 Compensation and Benefits Survey reveals which factors impact earnings.

The tough truth about salaries

Salaries generally reflect the strength of the economy. When the economy is robust, salaries tend to be higher. Because the economy is recovering slower than anticipated, the survey results reveal that the veterinary economy is struggling, and salaries reflect the struggle. Lower salaries are reported among managers and administrators in the industry, regardless of seniority and experience. Although office managers registered a 7% salary increase since 2011, the average practice manager's salary has plummeted by 6%, and hospital administrators' salaries have decreased by 4% during that same period.

The news is not all discouraging. The results also reveal that there are opportunities for managers and administrators to increase their compensation. For example, the 2013 survey clearly shows that becoming a Certified Veterinary Practice Manager (CVPM) improves compensation. Managers with a CVPM earned \$2,500 more each year and administrators earned \$4,000 more per year. Post-graduate degrees also drove salaries higher. Employees who shared in

the financial risk of a practice reported higher salaries; managers who received a profit share in addition to their salary received between \$5,000 and \$10,000 more than average.

The type of practice a manager is affiliated with can also impact compensation. Practice managers working in emergency practices earned the highest salaries but worked the longest hours. Of all hospital administrators who responded to the survey, the 4% who worked in specialty practices reported the highest average salary. Hospital administrators managing more than one hospital reported a 25% increase in salary. Small animal hospital administrators worked the fewest hours but, in general, earned the lowest salaries.

Seniority is a weak driver of salary. And, in many cases, salaries trended lower as seniority among managers and administrators increased.

The issue with benefits

Office managers received an average of two weeks paid vacation each year. And practice managers and administrators received an average of three weeks.

Hospital administrators received more comprehensive benefits; office managers were likely to receive the weakest benefits. Continuing education and veterinary product discounts are benefits enjoyed by all managers. ➤



How managers are paid

Review how managers are paid and how many hours they work annually.

Title	How paid	Salary	Annual hours	Hourly wage*
Office manager	Hourly	\$36,750	1,846	\$19.91
	Salary	\$37,970	1,949	\$19.48
Practice manager	Hourly	\$41,600	1,926	\$21.60
	Salary	\$48,000	2,040	\$23.53
	Salary + profit sharing	\$53,541	1,926	\$27.80
Hospital administrator	Hourly	\$56,750	1,961	\$28.94
	Salary	\$64,100	2,131	\$30.08
	Salary + profit sharing	\$72,000	1,960	\$36.73

SOURCE: VHMA 2013 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS SURVEY

*WHEN HOURLY WAGE NOT REPORTED, WAGES WERE CALCULATED BY DIVIDING SALARY BY HOURS WORKED.


Hospital administrators are most likely to receive health insurance. The median co-payment for health insurance among all managers runs between 78% and 90%.

General trends

Since the last VHMA survey in 2011, veterinary managers and administrators have experienced

a decline in salaries. Traditionally, seniority and experience have resulted in higher salaries but the survey results indicated that these factors do not guarantee higher salaries. Managers committed to earning higher salaries would benefit from enrolling in certification or advanced degree programs or negotiating a profit sharing arrangement with their employer.

Visit dvm360.com/VHMA for an overview of job responsibilities by title for office managers, practice managers and hospital administrators in veterinary practice. You'll also find the 2013 Compensation and Benefits Survey methodology and more data that outlines how credentials change what you make.



Learn more about salary issues

Turn to page 15 for more coverage about team members' salaries in practice. And for complete coverage of the financial health of veterinarians—and their practices—visit dvm360.com/ailingprofession.



Christine Shupe, CAE, is the executive director of the Veterinary Hospital Managers Association. The association is dedicated to serving professionals in veterinary management through education, certification and networking.

Q&A: A *team approach* to DENTAL CARE

Consider this advice to get your whole team on board to offer the topnotch dental care pets need for better health.

Creating a consistent approach to dental care takes a team ready to work together to improve pets' dental health. Team members in all job positions can engage pet owners and create a partnership for better pet care and improved dental compliance.

"February is reserved as National Pet Dental Health Month, but really, every month should be pet dental health month," says Patricia March, RVT, VTS (Dentistry), a dental technician at Animal Dental Center in Baltimore, Md. She shares these tips to work together for better oral health in pets.



"All members of the veterinary team are advocates for the animal, and we all play a role as dental ambassadors."

—Patricia March, RVT, VTS (Dentistry)

Q Why is dental care for pets important?

Periodontal disease can have devastating effects on a patient's quality of life, so active treatment is key. Because oral infection can travel to other organ systems, it will decrease the pet's longevity and it will cause pain and chronic suffering.

Q What can team members say to influence pet owners to offer care?

Relate to clients with personal stories, and use show-and-tell. For example, a 3-year-old bichon frise with dental disease visited our practice, and we

recommended several extractions. The pet owner wanted to save the teeth. We told her the only way we could do this was if she brushed the teeth daily and came in every six to 12 months for professional cleanings. She agreed. We waited one week after the dog's

cleaning, then I showed the pet owner how to properly brush his teeth. The dog didn't enjoy it, but he allowed it. The owner visited every three months for teeth and gum exams, and I am happy to report his teeth and gums are in great shape, with only minor gingival recession and pocketing.

Q What role can technicians take to change the practice's dental health program?

Technicians are the key to educating and promoting dental

care to other staff members, as well as to clients. Not all technicians like dentistry, but they need to know its significance and the treatment options and keep abreast of the new medications and home care options.

There are various continuing education centers for technicians and veterinarians as well as online continuing education programs. The dental care guidelines from the American Animal Hospital Association can help your practice create the proper protocols.

Just as food companies promote different stages of life with their foods, we can do the same with oral care. For example, we can provide a toothbrush to puppies and kittens and perform an oral exam when they visit to check for retained or missing teeth as well as malocclusions.

Adult dogs and cats also require oral exams to check for retained or missing teeth, discolored or fractured teeth and oral masses. Geriatric pets are more prone to periodontal disease, so oral exams are an essential part of your senior wellness plan.

Q If you're not a technician, what's your role in dental health?

Receptionists are key because they influence clients. So offer training to explain periodon-

tal disease and its effects and treatments, so receptionists can educate clients.

We also had a case where the groomer noticed an oral tumor on a pet and brought it to the client's attention. It was a benign tumor, but it acts aggressively by destroying jaw bone, so it had to be removed surgically. By noticing the mass and acting quickly, the surgery was a success and the pet did well. All members of the veterinary team are advocates for the animal, and we all play a role as dental ambassadors.

Q What's the most important thing to say to clients?

Remind them that animals suffer in silence. As their caretakers we need to intervene and improve their quality of life. One way to do that is to keep their mouth as clean as possible to prevent disease and pain.

Q What should team members never say?

Stop calling it a "dental." Call it a professional dental cleaning. Don't say extractions, say periodontal surgery. Using the proper terms will help people understand the importance of what we do. By increasing our own awareness of the need for dental health care in our patients, we can get pet owners to embrace oral health care. **FL**



Information from your veterinarian
Bad breath (halitosis) in pets
Does your pet's mouth smell not so sweet? A bad odor can be a sign of serious problems for your pet, such as periodontal disease or oral or systemic infection. So discuss your pet's problem with your veterinarian.

Brushing This is the best way to keep your pet's mouth healthy. You may also use daily tooth hygiene spray, dental chews, water additives, and also there are tips to keep your pet's mouth clean.

Remember the more you care that you offer to prevent dental disease, the less your veterinarian will need to provide to treat problems in the future.

Signs your pet is suffering from dental disease

- Bad breath
- Bad gums (healthy gums are pink, along the color)
- Pain during your exam
- Bad swelling
- Yellow or brownish buildup on the teeth
- Pain

Remember that your pet may be in pain if it goes to the front door and looks away or it yawns or drops food from its mouth.

Treatment What your veterinarian will do

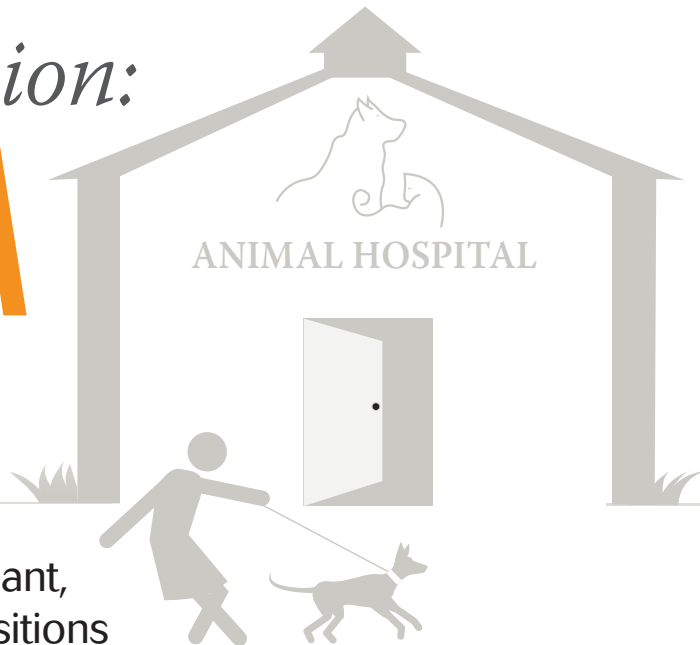
Common mouth myths: true or false?

- Pets are supposed to have bad breath. **FALSE.** An odor is not normal. Just like in people, bad breath is a sign of dental disease and requires treatment to safeguard your pet's health.
- Pets don't need regular vet visits. **FALSE.** Regularly scheduled dental cleanings in your pet's mouth are essential to regular tooth brushing.

Find it all here.
dvm360.com
Tools to educate
Visit dvm360.com/dentalforms for free client dental education forms about topics ranging from how to brush a pet's teeth and halitosis to dental disease and the treatment pets receive during dental appointments.

An ailing profession:

TEAM PAY



Team pay has been largely stagnant, with signs of recovery across positions and a growing demand for technicians.

You want to earn more—and your boss wants to pay you more. But the truth is, they're feeling pinched by the economy, so they may need your help to build business to the level where they can afford to offer raises. (See page 18 for salary data.) This first of four dvm360 Leadership Challenges takes a hard look at

veterinarians' ability to afford to pay their team members. First, let's examine some pertinent facts about the veterinary profession.

Fact 1: **Veterinary practices are making less**

The VPI-*Veterinary Economics* Financial Health Study shows

only 22 percent of veterinarians believe the veterinary profession is financially healthy. And only 33 percent of owners say their practices are doing well, while about 16 percent say their practice was less profitable in 2012 and 31 percent report a drop in patient volume.

Fact 2: **Technology programs have doubled**

"We've increased our veterinary technology programs a lot," says Julie Legred, CVT, executive director of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America. "Back when I started as a technician, there were only about 60 programs. Now we're at 218 accredited programs. And many of these markets aren't just state schools



Accept the challenge

Get started with a video from dvm360 editor Kristi Reimer, *Veterinary Economics* and *Firstline* editor Brendan Howard and *Veterinary Medicine* editor Mindy Valcarcel discussing the goals of the dvm360 Leadership Challenges and what you can expect from the most trusted media brands in the veterinary profession throughout all of 2014. To access all Leadership Challenge content, visit dvm360.com/leadershipchallenges2014.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

This data is just the beginning. See page 11 for data from the 2013 VHMA Compensation and Benefits Survey. Want to discover more about associate and practice owner debt and their financial outlook, read about why team members leave the veterinary profession or find a list of tasks technicians can take over? Visit dvm360.com/ailingprofession. On the next pages, you'll also find tips and ideas to help build your practice and earn more, stories that remind you why you love your job and advice to improve your personal financial outlook.

anymore, they're for profit."

All programs need to do a good job of educating the applicants about the profession and what it entails to ensure the applicants have the best chance for success, Legred says.

Fact 3: The demand for technicians is growing

In 2013, Legred worked with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to refine their predictions for the demand for technicians. Based on their work, the BLS reported the demand for technicians is expected to increase by 30 percent by 2022, making it a fast-growing position.

What does the future hold?

Without the benefit of a crystal ball, we can still make some educated guesses about where the profession is pointed, especially for team members who are willing to take control of their job outlook and push for change in their practices. Consider these predictions:

1. The need for positions like nurse practitioners and physician's assistants and specialized technicians will grow, Legred says. For example, there are at least five new veterinary technology specialties being explored in the next few years, from imaging and shelter medicine to alternative medicine, ophthalmology and dermatology.

"When veterinary medicine finally figures out that technicians aren't going to take the veterinarians' positions away, a nurse practitioner role will be needed," Legred says. She also points to the way dentists and eye doctors in human medicine use their team members as a model for how veterinary medicine can grow.

2. Technicians who don't specialize may still find areas they're more focused on, such as an area of client education.

3. The need for technicians in large animal medicine will increase, as the number of veterinary students interested in large animal medicine declines

or the large animal veterinarian role changes to more of a consultant. Technicians have a unique situation in large animal medicine, where they can not only work in a practice-type situation, but as herd managers on large farms and facilities, Legred says.

4. Team members, especially technicians, who aren't utilized will continue to leave practices. "Technicians want to use their skills. That's why they went into this profession," Legred says. "As doctors realize what technicians can do and feel comfortable with that, team members are going to like their positions more because they're doing what they're supposed to be doing."

Firstline board member Kyle Palmer, CVT, agrees. "Veterinarians must understand that providing the opportunity for team members to utilize their skills does not weaken their control of the practice, it strengthens it."

And as technicians are properly utilized, the rest of the



MISSING SOMETHING?

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MICROFILARIA
Dogs only



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ROUNDWORMS



HOOKWORMS



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Dogs only



SARCOPTIC MANGE
Dogs only



EAR MITES
Cats only

New for ferrets†



FLEAS



HEARTWORMS



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*Based on label indications: spectrum of species, parasites (dog) and life stages (dog and cat).

†Advantage Multi® for Cats (imidacloprid + moxidectin) (0.4 mL) is indicated for ferrets that weigh at least 2 lbs.

CAUTION: Federal (U.S.A.) law restricts Advantage Multi® for Dogs (imidacloprid + moxidectin) to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian. WARNING: **DO NOT ADMINISTER THIS PRODUCT ORALLY.** For the first 30 minutes after application ensure that dogs cannot lick the product from application sites on themselves or other treated animals. Children should not come in contact with the application site for two (2) hours after application. (See **Contraindications, Warnings, Human Warnings, and Adverse Reactions, for more information.**) CONTRAINDICATIONS: Do not administer this product orally. (See **WARNINGS.**) Do not use this product on cats.

CAUTION: Federal (U.S.A.) law restricts Advantage Multi® for Cats to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian. WARNINGS: Do not use on sick, debilitated, or underweight cats (SEE **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). Do not use on sick or debilitated ferrets. PRECAUTIONS: Avoid oral ingestion. HUMAN WARNINGS: **Children should not come in contact with the application site for 30 minutes after application.**

Advantage Multi® for Dogs and for Cats

(imidacloprid + moxidectin)

BRIEF SUMMARY: Before using Advantage Multi® for Dogs (imidacloprid+moxidectin) or Advantage Multi® for Cats (imidacloprid +moxidectin), please consult the product insert, a summary of which follows:

CAUTION: Federal (U.S.A.) Law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Advantage Multi for Dogs:

WARNING

- DO NOT ADMINISTER THIS PRODUCT ORALLY.
- For the first 30 minutes after application ensure that dogs cannot lick the product from application sites on themselves or other treated animals.
- Children should not come in contact with the application sites for two (2) hours after application.

(See Contraindications, Warnings, Human Warnings, and Adverse Reactions for more information.)

INDICATIONS:

Advantage Multi for Dogs is indicated for the prevention of heartworm disease caused by *Dirofilaria immitis* and the treatment of *Dirofilaria immitis* circulating microfilariae in heartworm-positive dogs. **Advantage Multi for Dogs** kills adult fleas and is indicated for the treatment of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*). **Advantage Multi for Dogs** is indicated for the treatment and control of sarcoptic mange caused by *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *canis*. **Advantage Multi for Dogs** is also indicated for the treatment and control of the following intestinal parasites species: Hookworms (*Ancylostoma caninum*) (*Uncinaria stenocephala*), Roundworms (*Toxocara canis*) (*Toxascaris leonina*) and Whipworms (*Trichuris vulpis*).

Advantage Multi for Cats is indicated for the prevention of heartworm disease caused by *Dirofilaria immitis*. **Advantage Multi for Cats** kills adult fleas (*Ctenocephalides felis*) and is indicated for the treatment of flea infestations. **Advantage Multi for Cats** is also indicated for the treatment and control of ear mite (*Otodectes cynotis*) infestations and the intestinal parasites species Hookworm (*Ancylostoma tubaeforme*) and Roundworm (*Toxocara cati*). **Ferrets:** **Advantage Multi for Cats** is indicated for the prevention of heartworm disease in ferrets caused by *Dirofilaria immitis*. **Advantage Multi for Cats** kills adult fleas (*Ctenocephalides felis*) and is indicated for the treatment of flea infestations in ferrets.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Do not administer this product orally. (See WARNINGS). Do not use the Dog product (containing 2.5% moxidectin) on Cats.

WARNINGS:

Advantage Multi for Dogs: For the first 30 minutes after application: Ensure that dogs cannot lick the product from application sites on themselves or other treated dogs, and separate treated dogs from one another and from other pets to reduce the risk of accidental ingestion. Ingestion of this product by dogs may cause serious adverse reactions including depression, salivation, dilated pupils, incoordination, panting, and generalized muscle tremors. In avermectin sensitive dogs¹, the signs may be more severe and may include coma and death².

¹ Some dogs are more sensitive to avermectins due to a mutation in the MDR1 gene. Dogs with this mutation may develop signs of severe avermectin toxicity if they ingest this product. The most common breeds associated with this mutation include Collies and Collie crosses.

² Although there is no specific antagonist for avermectin toxicity, even severely affected dogs have completely recovered from avermectin toxicity with intensive veterinary supportive care.

Advantage Multi for Cats: Do not use on sick, debilitated, or underweight cats. Do not use on cats less than 9 weeks of age or less than 2 lbs. body weight. Do not use on sick or debilitated ferrets.

HUMAN WARNINGS: Not for human use. Keep out of the reach of children. Dogs: Children should not come in contact with the application sites for two (2) hours after application. Cats: Children should not come in contact with the application site for 30 minutes after application.

Causes eye irritation. Harmful if swallowed. Do not get in eyes or on clothing. Avoid contact with skin. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after handling. If contact with eyes occurs, hold eyelids open and flush with copious amounts of water for 15 minutes. If eye irritation develops or persists, contact a physician. If swallowed, call poison control center or physician immediately for treatment advice. Have person sip a glass of water if able to swallow. Do not induce vomiting unless told to do so by the poison control center or physician. People with known hypersensitivity to benzyl alcohol, imidacloprid or moxidectin should administer product with caution. In case of an allergic reaction, contact a physician. If contact with skin or clothing occurs, take off contaminated clothing. Wash skin immediately with plenty of soap and water. Call a poison control center or physician for treatment advice. The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) provides additional occupational safety information. For a copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or to report adverse reactions call Bayer Veterinary Services at 1-800-422-9674. For consumer questions call 1-800-255-6826.

PRECAUTIONS: Do not dispense dose applicator tubes without complete safety and administration information. Use with caution in sick, debilitated or underweight animals. The safety of Advantage Multi for Dogs has not been established in breeding, pregnant, or lactating dogs. The safe use of Advantage Multi for Dogs has not been established in puppies and dogs less than 7 weeks of age or less than 3 lbs. body weight. Advantage Multi for Dogs has not been evaluated in heartworm-positive dogs with Class 4 heartworm disease.

Cats may experience hypersalivation, tremors, vomiting and decreased appetite if Advantage Multi for Cats is inadvertently administered orally or through grooming/licking of the application site. The safety of Advantage Multi for Cats has not been established in breeding, pregnant, or lactating cats. Use of this product in geriatric cats with subclinical conditions has not been adequately studied. Ferrets: The safety of Advantage Multi for Cats has not been established in breeding, pregnant, or lactating ferrets. Treatment of ferrets weighing less than 2.0 lbs. (0.9kg) should be based on a risk-benefit assessment. The effectiveness of Advantage Multi for Cats in ferrets weighing over 4.4 lbs. (2.0 kg) has not been established.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: Heartworm Negative Dogs: the most common adverse reactions observed during field studies were pruritus, residue, medicinal odor, lethargy, inappetence and hyperactivity. **Heartworm Positive Dogs:** the most common adverse reactions observed during field studies were cough, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, (including hemorrhagic), and inappetence. **Cats:** The most common adverse reactions observed during field studies were lethargy, behavioral changes, discomfort, hypersalivation, polydipsia and coughing and gagging. **Ferrets:** The most common adverse reactions observed during field studies were pruritus/scratching, scabbing, redness, wounds and inflammation at the treatment site, lethargy and chemical odor.

For a copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or to report adverse reactions call Bayer Veterinary Services at 1-800-422-9674. For consumer questions call 1-800-255-6826.

Advantage Multi is protected by one or more of the following U.S. patents: 6,232,328 and 6,001,858.

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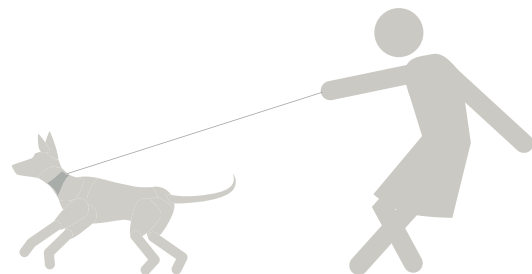
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MONEY matters



team can take on more responsibility, and Legred says this builds a happier, more productive team with greater job security and longevity.

“I think we’re going to discover practices can be more productive and

generate more profit than they have in the past,” Legred says. “Doctors don’t have to work 18 hours a day to be profitable. They can utilize their team members, and I think everyone will find the outcome is better.” FL

What is your hourly wage?

2009 2012

Practice manager/
office manager

\$17.29

\$18.09

Credentialed
veterinary technician

\$13.24

\$17.15

Receptionist

\$13.03

\$13.44

Veterinary assistant/
noncredentialed
technician

\$13.95

\$14.53

SOURCE: 2010 FIRSTLINE VETERINARY TEAM TRENDS STUDY, 2013 FIRSTLINE SALARY STUDY

“NAVTA’s 2011 demographic survey showed that even some of technicians’ benefits are going away. So if salaries aren’t increasing at a regular rate to compensate for the increased cost of living and you’re losing benefits, something has to give. Technicians may not want to leave the profession, but they have no other choice.” — Julie Legred, CVT, executive director of NAVTA

What is your annual salary?

2009 2012

Practice manager/
office manager

\$41,034

\$43,616

Credentialed
veterinary technician

\$34,750

\$35,642

SOURCE: 2010 FIRSTLINE VETERINARY TEAM TRENDS STUDY, 2013 FIRSTLINE SALARY STUDY

DO MORE, EARN MORE



Help your practice to grow and help more clients and pets, and you can ultimately earn more yourself.

Don't believe anyone who offers up a get-rich-quick, three-easy-steps-to-make-more solution. Experienced team members in all roles in practice who've transitioned their jobs into careers point to hard work and innovation as the keys to unlocking the door to more pay.

The truth is, your bosses and managers are often too busy working on the business of keeping your practice in busi-

ness to focus on how you as a team member can grow your career. So you may need to take the reins and look for places where you can grow—and generate revenue.

Properly utilizing the team is a big factor in how practices can afford to pay team members more, says Julie Legred, CVT, executive director of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America. "Once you utilize team members more, it all falls into place. Clients comply more because they receive more education from the entire team. Clients will feel more comfortable providing the care the team recommends, whether it's feeding a diet or offering flea and tick prevention or dental care. The increased profits will come to the practice, and doctors can afford to pay team members more."



See the big picture

Before you can earn more, you need to

look beyond your own needs and see the big picture of how your business operates, says *Firstline* Editorial Advisory Board member Kyle Palmer, CVT, practice manager at Silver Creek Animal Clinic in Silverton, Ore. Palmer began his veterinary career as a kennel attendant and worked his way up to practice manager.

If you can identify areas to evolve and improve, you can improve the practice's profits. "I think I'm safe in saying all practice owners still value the ability to save money and eliminate waste," Palmer says. "Team members who are focused on keeping our waste down get my attention first. And becoming exceptional at your position is the next level."

Get educated

Palmer advises team members to lobby for the opportunity to attend local, regional and national CE meetings regularly to expand your



Find it all here.
dvm360

Get more online

Dr. Greg Magnusson explores 10 challenges that make the veterinary technician's job so hard at dvm360.com/techtrouble. You'll also find more discussion on salaries—and how to ask for a raise—at dvm360.com/teamraise.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR FOR A LEG UP

Firstline Editorial Advisory Board member Mandy Stevenson, RVT, offers this checklist of what doctors and managers can do to keep their team members in the veterinary profession:

- ☐ Don't over-hire. Hire smart, train effectively and then empower your team.
- ☐ Explain your expectations, then let them do it.
- ☐ Monitor team members appropriately—and pay them for what they do.
- ☐ Do not let seasoned team members bully

your team. This happens more often than anyone wants to admit.

- ☐ Give team members a learning curve and maintain an expectation log.
- ☐ Let go of the bad eggs. Even if these team members are good at one or two things, it's not worth it if they're mean or inappropriate with clients. The money and work can be used for someone who can be amazing in your practice.

knowledge. It's advice Palmer takes to heart. He earned his CVT in 2009 and he's currently pursuing his VTS in dentistry certification.



Be exceptional

"Based on education, training and desire, team members can lift themselves above coworkers by earning a reputation for excellence," Palmer says. "This may



Push for innovation

For example, Palmer created a niche for himself in two areas: assisting with dentistry and taking Orthopedic Foundation for Animals registration films. By expanding his skills into these areas, he generates an additional \$100,000 of revenue that doesn't require more doctor time. And in his practice, he

counseling clients about nutrition and obesity or tackling inventory management.

Caitlin Rivers, a former *Firstline* board member and team trainer, agrees. She recommends making a list—one or two tasks to start—of items you'd like to take over that don't cost a lot but will add to your skills and job description.

At one practice where she worked, Rivers lobbied to place catheters in each pet before anesthesia. Each catheter cost less than \$1 at the time, and it improved the patient's experience, because adding fluids helped keep their blood pressure up and offered an access point in an emergency. The first time she asked to make the change, the veterinarian said no. With persistence, she convinced him, and the veterinarian was able to advertise his safer anesthesia protocol and raise the cost of the anesthesia package.

"Most practice owners will appreciate team members who take the initiative," Palmer says. **FL**

"I don't think the route to higher pay for our team members is higher fees. I know increased revenue already exists in our practices in the form of reduced waste and capturing overlooked opportunities. With all that our veterinarians have to focus on, this is a wide-open area for the team to explore."

— Kyle Palmer, CVT

be as an anesthetist, it may be as a great communicator with clients, it may be as the person who is best at difficult catheters or it may be as the best patient handler. Regardless, it's a progression toward becoming invaluable."

says there are at least four more areas like this team members could grow into to generate more revenue. For example, Palmer recommends areas such as becoming an expert with the microscope, educating pet owners about pet insurance,

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WHY YOU DO IT



Whether you're the compassionate voice at the front desk or a member of the clinical or management team, your work improves the lives of pets and their owners.

By Donna Recupido, CVPM

Ever had a day where you wanted to move to a secluded beach and forget about veterinary medicine? That's when it's most important to celebrate your successes. Here are a few client letters from my practice, Veterinary Specialty Care (VSC). Dig up your own and remember why what you do matters.

Moments of bliss

"On Sunday, May 28, 2012, our local veterinarian and two compassionate technicians performed an emergency splenectomy followed by a blood transfusion on our beautiful 9-year-old Australian shepherd, Bliss. He saved her life that evening. And we thought we were home free until he called us a week later with the pathology results: hemangiosarcoma. We had never heard of it and were heartbroken. Our veterinarian suggested we come to Veterinary Specialty Care."

During the next year, VSC offered care until the family decided it was time to let Bliss go.

"We brought Bliss in on Monday, Oct. 14, and decided it was best for her to let her go. Dr. Wall and her technician were so wonderful. They made the worst possible situation as bearable as possible. After more than 30 visits to VSC and three surgeries, there are so many wonderful compassionate people who helped us through it all. After all that Bliss went through she never lost

her love of life. She truly was Blissful, and her paw prints will be forever in our hearts."

Our boy Friday

"I have a 13-year-old dachshund named Friday. Dr. Lori Ludwig saved Friday's life not once, but twice. In 2009, my precious Friday had to have back surgery. I was terrified and afraid I was going to lose my best friend. Veterinary Specialty Care was amazing. As I waited in the lobby while his surgery was being performed, the wonderful employees kept me informed and made me feel more comfortable with procedure. I went back every other hour throughout the night to check on him. Again, the employees were amazing.

"In November 2012, Friday got sick and had a blockage. I chose Dr. Ludwig to perform the operation on Friday again since she made miracles happen the first time. Dr. Ludwig removed an 8-inch tumor out of his small intestines along with a few bladder stones. Dr. Ludwig came out after the surgery and updated me thoroughly with everything she did during the exploratory surgery. Friday celebrated his 13th birthday on July 25. Words cannot explain how grateful I am."

Want more? You can read the full stories at dvm360.com/whyyoudoit. **FL**

Donna Recupido, CVPM, is a hospital administrator at Veterinary Specialty Care in Charleston, S.C.



5 steps to BUILD YOUR CAREER

Take the next step to make your job a career with these tips.

By Jennifer Graham

When I took the advice of an acquaintance and answered an ad in the local newspaper for a veterinary receptionist, I could never have imagined the fantastic journey I'd embarked on. Fifteen years later, while my main duties are still reception, I've observed, experienced and soaked up as much knowledge as possible, trying to make myself an indispensable employee. Here are just a few ways you can help grow your career:

1 Master the basics

A great career begins with a strong foundation. I was fortunate to have a couple of really great trainers who started me off on the right foot. Mastering the basic skill set for your position is like learning a new language—it takes time and repetition. By practicing those skills every day, the basics soon become second nature. Consistently performing basic skills well shows your teammates and supervisors that you

are a dependable, reliable and trustworthy employee.

2 Ask lots of questions

Curiosity may have killed the cat, but it's helped me become a well-rounded employee. Strive to learn as much as you can, not just about your position, but your teammates as well. A broad knowledge base helps you see the bigger picture of clients, patients, practice life and veterinary medicine.

3 Be flexible

Be open to change and changing roles within the practice. Change is necessary for businesses and employees to thrive. The better you're able to adapt to change, the greater your chances of success.

4 Don't be afraid to make mistakes

Let's face it, nobody's perfect. Mistakes can be pretty embarrassing, but they can also show gaps in training and create

great opportunities. My first appearance in *Firstline* was a letter to the editor about what an idiot I was for missing my cat's quite obvious hyperthyroid symptoms. Acknowledging my mistake opened new doors and opportunities to help clients and patients.

5 Find your niche

I've learned that you can make a difference in the lives of clients and patients, no matter what your role in practice. Have a special interest or skill? Run with it. Sometimes the coolest opportunities are the ones we create for ourselves. For example, my passion for writing—and team building—led me to create and write *The Buzz* newsletter for my practice for several years. You can see a copy of the newsletter at dvm360.com/thebuzz. Extend yourself and see how far you can reach. **FL**

Jennifer Graham is the client services team leader at Bradford Hills Veterinary Hospital in Wexford, Pa.



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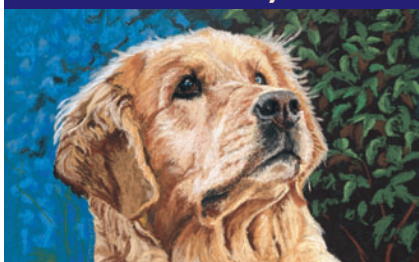


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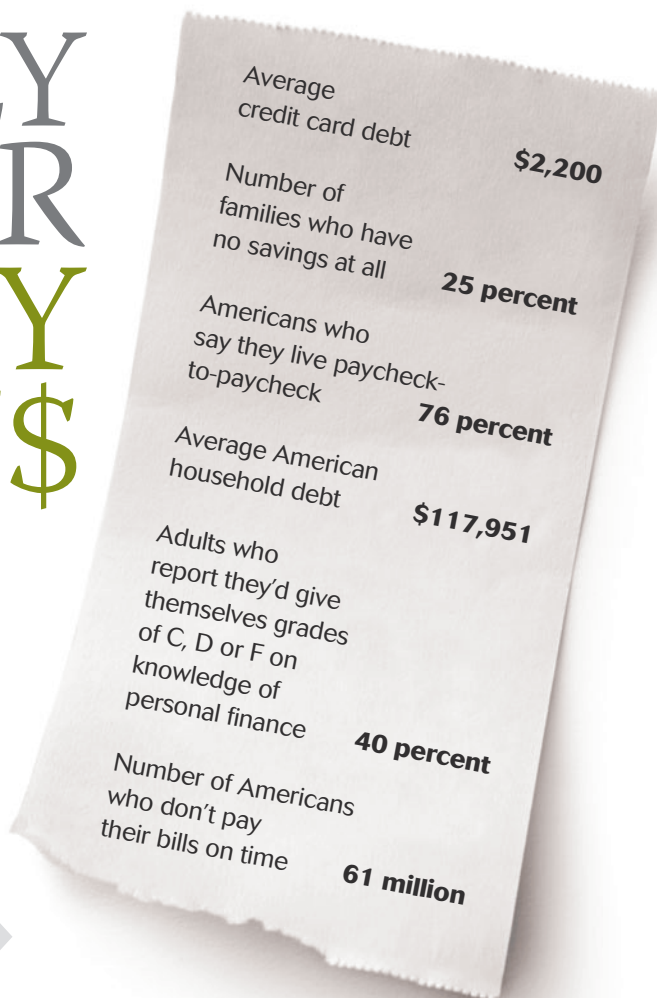


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SOURCES: 2013 CONSUMER FINANCIAL LITERACY SURVEY, BANKRATE.COM, FEDERAL RESERVE, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE



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³ Opinion Research Corporation, Heartworm Prevention Medication Study, 2012. Data on file at Merial.

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See brief summary on page 9.