



p10

A hospital design
the people liked best

Practice tips

- ▶ Managers can be superheroes **5**
- ▶ Stop missed charges once and for all **6**

Associate angst:

How does experience change new doctors? **7**

Sharing secrets:

DVMs' top 10 regrets **15**

Your first step:

Put positive psychology to work for you now **16**

Care, not cost:

Keep veterinarians out of price talks **28**

Are *you* happy?

dvm360
leadership
CHALLENGE
BURDEN OF CARE

p11



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Mupirocin Ointment 2%	Bactoderm® (Zoetis)
Ketamine Hydrochloride Injection, USP	Vetalar® (Boehringer Ingelheim)

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¹Based on list price 2015.



I want you to SUCCEED

It's not about just "dealing with life"—it's coming to terms with your choices and finding the best success for you now. *By Brendan Howard, Editor*

This month in *Veterinary Economics*—as part of the dvm360 Leadership Challenge: The Burden of Care that spans this magazine and our sister publications (*dvm360*, *Firstline* and *Veterinary Medicine*)—we're looking, not at medical science or financial numbers, but something more nebulous yet far more important to you than almost anything else: how you feel about your life.

So ... how does that make you feel?

Seeing through the dark

In this life, every day, I can guarantee good and bad things will happen to you—and you will do good and bad things, on purpose or by accident. What I can't guarantee is how you'll feel about it.

Will you see the latest disgruntled client as another nail in the coffin of your dream to be a beloved animal doctor? Or will you walk into the next appointment convinced, instead, that good clients and bad clients come and go, but work that matters—veterinary medicine—lives on in your hands?

Worse yet, and even deeper, will you wish that you'd never gone to veterinary school ... that you didn't have a job that kept you away from your spouse and kids ... that you hadn't been saddled with *so much debt* on your quest for a DVM degree?

It's your psychology, your resilience,



your outlook on life—yes, your feelings—that make clichés come true for you. You know, lemons into lemonade, see the sunny side, blah blah blah.

That's *you* that can do that. (Maybe with the help of prescription drugs and a good therapist; maybe not.)

If I could give you the world

As much as I want to give you the job you want, the family life you crave and the contentment you deserve, I don't have the power to do that. It's true that I do spend my weekdays hard at work learning about and sharing new and tried-and-true ways to help you earn more money, to smooth out client and employee conflict, and to be happier and more fulfilled at work and in life.

But I—like everybody else dedicated to making your veterinary life better—can only do one thing: Help you when you're ready to work on the parts of your life that you regret, that make you feel bad, that make you feel trapped.

A survey that tells your story—in all its facets

With the help of two concerned veterinarians—Drs. Eden Myers and Ryan Gates—we fielded the 2015 *Veterinary Economics* Career and Family Survey that looks at the complex balance of your time and attention—job, family, friends, community—and your feelings and thoughts about it all.

Go to page 11 and see whether you can see your story and your happiness in the data. Then head to 15 to learn a few habits proven to make you a little happier, a little calmer and a little more clear-headed so you can decide what needs to change—or if, in fact, you're pretty darned happy with your life.

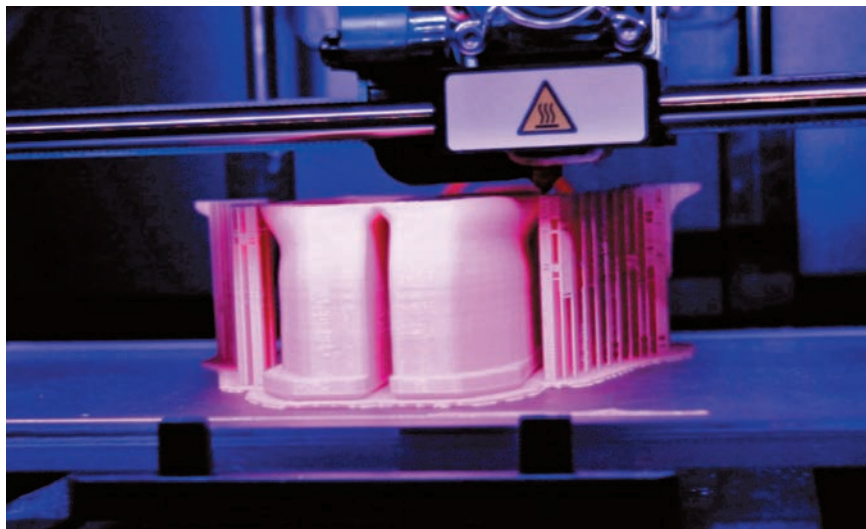
Either way, be mindful that everyone is fragile sometimes. (Some of us more often than others.) Don't ever let the burden of care you face as a doctor, scientist and caregiver bring you down. Reach out for help. Ask your peers for advice in person, online at dvm360.com and here at *Veterinary Economics* at ve@advanstar.com.

Your loved ones want you to succeed. A profession full of peers want you to succeed. Whatever success looks like to you—full-time, part-time, no-time, a dozen kids, no kids, married with a house, single in a yurt—I want you to succeed.

Don't stop caring. Just remember to care for yourself too. **VE**

The future is now: Using 3D printers in veterinary practice

3D printing—a technology once thought to be futuristic—can build customized veterinary equipment from digital designs. Learn how an engineer-turned-substitute-technician used his background to improve operations at his wife's hospital with his 3D printer to save money, address shortcomings and improve patient care. Read about the technology at dvm360.com/3Dprinting.



Data on the moneymakers

Market data reveals why some veterinarians are earning more money than others. Learn how factors such as location, gender and practice type impact your paycheck by reading the economic market report at dvm360.com/MorePay.



STOP WITH THE EXCUSES:

Everybody can use this time management method in practice

"I don't have time" doesn't cut it in veterinary medicine. Whatever your role is, you can adopt the STOP

Method to take control of your professional life. Visit dvm360.com/STOP to learn how a few minutes and a legal pad can make you more efficient.



COLD RECEPTION: Don't wait for this front desk disaster

A bad receptionist is bad for business. See why it's important that your front desk team member knows a patient's sex by watching the video at dvm360.com/Lady.



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Visit our websites: dvm360.com; thevcv.com; industrymatter.com.

This month, we explore the burden of care in veterinary medicine. Check out how our team de-stresses with pets, below.

THERESA ENTRIKEN, DVM
Taking their photos and hanging out with our indoor cats as they explore the backyard.

MINDY VALCARCEL
Almost every workday at lunch I take Ollie for a walk to mull things over, get some sun and exercise, and to watch his cute prancing about.

KATIE JAMES
We go running!

ALISON FULTON
My husband and I both spend a lot of time relaxing with our dogs on the couch. They send us to sleep.

BRENDA ANDRESEN
My golden retriever, Wrigley, is better than yoga, meditation, a long bath or a glass of wine when it comes to helping me chill after a stressful day. We have a "time to relax" ritual—when I sit on her favorite kitchen rug, she knows it's time to jump in my lap and snuggle up real close, and I rub her warm tummy.

JESSICA ZEMLER
Go to the dog park!

GREG KINDRED
I like for my 30-pound dog, Finn, to sit on my lap while I watch TV. I pet him while he sits there, but I mostly just like him in my lap.

Veterinary economics

The business of client and patient care

Mission

To give practicing veterinarians the business tools, insights, ideas and inspiration they need to fuel their passion for practice; run a well-managed, profitable business; enhance client loyalty and satisfaction; and maximize their patients' well-being.

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2011
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Finalist



2012
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Finalist



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AVENGERS COULD BE YOUR VETERINARY TEAM MODEL

Amazing veterinarians (and superheroes) try to do it all, but they're better when they build their own super-teams. *By Christine Shupe*

Practice owners are often talented clinicians, caring professionals and day-to-day task jugglers. Although they can't fly and most likely wouldn't wear a cape, owners may aspire to be superheroes—assuming full control of managing the office and taking care of patients.

Hiring a practice manager can foster greater productivity and efficiency—and these benefits are fully realized when owners take advantage of the skills of the manager and the entire team.

Avengers assemble!

Even owners with practice managers don't seem to be communicating how management tasks could be delegated. In a survey by the Veterinary Hospital Managers Association (VHMA), 30 percent of practice owners said they spend too much time on tasks they felt their managers should be doing. A recurring theme from managers was, "You don't understand what I can do."

Whether it's an example of superhero and sidekick—or a super-team like the Avengers in which management duties are shared with the manager and others—delegating responsibility can be a force to be recognized.



Delegating superpowers

The VHMA has identified these job domains for managers. (Two more are at dvm360.com/avengers). Do you recognize super-potential in your practice manager or team member?

Whip human resources into shape like Black Widow.

Like The Avengers' Black Widow, who possesses calm interrogation skills, the manager plans and coordinates personnel tasks. Recruiting, hiring and directing subordinates are duties that fall in her web.

Woo new clients and impress current ones like Iron Man.

Suave billionaire Tony Stark wowed crowds with his marketing savvy as the high-tech Iron Man. A great practice manager has a knack for developing marketing plans,

preparing client surveys and thinking up ways to improve client satisfaction. Wow 'em!

Manage the money with great honor and conscience like Captain America. Someone as trustworthy with the purse strings as Cap can analyze financial reports, maintain accounts, establish client credit policies and more.

Smart owners appreciate the skills that hospital administrators, practice managers and team members contribute to management. The Avengers fight foes far greater than themselves because they trust and delegate. What are you waiting for? Veterinary team, assemble! **VE**

Christine Shupe is executive director of the Veterinary Hospital Managers Association. The VHMA serves professionals in veterinary management through education, certification and networking.



Team unite!

Check out how the Hulk and Hawkeye contribute to the team by heading to dvm360.com/avengers.

A simple trick to help catch missing income

This practice sets an eye-catching number as the default dollar amount for procedure codes, rather than zero.

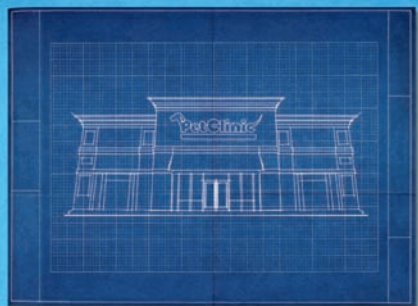
Few are the practices whose income does not suffer from missed charges, and the income from those can really add up.

For procedure codes without a fixed fee, most practice

software defaults the fee to zero. However, when finishing a client visit at the checkout counter, it's all too easy to overlook a null entry. To make such items impossible to miss, we assign each of them a value of \$1,000. Doing

so will surely make the receptionist pause when a vaccination visit is more than \$1,000. Then, it's just a simple matter of inserting the correct fee.

*James W. Randolph, DVM
Long Beach, Mississippi*



— to —



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How time changes associates

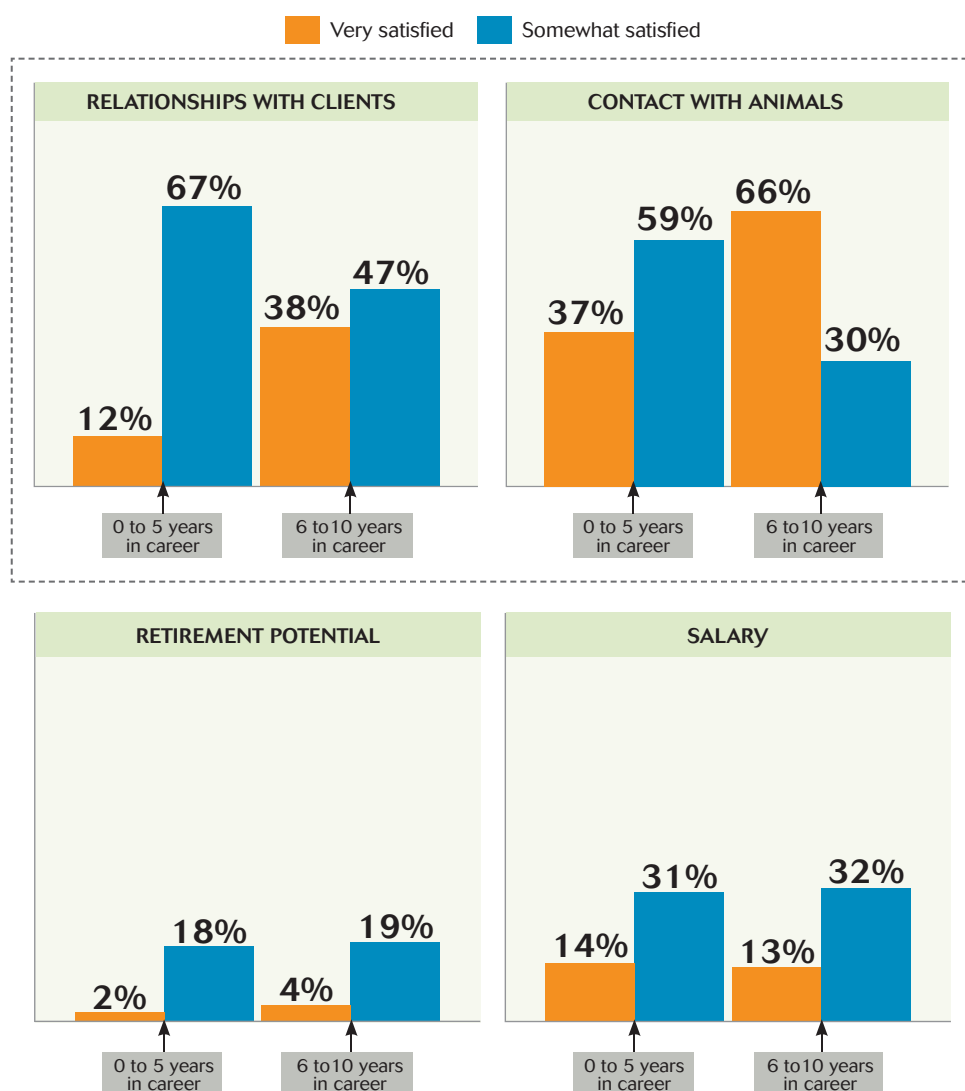
The 2015 dvm360 Job Satisfaction Study suggests older associates are more satisfied with relationships, but just as worried about finances.

Data from the 2015 dvm360 Job Satisfaction Study shows associates finding more satisfaction in their interactions with clients and patients as they gain

experience, but financial concerns linger. Respondents could choose from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. The answers suggest new veterinarians tend to become more comfortable

with professional relationships, but long-term concerns about money and financial security are not alleviated after five years. For the full charts, visit dvm360.com/Changes.vet

Associates rated their satisfaction with attributes in their current position:



SOURCE: 2015 DVM360 JOB SATISFACTION STUDY

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Introducing Vetstreet's Thank You Emails with Online Reviews, Social Sharing and Smart Surveys

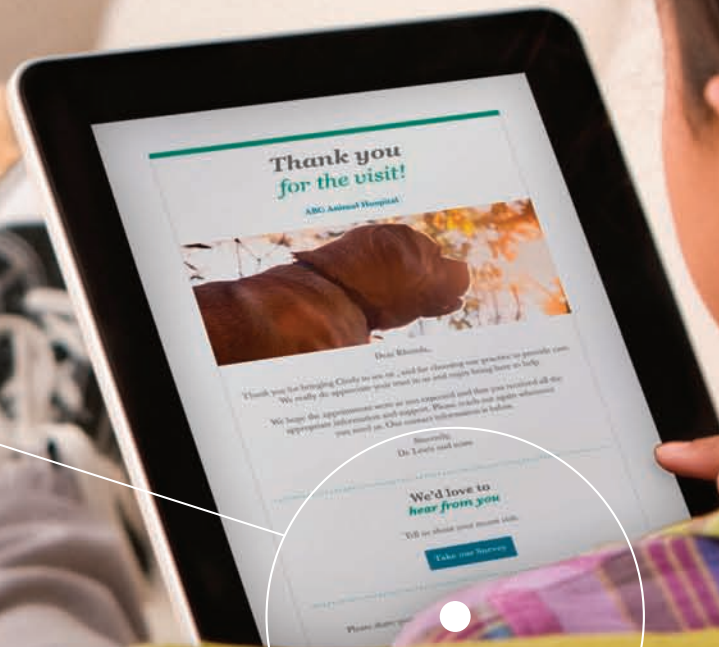
Thanking clients for entrusting you with their pets' health is more than common courtesy. It's a way to build client loyalty and long-lasting relationships. But just as important to the success of your practice is asking clients what they think of the customer service you provide.

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2015 PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD WINNER: Compassionate Care Veterinary Hospital

The votes are in! Check out this people-pleasing practice with efficient workflow and species-friendly spaces.

Online voters picked Compassionate Care Veterinary Hospital in Berlin, Connecticut, as the 2015 *Veterinary Economics* Hospital Design Competition People's Choice Award winner. The 2,048-square-foot conversion project is located in a commercial plaza at the intersection of two high-traffic thoroughways, making it easily accessible for clients to see and find the hospital.

A family hospital

Owner Christine Puskaric, DVM, wrote in her entry that two major factors drove the design process: People consider their pets members of their family, and most pets are unhappy in the hospital environment. The philosophy was to create a place that conveyed comfort and compassion. This was accomplished with:

- > Warm and relaxing hues in the paint scheme and countertop colors
- > Separate exam rooms for cats, small dogs and large dogs or multi-pet appointments
- > A 10-gallon fish tank to entertain cats in the cat-only exam room.

An efficient hospital

Compassionate Care was built on a strict budget, but with careful planning there was room to provide state-of-the-art diagnostic and monitoring devices, something that Puskaric felt was essential to providing outstanding care. Puskaric also



>>> Warm colors were chosen for walls, countertops and exteriors at Compassionate Care Veterinary Hospital.



>>> A door with full-length glass makes monitoring isolation easier focused on design choices that support workflow. These features include:

- > Grommets built into cabinets doors and countertops to allow for wires to be hidden and easy disposal of garbage and sharps
- > Exhaust fans in exam rooms to control odor
- > In the isolation ward, a glass door in (see above) and a separate drain-and-hose system to keep contamination contained. **VE**



**Every photo,
every room**

For more on this hospital, visit

dvm360.com/peopleschoice.

For a photo tour, visit dvm360.com/peoples2015.

Are *you* happy?

A first look at the 2015 *Veterinary Economics* Career and Family Survey examines how veterinarians' personal choices correspond to overall happiness.

When Eden Myers, DVM, and Ryan Gates, DVM—contributors to the veterinary blog JustVetData.com—asked themselves what they wanted to know about veterinarians, the answer was obvious: What impact do our personal choices have on our careers, and what impact do our career choices have on us personally?

What happened?

The 2015 *Veterinary Economics* Career and Family Survey was open for three months and distributed via social media, online discussion groups, online discussion listservs and several allied organizations and state veterinary medical association memberships.

"We ended up with 741 remarkably complete, usable responses," Myers says.

Questions covered the gamut—from basic demographics and veterinary school affiliation to marriage, children, home ownership and debt load.

What do we know?

Results from the survey, and further analysis, will filter out during the coming months from JustVetData.com, *Veterinary Economics* and dvm360.com. We thought we'd start with happiness.

The majority of veterinarians who responded to the survey and also answered the question (655 respondents)—"Are you happy with how your life has turned out at this point?"—identified themselves as happy. Their other choices were "No" and "Yes and no." We found that regardless of personal choices (Married? Employed? Kids?), 5 percent consistently

reported as unhappy.

Myers noted that many respondents had mixed feelings—choosing "yes and no" often when answering the "happy question." With these initial results, she hopes to dig deeper to get to the bottom of what exactly they're veterinarians are happy—or not happy—about. (Maybe their regrets on page 15?) But while mixed feelings abound, there are outliers.

> There was little fluctuation in happiness when applied to the mean income level of the ZIP codes where respondents live. However, 11 percent of those who lived in the area with the highest mean income said they were unhappy. That's more than double those who identified as unhappy living in lower-mean-income areas.

> Veterinarians who said

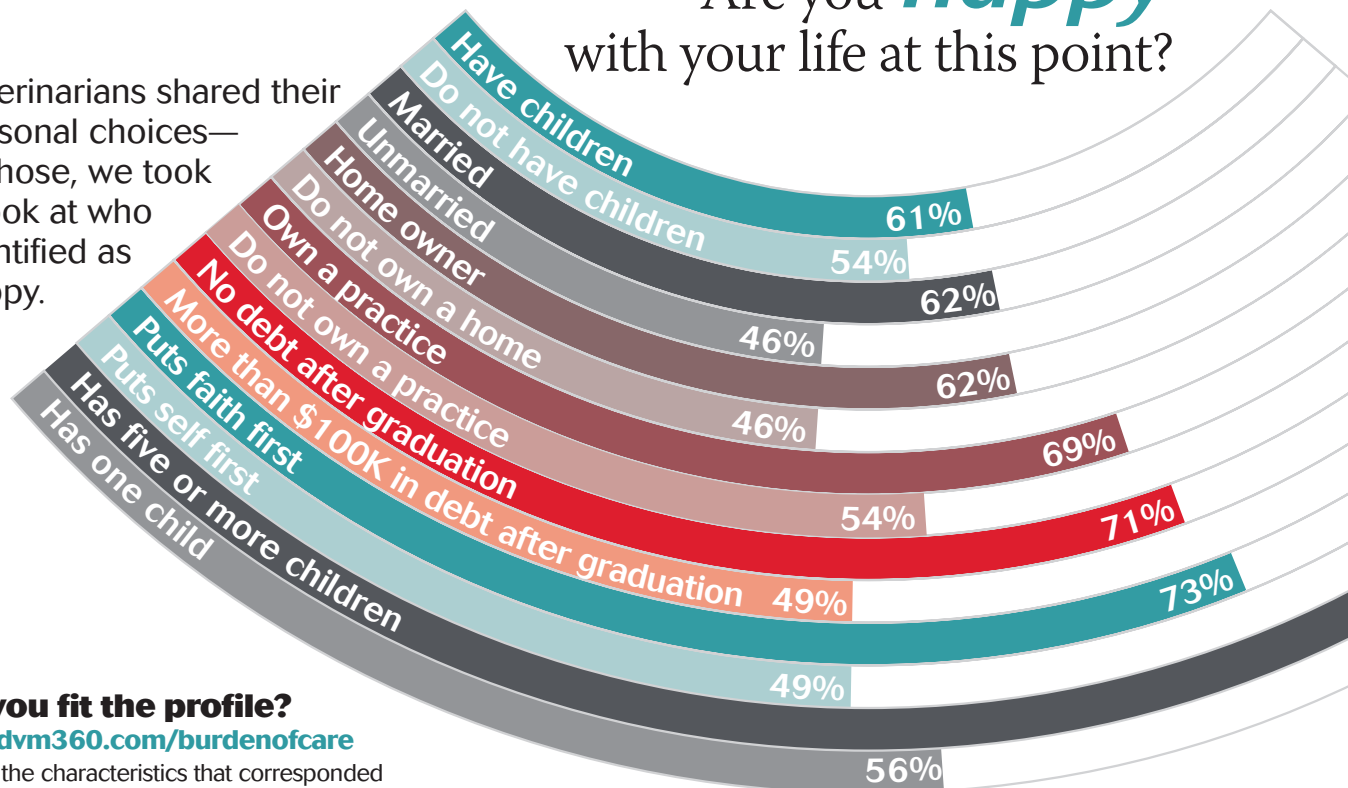


Can I ask a personal question?

Veterinary Economics asked a wide variety of personal questions in the career and family survey. Go to dvm360.com/burdenofcare to see the entire collection.

Are you *happy* with your life at this point?

Veterinarians shared their personal choices—of those, we took a look at who identified as happy.



Do you fit the profile?

Go to dvm360.com/burdenofcare to see the characteristics that corresponded most with happiness—and unhappiness.

SOURCE: 2015 VETERINARY ECONOMICS CAREER AND FAMILY SURVEY

they don't own a home reported as unhappy twice as much as their home-owning counterparts.

➤ At a time when good self-care is being promoted to improve physical and emotional well-being, those who ranked "self" in their list of priorities ahead of faith, family or career reported as least happiest compared to those with different priorities.

➤ While debt after graduation didn't seem to affect the amount of veterinarians who said they were unhappy, it definitely affected those who identified as happy—71 percent of those with no debt identified as happy compared to only 49 percent of those whose debt exceeded \$100,000.

➤ Respondents' happiness seemed to increase among those with multiple children. Of the few veterinarians who

said they had five or more children, 100 percent said they were happy.

When broken down by gender, male veterinarians were generally happier than female veterinarians. There were many similarities between the sexes, such as the percentage ranking family as a first priority—63 percent of men and 69 percent of women. However, 13 percent of women—more than four-times that of men—reported that they put themselves before their faith, family and career. Yet, 20 percent of men who put themselves first identified as unhappy compared to only 3 percent of women.

Another comparison of note was while 11 percent of women who didn't own a home reported as unhappy, not one non-owning male veterinarian identified as unhappy.

What does it mean?

"This is the kind of data the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) isn't providing for us," Myers says. "This data is about real people. It can help them make decisions."

In the end, Myers says when respondents were asked what they would have changed, the same things cropped up in both the unhappy and happy groups—more time at home, more money, less debt, children sooner, children later.

"This has really interesting implications for what we need to do to actually make this career better in terms of outcomes," Myers says. "Simply asking whether people feel good isn't likely to give actionable information. It'll take asking what people want to change." **VE**

Male and female veterinarians make similar choices, but satisfaction may differ

	Married				Unmarried	
♂	4%	26%	70%	50%	44%	6%
♀	5%	37%	56%	47%	45%	8%

Where do you live?

	\$50,000 mean income or less				\$50,000 to \$100,000	
♂	7%	40%	53%	70%	26%	4%
♀	4%	38%	58%	58%	37%	5%
	\$100,000 to \$150,000				\$150,000 or more	
♂	5%	27%	68%	78%	22%	
♀	5%	44%	51%	47%	37%	16%

	Own a home				Don't own a home	
♂	5%	25%	70%	59%	41%	
♀	4%	36%	60%	42%	47%	11%

	Men				Women	
Career	33%	67%	38%	56%	6%	
Faith	5%	16%	79%	70%	24%	6%
Family	4%	31%	65%	56%	38%	6%
Self	20%	20%	60%	48%	49%	3%

Happy Yes and No Not happy

SOURCE: 2015 VETERINARY ECONOMICS CAREER AND FAMILY SURVEY

Men who put themselves first ranked the highest for unhappiness



- > The burden of care: Veterinarians' mental health, how to protect yourself and the profession's role in protecting its members
- > Check out the current state of job satisfaction with exclusive research from the 2015 dvm360 Job Satisfaction Survey
- > Tips and advice from veterinarians to be happier veterinarians.

On deck in *dvm360's* sister publications

Veterinary
medicine

- Struggling with personal issues? You're not alone.
- > A personal account of one veterinarian's struggle with extreme depression and suicidal thoughts
 - > Exclusive survey data on veterinarians' physical, emotional and financial health
 - > Suicide and euthanasia: Is there a link?

firstline

- > Exclusive data on team members' job satisfaction from our 2015 study
- > True stories of burnout and compassion fatigue in practice
- > Advice and insight on how veterinary team members have adapted their careers to stay happy at work
- > A guide about moods—and how to develop emotional intelligence.

From Eureka to Action

Why and How to Create a Fear-Free Practice

Dr. Marty Becker is on a mission to make Fear-Free veterinary visits a reality for pets. He's outspoken about the need, and his message is eye-opening. In this symposium, you'll learn how to use Fear-Free concepts to:

- put animals and owners at ease
- deliver a higher level of compassionate care
- earn repeat visits.

You will also receive a copy of the new brochure

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Marty Becker, DVM

Fear-Free tools to transform patient interactions, boost visits, and enhance your practice.

Lisa Radosta, DVM, DACVB

Fear-Free techniques: Clinical behavioral evidence that they work.

Jonathan Bloom, DVM

Modern Love — Making pets happy at the veterinary hospital.

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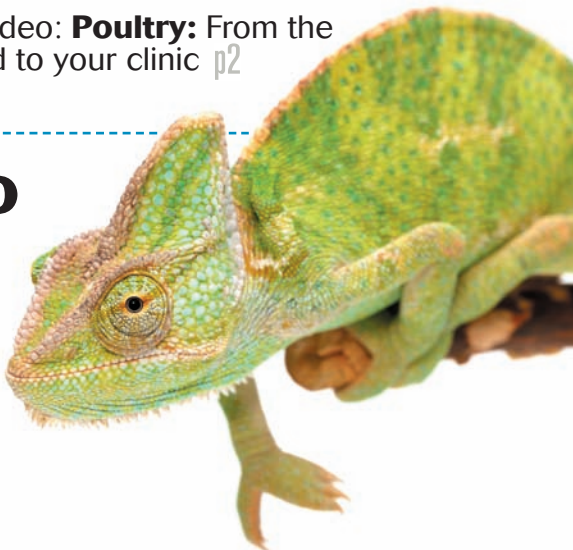
6 tips for your clients with backyard chickens

PLUS Video: **Poultry:** From the backyard to your clinic p2

How-to tool:

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TOOLS Video

>> Exotic pets: What's to know? How to prepare yourself and your team for exotic patients

p5

Data

A look at figures on exotic pet ownership from the AVMA

p5

Client handouts

- >> Choosing a healthy rabbit
- >> Welcoming your new feathered friend home
- >> How to pick a cage for your bird
- >> Why choose ferrets as pets?
- >> How to find a healthy ferret

p6

Expert Q&A

I'm ready to work on exotics! Now what?

PLUS Tips on making your exotics practice SEO-friendly

p7

Take action

- >> Technician spotlight: Why I chose to specialize in exotic animals
- >> Boarding exotic pets for better business

p8

6 tips for your clients with backyard chickens

These gentle birds are a great way to start with avian species.

Chickens make wonderful avian patients, says Tracey Ritzman, DVM, DABVP (avian and exotic mammals), a practitioner in Michigan who spoke at CVC San Diego in December 2014. In fact, veterinarians who want to start seeing more birds could do worse than to start with chickens.

“Chickens are gentle,” Ritzman told a room full of veterinarians. “They’re not aggressive, they’ll sit still on the table if they have good footing, and they’re easier to handle than other birds, such as parrots.”

Chances are that with the urban poultry trend continuing to climb, you probably already have a number of clients who have these birds roaming their yards. Here are some basic tips you can offer them, even if you end up referring these patients to an avian veterinarian nearby.

1 Chickens need to forage

In addition to providing needed nutrients, foraging is normal



behavior for chickens. If they can’t engage in this behavior, “they get a little wacky,” Dr. Ritzman says. Owners can allow chickens to forage by using moveable housing that can be placed in different locations around the yard.

2 It’s normal for egg production to drop

Clients may mention that their hens aren’t laying as many eggs as they did initially, and they may think this indicates a health problem. Barring ab-

Find it ALL here...

To watch the video below, go to
dvm360.com/exoticpetcare.



EXOTIC PET CARE

normal exam findings, you can reassure these owners that it's normal for a hen's egg laying to decrease as her age increases.

3 Chicks will tell you if they're comfortable

Young chicks under a heat lamp have very specific temperature requirements, Dr. Ritzman says, and they'll react to incorrect heat levels in specific ways. If they're too warm, they'll disperse around the periphery of their enclosure, as far away from the lamp as they can get. If they're too cold, they'll huddle underneath the lamp in a clump. And if the temperature is just right, they'll be distributed evenly throughout the enclosure. Owners who notice anything other than this even dispersal can adjust the heat level accordingly.

4 A mister helps keep chickens cool in high temperatures

Dr. Ritzman told her audience that chickens can experience heat distress and even death at temperatures above 95 degrees F. One CVC attendee, a veterinarian from Tucson, Arizona, told fellow veterinarians that a mister is a great way to help chickens keep cool in high temperatures. Covering food and bedding with a metal roof can help prevent moisture-related fungal growth that can be harmful to the birds, he added.

5 Salmonellosis is a serious concern

U.S. outbreaks of salmonellosis in the fall of 2014 were linked to backyard poultry flocks whose birds all originated with the same mail order hatchery,

Dr. Ritzman said. The disease can cause serious disease and death, and clients need to take precautions. It's not recommended that children under the age of 5, along with elderly or immunocompromised people, handle chicks or raw eggs, Ritzman said. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has created educational resources for backyard poultry owners.

6 Diet affects stinkiness of manure

A veterinarian in Dr. Ritzman's CVC audience—one who owned a few backyard chickens himself—mentioned that you can “be a better neighbor” by feeding vegetarian-based feed (which is formulated to meet birds' dietary protein needs as effectively as animal-based feed). It's far less stinky, he says.

POULTRY: FROM THE BACKYARD TO YOUR CLINIC

Backyard poultry is gaining in popularity and avian veterinarians aren't the only ones seeing more of these species in their practices. Follow this advice from Eric Klaphake, DVM, DACZM, DABVP, to expand your expertise in this area of avian medicine.



Scan the QR code with your mobile device to watch the video now.





How-to tool:

A tourniquet for exotic pets

Create a tiny tourniquet for delicate patients with this step-by-step tutorial using items from a craft store.

We were looking for a small limb tourniquet for ferrets, guinea pigs, small reptiles, and birds. The standard ones made for dogs and cats are too big, and rubber bands and hemostats are either too tight or not tight enough. While shopping at a local craft store, we found some inexpensive waterproof materials that we used to make tiny tourniquets.

Supplies

- 2-mm rubber cording (Stretch Magic Silkies Necklace—Pepperell Crafts); I found these in the jewelry-making section (*Figure 1*). A package of six cords costs about \$5.
- Plastic cord stops (single hole) for drawstrings on garments; I found these in the sewing section. A package of two costs about \$2.30.
- 2-mm-thick craft foam; I purchased a 9 x 12-inch sheet for \$0.75.

Instructions

>> Cut the clasp ends off the rubber cording, and cut the cording into two pieces. Insert the ends of one piece into the hole of the cord stop (*Figure 2*). Insert the ends of the other piece into another cord stop to make a second tourniquet.

>> For delicate skin (e.g. birds, geckos), we made a foam doughnut to put between the leg and plastic cord stop. Cut a small round piece of foam about 1.5 cm in diameter, and use a hole punch to create a center hole (*Figure 3*). Place the foam doughnut over the looped end of the rubber cording, and apply to the leg (*Figure 4*).

—Dr. Laura Wade, DABVP (avian practice)
Lancaster, New York



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EXOTIC PET CARE

Exotic pets: What's to know?



Think you've got exotics covered? Whether you treat exotic pets or refer cases, it's likely you'll face a question or two. Here are tips to help you help potential clients.

Know your exotic pets

When a client comes in with their rat that has a lump—don't let it freak you (or your team) out—use the tips provided by exotic veterinarian Lori Corriveau, DVM. Here she talks about the common mistakes veterinarians and their team members can sometimes make with the unexpected exotic patient, and how to avoid these pitfalls for good.



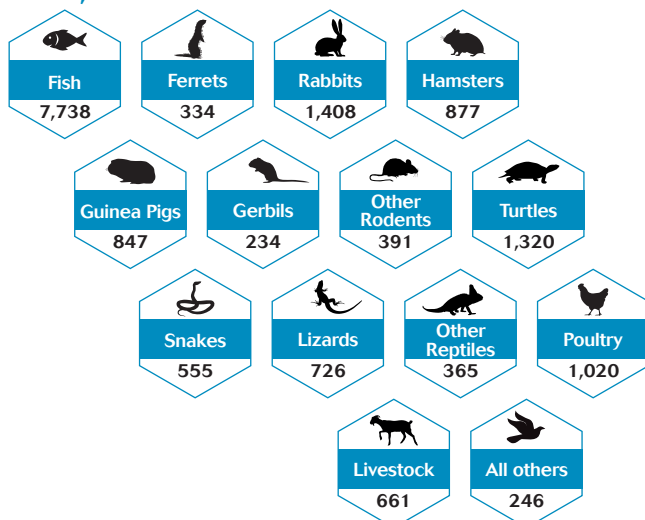
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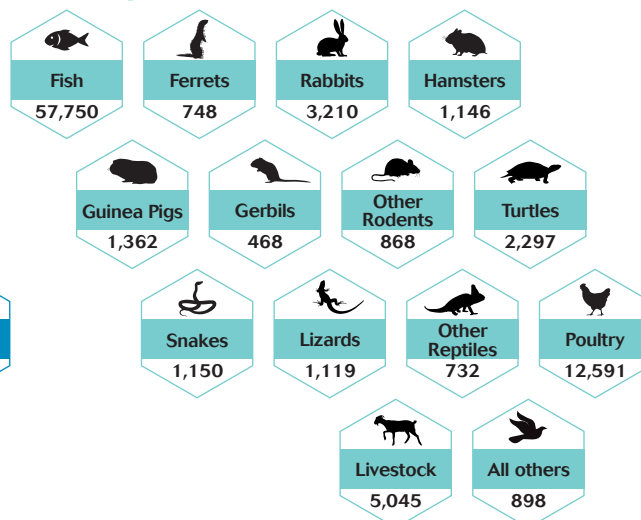


DATA FROM THE AVMA: U.S. pet ownership of specialty and exotic animals—more than you think!

Number of U.S. households (in 1,000s) that own ...



Number (in 1,000s) of these exotic pets in the U.S.



Offer this important exotic pet care information to your clients who own an exotic pet or are considering a new member of the family.



EXPERT TIP

Post animal care videos to your hospital's YouTube page with a link to your website. One video on syringe feeding a rabbit can come in handy when panicky clients call late at night, too distraught to remember what they saw at the hospital.



EXOTIC PET CARE

Q&A: I'm ready to work on exotic pets! *Where do I start?*

Dip your toe in exotics with these first steps to help care for pets that are less common—but no less lovable.

Laurie Hess, DVM, DABVP (Avian)

Like any other service your hospital offers, exotic pet care—whether birds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, wildlife or uncommon species (hedgehogs, pot-bellied pigs, sugar gliders, prairie dogs)—will only be worth it if you can charge appropriately for it. And the way to feel justified charging for exotic pet services is to spend time studying bird and exotic animal diseases and treatment and to acquire basic equipment to diagnose and treat these pets. Of course, the amount you spend on equipment will be proportional to the depth of exotic pet care you aim to provide, but here's some basic equipment you'll need:

- > Small syringes (insulin- and tuberculin-sized) with small needles (33- and 25-gauge, respectively)
- > Microtainer tubes and microhematocrit tubes for blood collection (available from most veterinary laboratories)
- > A microcentrifuge to spin down microtainer tubes
- > A scale that weighs in grams
- > Support from a veterinary laboratory that tests small blood samples from exotic pets
- > A microscope and Gram stain
- > An infant-sized stethoscope
- > A heated cage to provide oxygen and nebulized drugs with narrow bar spacing or a Plexiglas enclosure to prevent escape of small exotic pets
- > Small-gauge intravenous catheters, endotracheal tubes and masks to deliver anesthesia and



oxygen

- > Metal gavage feeding tubes: curved for birds and straight for reptiles
- > An infusion pump that can deliver fractions of a milliliter of fluid per minute
- > A variety of towels, from washcloths to bath-sized, to restrain pets
- > A nearby pharmacy that can compound drugs into small volumes

Once you've set yourself up with basic equipment and have a general knowledge of bird and exotic pet diseases and treatment, it's a matter of time and practice to make exotic pet services profitable. For reference, I've been treating solely birds and exotics for 18 years and now have an active client base of about 3,500 exotic pet owners. Depending on the species I'm treating, my average transaction fee is about \$375. So, done correctly, exotic pets can be quite profitable.



SEO success story

Dr. Hess offers up her tips for better SEO—a must if you see exotics—in this video. Scan the QR code to watch now or find it at dvm360.com/exotic-petcare.





Specializing in **exotics**

Lorelei Tibbetts, LVT, VTS (Clinical Practice—Exotic Companion Animal), is practice manager and director of nursing at The Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine in New York City.

Everyone knows that chocolate and lilies can kill cats, but did you know overheating non-stick cookware can kill a bird? Each exotic species has unique traits. This can make working with exotics a challenging—and amazing—job.

We've watched technicians' roles grow to include discussing treatment plans and payment options, placing catheters, collecting samples, administering medication, monitoring surgical patients, positioning patients for radiology and communicating with clients constantly. This can be taxing on the most qualified dog and cat technician. Now, imagine that instead of just a couple species, there were many more species

that required these services, each with dramatically different anatomy, physiology and medical needs. Exciting, right?

Clients want to know their pets are receiving special-

ized care. We owe it to pets to have the most highly qualified technicians. This elevates our level of care and maintains high standards in our profession. That's why I specialized.

Why specialize in exotic companion animals?

"One of the newest specialties available for technicians is the Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Clinical Practice, which has three categories: Canine/Feline, Production Animal and Exotic Companion Animal (ECA). As a founding member on the ECA team of the specialty, I saw the growing need for exotic pet technicians to become specialized to meet the demand exotic pet owners expect from their veterinary team."

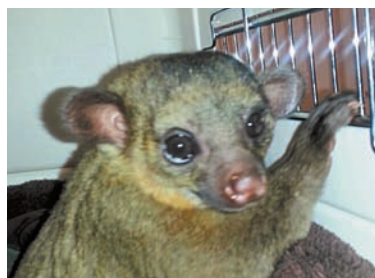


—Lorelei Tibbetts, LVT, VTS

One more tip

Boarding exotics for **better business**

Even if you don't normally offer veterinary care for exotics, you can board them. You can offer your clients reliable caretakers who will closely watch their pets and



intervene on their behalf if a problem arises. Exotic pet boarding is an easy service to offer for most species as long as owners provide all supplies and bring enough

food to last the entire visit. Problems usually occur when there is an abrupt change in the pet's routine or the type of food offered (e.g., when food runs out and is replaced with a different brand), or when subtle signs go unnoticed (e.g. no new droppings for several days). Make sure your staff learns to properly set up cages and keep them clean. Most exotic pets are natural prey for carnivores. Keep your birds and other exotics from line of sight with dogs and cats. If possible, house them in a warm, quiet section of the hospital, away from dog and cat noise and odors.

—Dan Johnson, DVM, DABVP

YOUR TOP 10 regrets



Here's what veterinarians wish they had done differently.

Data from the 2015 *Veterinary Economics Career and Family Survey* shows that in general veterinarians are happy with

where they are in their lives, with 59 percent responding yes when asked, "Are you happy with how your life has turned out to this point?" Five percent

replied no, and 36 percent said yes and no. But there are still things that you'd change. Below are the top 10 regrets and a few respondents' thoughts. **VE**



1 I wish I had more time for personal life and family:

"I wish I had more time for myself and my family. Lots of sacrifices have been made to be a veterinarian, and the monetary compensation seems so little for the work involved, compared to other professions."



6 I wish I'd had more kids or had kids sooner:

"Kids earlier. I wanted more than one, but biology said no."



7 I wish I'd become a practice owner—or done it sooner:

"Ownership may have been possible for me had I considered it earlier in my career. I could have chosen my first job more carefully with this in mind."



2 I took on too much student debt:

"The student loan debt is crushing and life-limiting, considering the typical debt-to-income ratio of a veterinarian. Banking on the Public Service Student Loan Forgiveness program is the only bright spot in this situation; however, they are looking to cap it at \$59,000 in FY 2015. This will most likely only cover the interest I've gained."



8 I wish I'd specialized or taken an internship or residency:

"I would have done an internship and gotten board certified. I also would have pursued practice ownership earlier in my career."



3 I wouldn't change anything:

"Nothing. My children have a richer and fuller life directly due to the decisions I've made."



9 I wish I lived or practiced in a different location:

"I might have paid off more of my student loans if I'd lived in an area with a lower cost of living"



4 I wish I hadn't gone to veterinary school:

"I wish I never became a veterinarian. I should have become a lawyer or physician so financially I would come out ahead. Instead I'm stuck in veterinary medicine at age 40."



10 I have regrets about my spouse (or lack thereof):

"I would have pursued marriage and started a family earlier."



5 I picked the wrong job:

"I would have chosen to go into veterinary medicine, and I would have chosen to have my children. I even would have specialized again."

But I never would have chosen the critical care specialty. The hours are too difficult with three kids, and the on-call time is killer."



Fight on-the-job frustrations

Find out your peers' top workday hassles in the 2015 dvm360 Job Satisfaction Survey. See your frustrations (and a few possible solutions) at

dvm360.com/burdenofcare.

THE POWER to change lies within

Let's tackle the top few regrets from the previous page. It's time to work on these issues to live happier lives.

By Steve Noonan, DVM, CPCC

// **wish I had more time for personal life and/or family"**

You know we all feel this way. There are 168 hours in a week. How well do we plan them? I challenge

each of you to spend a week or two and track where your hours actually go. I did this and was astonished how much time I waste. Now, I ask myself these four questions of time-intensive tasks:

- > Is this good for my career?
- > Is this good for me and my health?
- > Is this good for my relationships?
- > Is this fun?

When I can say "yes" more often, I am much happier and far more productive. How much of that time you regret losing from your personal life and family was spent on critical issues ... and how much might you be wasting?

"I have too much student debt"

Yeah, you do. We all do. Costs for education are spiraling out of control and salaries have plateaued. But research with more than 275,000 people in more than 300 studies in positive psychology has proven that happiness precedes financial success. Harvard's Shawn Achor wrote *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology* (Crown Business, 2010) about it. You improve the chance of paying down your debt by working on yourself first. You can't possibly create a good financial plan to service your debt with a defeatist attitude. It takes a lot of work, but nothing of value comes easy.

"I wish I hadn't gone to veterinary school"

Researchers have coined the phrase "hedonic treadmill" to describe the phenomenon where



what we seek only satisfies us for a short time and we then crave something more or different. Extensive studies have shown that we will only be happy with something “new”—a career, a car, a house, a lover—for a little while. We then become accustomed to it as normal, and our pleasure centers begin to crave more, or something new once again. We can’t help it. In a few months, we’ll be looking for something better.

Here’s an example: Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert studied simultaneously a group of mega lottery winners and acute paraplegics; within six months, both groups had returned to their baseline amount of happiness. Remember that you worked your butt off to get into this profession. Keep that in mind when today’s job gets you down.

Yes, some jobs are horrible (or horrible for you) and you need to leave. But do that for the right

reasons. My advice? Remember that veterinary medicine can be an awesome profession—it’s why you signed up. And remember that if you leave it for something “better,” you may not find it.

In my positivity and life coaching experiences with clients, I have seen the power of the very moment when someone makes the decision to change. Right then things start to open up, roadblocks turn into opportunities, and everything works a little better.

Be kinder to yourself. You could be amazed at the breakthroughs in your life when you start to see life less full of regrets and more full of choices and the power you have right now to be different, happier and healthier. **VE**

Dr. Steve Noonan, CPCC, is a veterinarian, management consultant, counselor, mindfulness instructor and professional life coach living in Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

Need to feel better? Put the research of positive psychology to work for you

Psychologist and writer Martin Seligman says there are five aspects to well-being we must address to have the best life we can. His acronym PERMA stands for (P)ositive emotions, (E)ngagement in our work, positive (R)elations, (M)eaningful work and (A)ccomplishments. I believe we’re lucky in veterinary medicine to have the blessing of (E)ngaging and (M)eaningful work. But what about the rest?

> Positive emotions.

Research shows positivity can increase your mental capacity. I recommend starting a gratitude practice immediately. You can read all about it at

dvm360.com/gratitude.

> Positive relations.

Make time in your schedule for your family, the most important relations you have.

> Accomplishments.

Set a goal. Accomplish that goal. Repeat. In her book *Creating Your Best Life: The Ultimate Life List Guide* (Sterling, 2011), psychologist Caroline Adams Miller shows us evidence that goal-setting is a surefire way to up your positivity quotient.

> **Exercise.** University of Michigan researchers found that exercise and fresh air helped to expand working memory by up to 20 percent.

Research also shows that as as little as 20 minutes of exercise three times a week is effective in boosting positivity.

Try walking your dog or head to the park with your kids. The key is to get moving!

> Practice compassion.

When someone annoys you during the day, stop for a moment and think about this: Everyone wants to be happy and everyone has problems. Everyone is trying. If you’re kinder to the obnoxious offender, you’re being kinder to yourself by increasing your own serotonin and oxytocin levels and training your body to stress out less.



The power of positivity

Read more from Dr. Noonan and how you can use positive psychology to live a happier life by heading to **dvm360.com/Noonan.**



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Boehringer Ingelheim Equine vaccine label change

Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica has received USDA approval to include “safe for use in pregnant mares” as part of its label claim for the Vetera vaccine portfolio. The USDA approved the additional label claim based on safety studies performed in a total of 446 pregnant mares vaccinated twice during each trimester of pregnancy.

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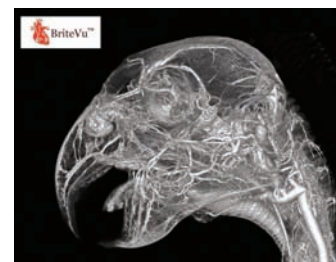


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Vetstreet Marketing services

Vetstreet has added a Reputation Engagement Program to its services. The program of digitally enhanced services includes customizable thank-you emails (at right), online reviews, social sharing and smart surveys. Vetstreet hopes the new services let practices extend their reach and influence online, fostering a dialogue between practices and their clients while increasing online visibility and ratings. The program works to enhance the level of comfort clients feel with their veterinary practice by building stronger client relationships through personalized communications. The Reputation Engagement Program and full suite of digital marketing and communication tools are included at no additional cost for practices that subscribe to Vetstreet.

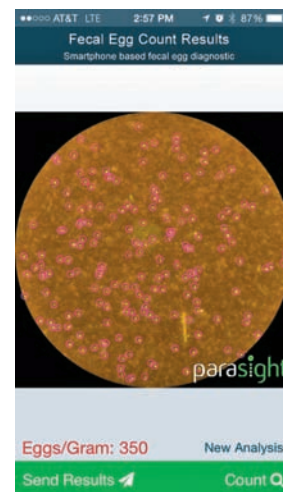
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MEP Equine Solutions Smartphone parasitology app

MEP Equine Solutions has received a \$100,000 small business innovation grant from the USDA to develop an app focused on food animal production and protection. The app will allow veterinarians to perform a simple on-site test to diagnose the presence of parasites using smartphone technology. The Parasight System will provide quantitative results in less than five minutes and emails imaged test results with egg count and type, along with treatment recommendations, to veterinarians and animal owners.

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Continues on page 27

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PENNSYLVANIA

Offered for sale: solo practice located in Northeastern PA. Sales includes quaint, free-standing building. Pleasant small-town atmosphere. Asking price \$399,000. Contact doctort@frontier.com.

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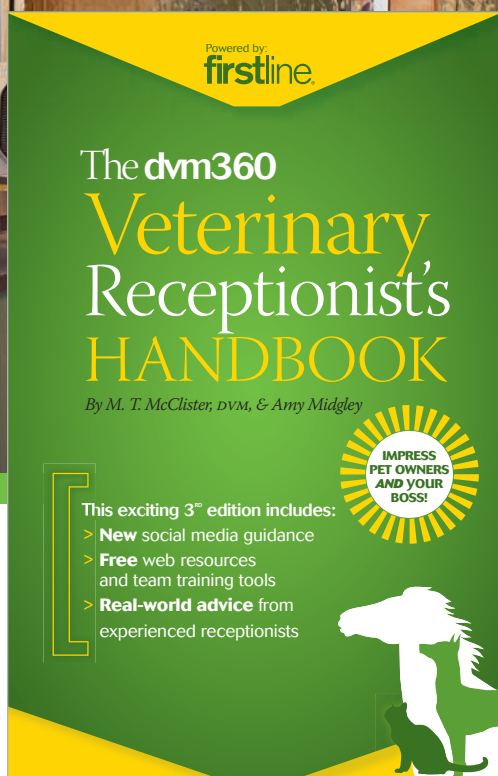


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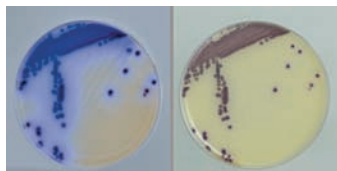


Continued from page 18

Hardy Diagnostics Diagnostic medium

Hardy Diagnostics has released HardyChrom Vibrio, a highly selective culture medium recommended for use in the primary screening, isolation and differentiation of *Vibrio* pathogens. HardyChrom Vibrio is a chromogenic media that can differentiate *V. cholera*, *V. parahaemolyticus* and *V. vulnificus* on the same plate. The fluorogenic reaction adds another dimension for thorough differentiation. It is also available in the Criterion dehydrated culture media format as well as the prepared plated media.

For fastest response visit HardyDiagnostics.com/HardyChromSS.html



Beyond Indigo Pets Veterinary marketing services

Veterinary marketing agency Beyond Indigo Pets has launched a series of all-inclusive marketing plans designed to help animal care professionals easily and seamlessly consolidate all of their marketing efforts. The four plans can be tailored to meet a variety of veterinary clinic sizes and budgets, from basic startup plans to strategies for large practices with multiple locations.

For fastest response visit beyondindigopets.com



Purina Canine urinary diet

Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Diets has introduced a canine urinary diet for the nutritional management of dogs at risk for urinary stones. UR Urinary Ox/St Canine Canned Formula is formulated to promote an unfavorable urinary environment for the development of both calcium oxalate and sterile struvite stones in dogs. The new diet was evaluated via both relative supersaturation (RSS) and activity product ratio (APR) testing. RSS provides a detailed analysis of the mineral saturation levels in urine, while APR helps predict urine crystal and urolith formation.

For fastest response visit purinaveterinarydiets.com



WG Critical Care Bovine medication

WG Critical Care announced that Quartermaster Suspension (penicillin-dihydrostreptomycin in oil), which is FDA-approved for intramammary use to reduce the frequency of existing infection and to prevent new infections with *Staphylococcus aureus* in dry cows, is now available from several major veterinary suppliers. The suspension is a combination of 1 million units of procaine penicillin G and 1 gram of dihydrostreptomycin base. It is available in in pails containing 144-by-10-ml syringes and 144 single-use alcohol pads or cartons containing 12-by-10-ml syringes with 12 single-use alcohol pads.

For fastest response visit wgcriticalcare.com/animal-health/animal-health-products/



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Peel away from sticker shock using this procedure in practice

Train staff to remove DVMs from the cost-delivery role. *By Andy Rollo, DVM*

Human doctors have it so easy in practice with patients. No, I'm not talking about the fact they only have to master one species. I mean they never have to talk about fees. When recommending a blood cell count for a sick child, rarely does the parent immediately ask, "Well, how much is that going to cost?"

I've told agitated clients that the services their pets will receive are significantly cheaper compared to their human equivalents. As I explain how expensive human medical care is and that they're paying for it through taxes and insurance premiums, my logic often falls on deaf ears.

As a profession, I think we do a fair job of taking the doctor out of the cost delivery role—but we're still asked about cost. My usual answer is, "I don't know, but someone will be in shortly with a treatment plan."

It's not hard to create a system within the hospital to deliver the financial implications. Usually it's a shared responsibility between receptionists and technicians.

Situations that are hard to predict or rare can present problems. Bringing up cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can be difficult, let alone adding a price tag to it.

Recently, I had a non-client rush in the door with a pet for an emergency. As trained, the receptionist asked if

the client authorized CPR and the resulting costs as his pet was rushed into the treatment area.



Dr. Andy Rollo is an associate at Madison Veterinary Hospital in Madison Heights, Michigan, as well as a Veterinary Economics Editorial Advisory Board member.

The pet was in bad shape but did not need resuscitation. After I made my initial assessment, I went to discuss the case with the client.

The owner was upset with the "sales job" that had just been forced on him. Rather than focusing on his pet, I found myself discussing the entire veterinary industry with the owner before bringing us back to what really mattered and why he was here.

Another case involved a 13-year-old large-breed dog for inappetence and vomiting. The owners said they wouldn't spend a lot of money. After

initial diagnostics were unremarkable, the owners agreed to an ultrasound. It showed a significant amount of intestines bounded up.

I didn't think they would go for surgery because the estimate was several thousand dollars, but they hardly blinked an eye and agreed.

The exploratory was a doozy—three feet of small intestines that already had dehiscence had to be resected. The surgery was a success, but it took me an hour longer than planned. Speaking with the owners that night, I explained the extent of the procedure and the extra time. The final cost was \$600 more than the estimate, but I believed it was more important to discuss my concerns with peritonitis than talk about money. Besides, when they didn't flinch at the high estimate, what's \$600 more? The owners came to pick up their dog and didn't get the final price until they were checking out, and they weren't happy. I understand because they had a price in mind before paying, but I thought my earlier hints conveyed the point. However, they missed it.

I'll always believe that our primary focus should be to provide good medical care, and the money side will work out. But discussing the cost has to be done. Practices should implement a system to address it, no matter how uncomfortable the situation is. **VE**

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