

A photograph of two dogs, a golden retriever and a corgi, lying on a lush green lawn. The golden retriever is on the left, lying on its back with its head tilted up towards the camera. The corgi is on the right, sitting upright and looking directly at the camera. The background is a dense, vibrant green grass.

Pet Life - Magazine Issue 16.

SUMMER 2020

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LEPTOSPIROSIS AND YOUR DOG

SALT WATER AQUARIUMS

THE DANGERS OF ALGAL BLOOMS

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Letter from the Editor



Welcome to our summer issue for 2020. This year has definitely been a weird year dealing with COVID lockdowns and restricted travel. As we look forward to the warmer months we can hope for a bit of stability, meaning more time out and about with our pets.

If you are heading to rivers and lakes then make sure you have checked to see what the status of the water is. Warmer weather brings with it the potential for toxic algal blooms. So far this summer, rivers in Selwyn, Waimakariri and the Bay of Plenty Districts have been affected by algal blooms. You can check river quality on the Land, Air, Water Aotearoa website (www.lawa.org.nz). If you suspect you or your dog have been in contact with toxins from cyanobacteria then rinse off immediately and seek medical and veterinary advice asap.

I remember my first trip to the North Island with our dogs and being told we needed to vaccinate for leptospirosis, I had no idea what they were talking about - I thought my dogs were completely vaccinated. Back then, vaccinations of dogs were mainly done in the North Island as it was thought to be the area most at risk. Now, however, tests show that dogs are exposed to infection all around New Zealand. If you are unsure about whether your dog needs to be vaccinated for leptospirosis then chat with your vet.

If you are trying to train your rat but not having much luck then check out our article on the top 3 training mistakes. In the mood to reward your dog for their unfaltering devotion, flip through to some awesome treat recipes that are simple to make and super tasty. These treats also make a simple and inexpensive gift to the dog owner in your life.

While you are enjoying your summer with your pets and posting your adventures on Instagram then don't forget to tag us #petlifenz. The beach photo was shared with us by @link_theo_germanshepherds. I can't wait to see who takes this spot in our autumn issue.

Enjoy your read, cuddle your pet and be sure to have a safe and happy summer.

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amy

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#PETLIFENZ ON INSTAGRAM

@link_theo_germanshepherds shared this gorgeous photo with us on Instagram.

If you would like to see your pet here in our next issue then tag your summer fun photos #petlifenz

SALTWATER TANK

IS IT THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOU?

This introduction to saltwater aquariums has the beginner aquarist in mind. There are many reasons for setting up a saltwater aquarium, not least of which is its beauty. The beautiful colours of fish and coral, interesting algae, the soothing sound of bubbling water and the fun involved in creating a fabulous marine world are all reasons why keeping saltwater aquariums gives people so much fun and pleasure.

For the beginner, even a brief introduction to saltwater aquariums can seem a bit daunting. This is because not only are marine systems a bit complex to set up and maintain, they can also be expensive. Saltwater aquariums are not for everybody and even the simplest marine tank can cause headaches. Fish keeping can be tricky and marine fish in particular take a lot of time and effort to keep healthy. Marine species are far more sensitive to water quality and temperature changes so you will need to be informed about the needs of all your fish as well as the tank itself. Saltwater aquariums require patience and a degree of know-how to make it work. You will also need to make sure that you can afford to keep the tank in a healthy state.

The saltwater aquarium you choose will depend on your aim for the tank and your personal preferences. There are many different options available in terms of the fish and animals you can keep in your tank, as well as the equipment you can choose from. Some saltwater aquariums are not suited for the absolute beginner.

The first thing to decide when setting up your saltwater aquarium is what kind of fish do you want to keep. The

next step is finding out as much about each one as you can. Not all marine species are suited to beginners so you might have to adapt your wish-list to suit your level of expertise. Never take on species that are for advanced fish keepers or you could well run into trouble.

There are two main kinds of saltwater aquariums, namely:

- fish only
- fish only with live rock or reef tanks.

The first is probably the easiest saltwater aquarium to attempt. This is because in saltwater aquariums of this nature, lighting is not really an issue and you can use a simple tank with its usual equipment and only a few extra bits like protein skimmers, powerheads and live rock or sand.

These kinds of saltwater aquariums will usually be either a community tank containing species like clownfish, damselfish, gobies, wrass, and dottybacks, or an aggressive tank where you will find species like lionfish, triggers and larger predatory species.



Before you choose your fish, make sure you know EXACTLY which species live well together to avoid your tank turning into a complete massacre. If you are a novice to saltwater aquariums, go for the largest tank you can afford and start with a tank that is at least 38 litres in size. This is because most – if not all – of your fish will easily outgrow a tank and bigger saltwater aquariums are easier to keep in tip-top shape.

Most important to the health of saltwater aquariums is water purification. Even the smallest amount of impurities in the water can hurt your fish. Remember, most of these animals are found in natural reefs where the water is very pure, so you will need to make sure the water in your tank is clean at all times. The best bet for any size tank is an RO/DI (reverse osmosis/deionisation) system. Filtration is quite complicated in saltwater aquariums but this depends to a large degree on the fish species you intend to keep and how many. In a fish only tank you can use a freshwater filter, for example canisters and power filters, and you can also try a wet-dry trickle filter. If you decide to keep a reef tank, you might want to use a natural filtration system like live rock or sand.

Protein skimming is also important in saltwater aquariums and strongly recommended, especially if you have lots of fish in your tank. A protein skimmer uses foaming bubbles to separate fish waste that floats up to the water column from the water's main flow.

CLOWNING AROUND

Clownfish are known technically as anemonefishes. Anemonefishes are a subfamily of damselfish, in the pomacentridae family. There are 26 unique species of clownfish, 25 of them being in the *Amphiprion* genus and only 1 in the *Premnas* genus. They are typically a small fish. Mature males only grow anywhere from 5 to 12 cm in length.

HABITAT

Clownfish are only found in the tropical waters of the Indian or Pacific oceans, and the Red Sea. Clownfish tend to be bottom dwellers, and most notably reside in inshore reefs, specifically inside sea anemones. The anemone provides protection for the clownfish both by enabling the fish to hide and by its poisonous tentacles keeping other fish away. There is no definite information why the clownfish is not stung by the anemone, but many theories exist.

PREY OR PREDATOR?

In nature, a clownfish will attract its prey by swimming around its anemone and displaying its bright colours. Once a victim (thinking it's a predator) begins to approach, the clownfish will recede into the anemone with his prey following closely behind. The sea anemone will sting, kill and begin to eat the prey. This leaves the leftovers for the clownfish to snack on. Other forms of food are planktonic crustaceans and algae that may

The foundation in your tank will require the laying down of live sand. Sand doesn't only act as a substrate, it is also the breeding ground for millions of vital bacteria. These bacteria help the nitrogen cycle to work efficiently. The sand is also home to the small animals that help control the waste products in your tank. The best sand for saltwater aquariums is calcium carbonate (aragonite) but you can also use silica and quartz sands.

Let's move on to the lighting in saltwater aquariums. In a fish only or fish and live rock tank, lighting is not really an issue. In a reef tank, however, it is critical. This is because light is needed for most corals and anemones to grow. Special lights are needed for a marine tank so use one of the following:

- power compact fluorescent (PC)
- very high output fluorescent (VHO)
- metal halide (MH).

Remember you will still need to cycle your tank and perform the necessary water quality testing before you add any of your livestock.

So there you have it – the basics of what to start thinking about as you set up a saltwater aquarium. We suggest doing plenty of further research to make sure you know exactly what you are doing before you get started. Marine tanks are not for everyone, so make sure they suit you before you spend a lot of money.



develop on coral or nearby rocks. Anemones themselves may provide food as the clownfish will pick at and consume dead tentacles.

CAPTIVITY

This fish is a very good first choice for saltwater tanks as they have a small territory, which is one of the reasons they have become so popular. The substrate area of a tank, meaning the area on the bottom and adjusted for protruding rocks and sunken ships, is more important than the volume of a tank. A 75 litre tank would be considered the minimum recommended size for clownfish. Living peaceably in your fish tank, a clownfish may require approximately 14 hours of light and 10 hours of darkness every day. These amounts may be adjusted and are only suggestions. Be careful of high nitrate levels. Mature clownfish can sometimes tolerate these levels, but the larva and babies will almost certainly not. Include a large variety of food in your clownfish's diet. Feedings should include live brine shrimp, frozen food, algae and traditional flakes. They do not require a sea anemone as they will have no predators in a tank. Clownfish may be expected to live around 3 to 5 years in captivity.

LEPTOSPIROSIS IN DOGS

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection caused by Leptospira that can affect a dog's blood, liver, and kidneys. The bacteria that cause the illness are carried primarily by brown rats and other rodents, but dogs that are infected with the disease can infect other dogs and humans as well. Ingestion of the urine of an infected animal is the most common means of transmission, but the bacteria can be contracted through damaged/thin skin and through the soft lining of the nose, mouth and eyelids.

After an animal is infected, the bacteria multiply in the bloodstream and then move into the tissues, concentrating in the liver and kidney. The dog's immune system starts to produce an antibody response that can quickly clear most of the Leptospira bacteria from the body, but the bacteria may persist in the kidneys and be shed for weeks or months in the urine.

Leptospirosis is an odd disease that can often show no signs or symptoms at all. In these cases, the bacteria are eventually defeated by the dog's natural defences. Other times, and more often, however, it can develop into a more severe and life-threatening illness that affects kidneys, liver, brain, lungs and heart.

If the disease is caught early enough, treatment with antibiotics is generally successful, however, often dogs

that survive renal leptospirosis will have chronic kidney disease for the rest of their lives.

Vaccination and clean, hygienic conditions are the best way to avoid leptospirosis in dogs. If the animal is not able to come into contact with disease-carrying rats and their urine, the dog is unlikely to become infected, even if unvaccinated. If you are unsure whether your dog needs to be vaccinated against leptospirosis then have a chat with your vet. In areas where leptospirosis vaccinations are recommended, puppies are vaccinated at 8 and 12 weeks and then a booster every year afterwards.

SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE:

- fever
- lethargy
- weight loss
- anorexia
- depression
- acute renal failure
- jaundice
- abdominal discomfort
- vomiting and diarrhea
- respiratory distress
- blood in urine is uncommon, but may occur



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SHOW ME THE TREATS

Dogs aren't just pets anymore, they're part of the family! And what better way to show that you love them by baking up a batch of homemade dog treats? It's time to put on your dog-themed oven mitts, pre-heat your oven, and get ready to make your dog very, very happy!

Today, dogs sleep in our beds, ride shotgun in our cars and come with us on vacation. As the trend to pamper our pooches grows, so does the popularity of gourmet dog treats. Owners are more concerned with what their dogs are eating, and commercial brands of dog biscuits sold in supermarkets are being replaced by healthier alternatives. Many homemade dog treats are made with all-natural, human-grade products and are healthy, nice to look at, and delicious. In addition, owners feel great when they show their love and concern by making their own dog treats; we all know the way to a dog's heart is through his stomach! Homemade dog treats are a good

alternative to supermarket brands for pets who have allergies or other dietary concerns.

You don't need to be an experienced baker to make your own dog treats, nor do you need fancy ingredients. Chances are, most of what you need is already in your pantry. Feel free to experiment a bit and have some fun! Mix and bake your dog treats like regular cookies, but take out the sugar and add ingredients such as vegetables, chicken or beef bouillon, or peanut butter (minus the xylitol). You'll most likely want to make your homemade dog treats a little thicker than the typical cookie, so be sure to increase the baking time. When your homemade dog treats are done, then it's guaranteed someone you know (your dog, of course!) will be willing and eager to test them for you. Have fun, be creative and remember, homemade dog treats are the perfect way to tell your dog you love him!

MINTIE FRESH TREATS

INGREDIENTS

2½ cups old-fashion oats (or whole wheat flour if preferred)
1 large egg (or ¼ cup unsweetened applesauce if eggs are a no-go for your pup)
¼ cup water
3 tablespoons coconut oil
½ cup finely chopped, fresh parsley
½ cup finely chopped, fresh mint
1 tablespoon of honey
Cookie cutter

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 165°C and line a tray with cooking paper.
2. Place oats into a blender and pulse until they reach a flour-like consistency.
3. Whisk parsley, mint, egg, water, honey and oil together in a large bowl.
4. Add the oat flour to your mixture and stir until combined.
5. Knead the dough a couple of times and place onto a floured surface.
6. Flatten out the dough using a rolling pin, or your hands, until it is about 0.5cm thick.
7. Cut out the cookies and place them about 1cm apart.
8. Bake for 35-40 minutes, or until golden brown.
9. Cool completely before serving.

EVERYTHING IN MODERATION

Chances are your dog will go wild over their homemade dog treats, and that will make you feel great! It's hard not to spoil your dog when they are so appreciative, but keep in mind that dog treats should make up no more than 10 percent of your dog's daily diet.

Also make sure to watch the fat content in your dog's treats, and stay on the safe side by sticking to lower-fat versions. If you are modifying human cookie recipes, make sure to never use chocolate, onions, raisins, grapes or macadamia nuts in your dog treats, as these ingredients are all highly toxic to dogs.

PEANUT BUTTER BANANA TREATS

INGREDIENTS

1½ cups uncooked oatmeal
1 large banana
½ cup peanut butter (with NO xylitol)



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Using a food processor or blender, grind the oats until they're powder.
3. In a bowl, beat together the banana and peanut butter until smooth.
4. Reserve about a tablespoon of ground oatmeal and pour the rest into the banana peanut butter mixture and mix until combined.
5. Dust your surface with the reserved ground oatmeal and roll your dough to about a 0.5cm thickness.
6. Cut into desired shapes and place on a tray lined with baking paper.
7. Bake treats for approximately 15 minutes, or until the edges start to brown.
8. Cool completely before storing in an airtight container for up to a week.

TOP three PET RAT TRAINING MISTAKES

It can be very rewarding to train your pet rats to do tricks and learn obstacle courses. Since they tend to be highly intelligent creatures, rats can actually learn a lot (and get bored if they have nothing to do). However, before you begin training, you may be interested to know the main pitfalls of pet rat training. That way, you can get started on the right foot and make the most of training time. Here are the top three mistakes that novice rat trainers will often make.

One

NEGLECTING TO CREATE A STIMULATING LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR THEIR RATS

Sometimes trainers make the mistake of thinking that their ratties' living environment doesn't need to be interesting or fun to be in. They seem to think that an hour of play time or training time is enough to stimulate their little minds.

This is untrue. Rats are constantly problem-solving, 24/7. Giving them a stimulating and challenging living environment will ensure that their minds stay sharp for learning tricks.

Buy or build a large caged enclosure complete with shelves, ramps, ladders, cubby holes, bins, hammocks, exercise wheels, tunnels, hidey holes, baskets and ropes strung across.

Occasionally, treat them to a game of hide and seek with sunflower seeds. Hide them in hard-to-reach places so they really have to think hard about how to get to them. Be sure to adjust and rearrange the furniture and food locations. Always keep 'em guessing.

Make playtime games challenging as well, with swimming pools, sand boxes and tunnel mazes.

Two

BEING TOO RESULTS ORIENTED ABOUT TRAINING

One major pitfall a rat owner can fall into is to be too demanding about what is to be accomplished during training. This approach to rat training will only end in frustration and neglect.

Never forget that training is just an extension of playtime and that repetition, along with positive reinforcement, is the key to success.

Three

FORGETTING TO REINFORCE OLD TRICKS

As the saying goes "if you don't use it, you lose it". The first-time rat trainer will often teach his rats a few basic tricks, move on to other ones for several weeks, only to discover that his rats have forgotten the first tricks!

Just because a rat learns a trick, it does not mean that the little guy will remember it later. Reinforcement is everything. This is why when teaching a rat to run an obstacle course, the trainer must tack a new obstacle onto the one(s) that were previously learned. Otherwise, the rat will fail to remember the first obstacles learned.

So, remember: keep their lives full of challenges at all times; try to be patient and not to get too attached to results and accomplishments; and don't take it for granted that they will remember the first tricks they learned ... because they won't. Repeat and reinforce their learning at all times!

Knowing about these three major pitfalls will go a long way in helping you to make the most of your rat's intelligences and abilities; and as long as you are together, you will look forward to training time every single day.



SHARING IS NOT CARING

Owners share antibiotic-resistant bacteria

Results of a recent study of 27 Auckland households showed people and pets can share the same antibiotic resistant strains of *Escherichia coli* and is a timely reminder of the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (18-24 November) is a World Health Organisation initiative promoting action on AMR to avoid the further emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections.

AMR occurs when antimicrobial medicines, including antibiotics, become less effective at treating infections. AMR is considered a global threat to human and animal health.

Study co-authors, Distinguished Professor of Food Safety and Veterinary Public Health Dr Nigel French, Dr Sara Burgess and Dr Jackie Benschop, from the School of Veterinary Science at Massey University, say the findings are a timely reminder for New Zealanders about this global health issue.

"Pets are regarded as a part of the family in many New Zealand households. With one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world, it is an issue we should all be aware of," says Dr French, who is also a member of the New Zealand Veterinary Association's Antimicrobial Resistance Committee.

The study looked at the transmission of extended-spectrum-beta-lactamase (ESBL) and AmpC beta-lactamase (ACBL) producing *E. coli* bacteria in 27 households inhabited by people and pets.

"These strains of *E.coli* are the most common cause of multidrug-resistant urinary tract infection in New Zealand. These sorts of infections can also have serious health implications," says Dr Burgess.

In five of eleven households in the study, whole genome sequence analysis found both strains to be present in people with urinary tract infection as well as those without urinary tract infection.

"These results also suggest there is sharing of antibiotic resistant bacteria between people in the home and between people and their companion animals, including the family dog," says Dr Benschop.

"They are significant from a public health perspective when it comes to our efforts to minimise community transmission, and highlight the need for considering interventions in the household."

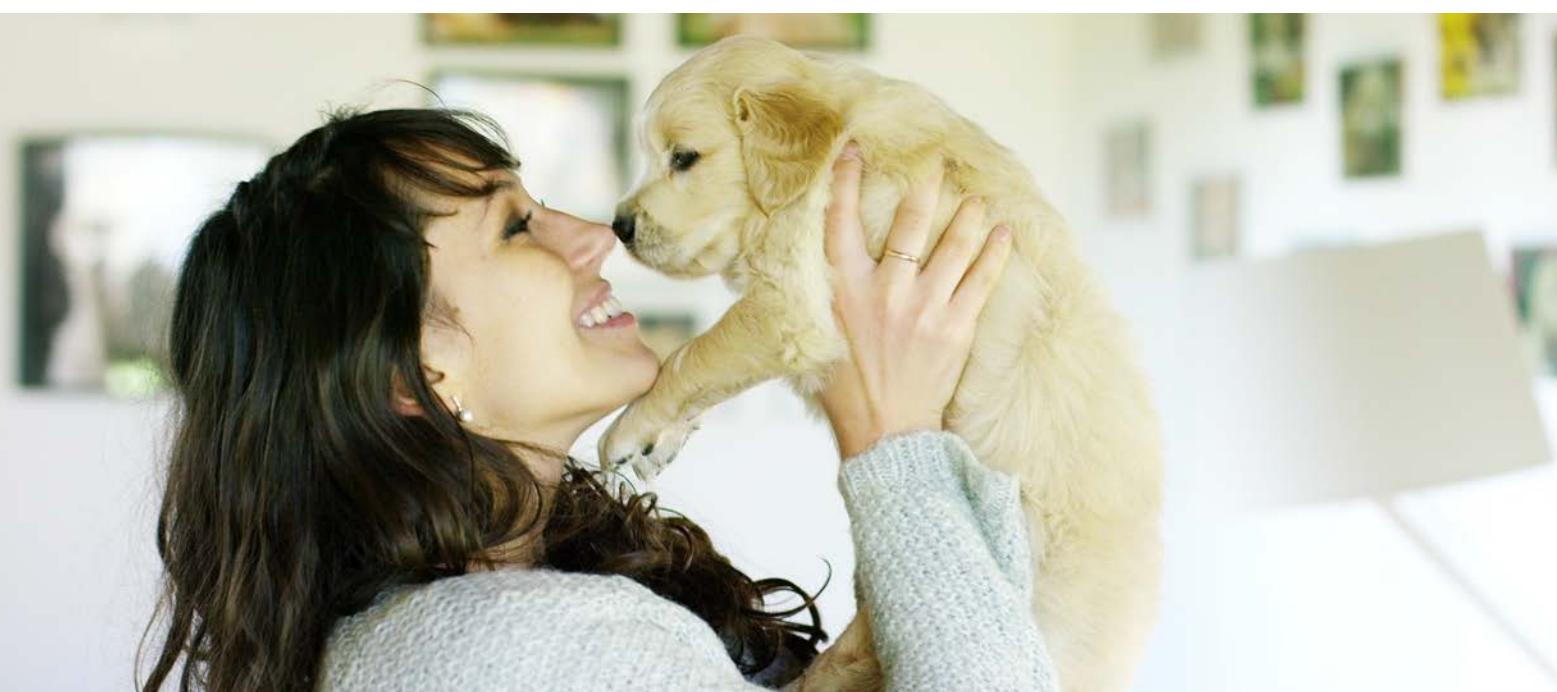
New Zealand Veterinary Association Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Helen Beattie says while New Zealand has one of the lowest rates of antimicrobial resistance, we should not be complacent.

"The New Zealand Veterinary Association has an ambitious goal that by 2030 antibiotics will not be needed to maintain animal health and welfare. We will need to work together to meet this goal."

Dr Beattie says New Zealand pet owners can play a role in helping to achieve this target.

"Making sure your pet has regular check-ups, good nutrition and keeping their vaccination schedule up to date is not only the best way to look after their health, it also helps in the national effort to combat AMR."

"Prevention of disease reduces the need for the use of antimicrobials. Good household hygiene, which includes things like regular hand washing and not allowing your pets to lick your face, are useful ways to help reduce the need to use antimicrobials."



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NZRDA

EQUINE THERAPY LIFE-CHANGING FOR CHILDREN

MEET KATIE

Riding her “unicorns” Flicka and Blue at Tauranga Riding for the Disabled is the highlight of the week for 6-year-old Katie O’Callaghan.

Whether trotting, playing games on the ponies or riding up big hills, Katie is rarely seen without a smile on her face.

Katie’s mother, Rochelle, says the past two years riding at RDA and spending time with the horses and instructors has helped Katie with many aspects of her development.

“Katie has global developmental delay, and her time riding at RDA has helped with her speech and language, strength, social interactions and confidence. It has been key in improving her balance and using both sides of her body more equally.

“Coach Angela and the volunteers work very hard to build relationships and trust so they can encourage riders to really stretch themselves and then celebrate every achievement they worked so hard for. We feel very privileged to be part of Tauranga Riding for the Disabled.”

Coach Angela O’Donnell says the team has loved watching the progress Katie has made in her riding over the last couple of years.

“Not only has she benefited from the therapeutic and educational side of the programme, but she has become a competent little rider. She has a lovely riding position and can ride her horse through an obstacle course independently without having a sidewalker or leader.

“She has great rhythm and is now rising to the horse’s trot. We love seeing Katie’s smile when she has achieved these goals.”

Tauranga Riding for the Disabled provides equine-based therapy programmes to those at risk, with disabilities, or with social challenges.

Whether helping those with cerebral palsy experience freedom outside of their wheelchair to improve their balance and muscle tone, or helping at-risk youth develop confidence and compassion, the charity’s programmes are making a positive difference in the lives of 300 riders a year.

Tauranga RDA Manager Elisha Olds says equestrian therapy works so well as it provides a huge range of benefits to so many different riders.

“You can’t beat the feel-good factor of riding; it not only builds confidence and self-esteem, but also has some incredible physical benefits. The horse mimics the movement of a person’s walk, so it gets all the same muscles moving, which is so important for our riders.

“We are so fortunate to have an amazing physiotherapist on our team, along with 120 dedicated volunteers who help make these outcomes possible with our horses.”

Tauranga Riding for the Disabled has seen a steady growth in rider numbers over the years and has an ever-growing waiting list. To help cater for more riders and volunteers, the charity sought TECT funding to extend their building and the all-weather riding space.

The extensions included on-site accommodation for international student volunteers, a canopy cover for the outdoor arena, a new administration and reception building, and classrooms.

The build was completed last year thanks to TECT funding of \$200,000 and support from other funders and generous donations.

This year, TECT funding of \$140,000 over two years was approved, providing the charity much-needed assurance they can operate in the months ahead.

Elisha says the over \$1 million in funding TECT has provided over the years has been vital to ensuring they can continue their life-changing work.

“TECT has been one of our main supporters for many years. Just knowing that support is there is such great security, especially with the recently approved multi-year funding. Not having the admin time tied up doing that year-to-year means we can focus on delivering our programmes.

“We wouldn’t be where we are today without TECT’s support. Their contribution to our building extension and outdoor canopy has allowed us to double our capacity, and their funding since 1998 has allowed us to continue growing and transforming lives.”



Katie on horse Blue.



Bradley enjoying a river ride.

TECT Trustee Tina Jennen says the charity is a vital asset in the community.

"Everybody knows the Tauranga RDA, but we don't all get to see the real impact they are having in people's lives. For their team and volunteers, seeing their riders' faces light up when they get on a horse, or achieve their therapeutic or sporting goal, must be wonderful to witness."

"We are so proud to support their work and be a part of that. Whether through therapy riding or even visiting retirement and nursing homes with their mini ponies, it's having an incredible impact in people's lives."

MEET BRADLEY

Bradley particularly seems to enjoy going out for rides. Around the racecourse, or down to the river, with many different noises and sights. There is often a breeze at the river and all the different sensory aspects must make for a more stimulating ride.

Bradley will never be able to achieve many of the goals other riders achieve. For Bradley, Riding for the Disabled (RDA) is a lot more about maintaining the abilities he has, rather than improving them.

Bradley (now 22 years old) has limited mobility and is non verbal. He has very low muscle tone and makes dyskinetic movements. He requires 24-hour care, and can do no tasks independently. But with the assistance of two side walkers and someone leading, he can ride a horse!

Although Bradley always rides with two side walkers, they are often only using a visual hold. On his horse, Honey, Bradley has space around him. He finally gets to look at people from a higher point than them, instead of always looking at their bellies! The horse's forward walk stimulates Bradley, and his core strength is noticeably better after regular riding sessions.

It is always rewarding to see how Bradley will at times self-correct his balance if he is tilting slightly to one side. Honey always copes beautifully with all that is required of her whenever Bradley is at a riding session. She stands perfectly still as the coach puts Bradley into the saddle.

Initially, when he started at RDA, Bradley could not hold his head up and look around. Over time he grew stronger. Over the years, he has had to have breaks from riding while recuperating from surgeries to both feet and legs, and a spinal fusion at 15 years of age.

His mum and his grandmother are so grateful for RDA. Here's what his grandmother has to say about riding: "Riding has improved his core strength and balance, and has given him a social life. He has made so many friends. Of course, he couldn't do this without the assistance of the wonderful RDA team. Our family is in their debt."

RDA is all about providing goal-based riding activities that increase the ability, strength and confidence of people with physical, intellectual, emotional and social challenges.

Our focus is to make a positive difference. Our vision is to reach more riders and change more lives.

We rely greatly on the generosity of people like you. Your donation helps us to provide safe and effective goal-based riding activities for children and adults with a disability.

Head to www.rda.org.nz and donate today.

THE DANGERS OF ALGAL BLOOMS

Summer has arrived. While we get to enjoy warmer weather (for the most part), the rise in temperature causes an increase in the amount of toxic blue-green algae in our waterways, which can be harmful to humans and dogs. Health warnings of algal blooms have already been issued in Selwyn, Waimakariri and Bay of Plenty rivers.

While referred to as toxic algae, it is not algae at all but cyanobacteria, an ancient group of organisms. Cyanobacteria are naturally present in all our waterways, however, when conditions are perfect the cyanobacterial cells multiply and form planktonic (suspended in the water) blooms or dense benthic (attached to rocks) mats. With the increase in cyanobacteria levels there is an increase in cyanotoxins which are released during growth. Consuming or coming into contact with water that contains cyanotoxins is a major health issue for both humans and pets.

"Exposure may cause skin rashes, nausea, stomach cramps, tingling and numbness around the mouth and fingertips," says Dr Brunton, Canterbury Medical Officer of Health.

Although district or city councils will place warning signs, these may not be seen at the numerous river access points, hence the need for people/dog-walkers to treat every low-flowing river cautiously. Here is what to look out for.

RIVERS

- Black, green or brown slime on rocks, or brown or black mats at the river's edge that have a velvety texture and earthy/musty smell.
- Mats that come loose can wash up on the river bank. If this happens the mats may dry out and turn a light brown or white colour.
- Check for alerts on the LAWA website, which provides live updates on where it is safe to swim.

LAKES

- If the water has a pea soup appearance, it could contain toxic algae. Discoloured, cloudy water with small green blobs suspended in it should be avoided.

Unfortunately the algae odour can be very attractive to dogs who may consume washed up benthic mats. It can take as little as a teaspoon of potentially toxic cyanobacteria to cause a fatal outcome. Dogs that have been in an area where there is an algal bloom and who start to show signs of illness should be taken to a vet immediately. Treat any potential ingestion or contact as an emergency. In extreme cases, death can occur in just 30 minutes after the first signs of illness. Typical signs of poisoning in your dog may include lethargy, muscle tremors, fast breathing, twitching, paralysis and convulsions.

"People and animals should remain out of the waterways until the warnings have been lifted," states Dr Brunton.

A good rule of thumb is stay out of water that looks green. If you or your dog come into contact with toxic algae, rinse off in fresh water as quickly as you can and monitor for symptoms. Don't let your dog lick or nibble at its fur after swimming in a possibly contaminated river or lake either!



Eww yuck ... say what?!

When you decided to get a dog, I'll bet you daydreamed about the great times you'd have with your new best friend. However, there are many things that you need to consider in order to keep your pooch happy and healthy. Things that perhaps you'd rather not even think about!

WEES

When you go to the veterinarian, you may be asked to get a urine sample from your dog. How do you do this? Your dog surely won't be able to hit a sample bottle. The easiest way to accomplish this is to tape a container to the end of a yard stick. While your dog is out doing his business, position the container underneath his urine stream. This is easier to do with male dogs than female dogs, but you can usually get a sample with one or two tries. Your veterinarian will want the sample to be as fresh as possible, so if you can't take it straight away keep it refrigerated until your visit.

The vet will be checking the sample for a variety of things like bacteria and crystals. If bacteria is found it could mean that your dog has a urinary tract infection and will most likely require a course of antibiotics. Crystals form in the urine whenever minerals bind together. There are several different kinds of crystals and these are most often treated with prescription diets.

POOS

If your vet asks for a stool sample, it could mean that he suspects intestinal parasites are bothering your dog. They can get these by eating fecal matter from another affected animal, carcasses, or other unsavory things. You will want to bring in a fresh sample which will be examined under the microscope to look for telltale eggs of parasites.

The most common parasites are roundworm, hookworm, whipworm, and tapeworm. Other diseases like coccidiosis, caused by coccidia, can also be seen under the microscope from your dog's stool sample.

BUM

What about anal glands? The anal glands are two small glands located just on the inside of your dog's anus that secrete a foul smelling liquid. Usually the glands will be emptied when your dog defecates.

Unfortunately, in some dogs, the anal glands become impacted and do not empty properly. If your dog is urinating more than usual or licking his hind quarters more often, there may be a problem with his anal glands. In this case, it's important to make an appointment with your vet who will

check the anal glands by gloved touch. If the anal glands are full, the vet will be able to empty them manually. It is possible, however, to learn how to do this yourself at home as some dogs require their anal glands be manually emptied regularly. Some owners have their dog's anal glands surgically removed – if you choose to do this, discuss the possible outcomes with your veterinarian as there is often a risk of fecal incontinence if the surgery goes awry.

DAND-RUFF

Occasionally in dogs, dandruff is just dandruff caused by skin allergies, nutritional deficiencies or improper grooming. Sometimes, however, dandruff can be a sign of a parasite called mange of which there are a few different types.

Demodectic mange is caused by a mite which all dogs have but are rarely adversely affected by it. Sometimes, however, there can be an overabundance of these mites which causes skin irritation and hair loss.

Sarcoptic mange (also known as scabies) is caused by another type of mite. A female mite buries herself in the dog's skin and lays her eggs there. When the eggs hatch, the cycle begins again. This causes severe skin irritation and hair loss in dogs but is easily treatable.

Cheyletiella mange is caused by a large mite that lives on the surface of the dog's skin. This infestation is also known as walking dandruff. This type of mange causes minor skin irritation but is easily treatable with topical medication.

So, now you can talk about the unpleasant things! It's important that you are properly educated and can recognise signs and symptoms so that you keep your dog as healthy as he can be.



TOP OFFICE DOG

Auckland IS now known as the City of Tails after Jagger (Mastiff cross), Wren (black Labrador) and Mino (Chihuahua cross) took top honours at the national Top Office Dog competition.

From a pack of more than 240 dogs, three Auckland dogs have reigned supreme. Jagger was crowned Top Office Dog, Wren won Top Dog with a Job and Mino took out the People's Choice.

The awards were announced in what competition organiser Frog Recruitment believed was the largest canine Zoom meeting ever held.

"We had almost 50 dogs on the Zoom call and it was barking mad!" says Frog Recruitment managing director Shannon Barlow.

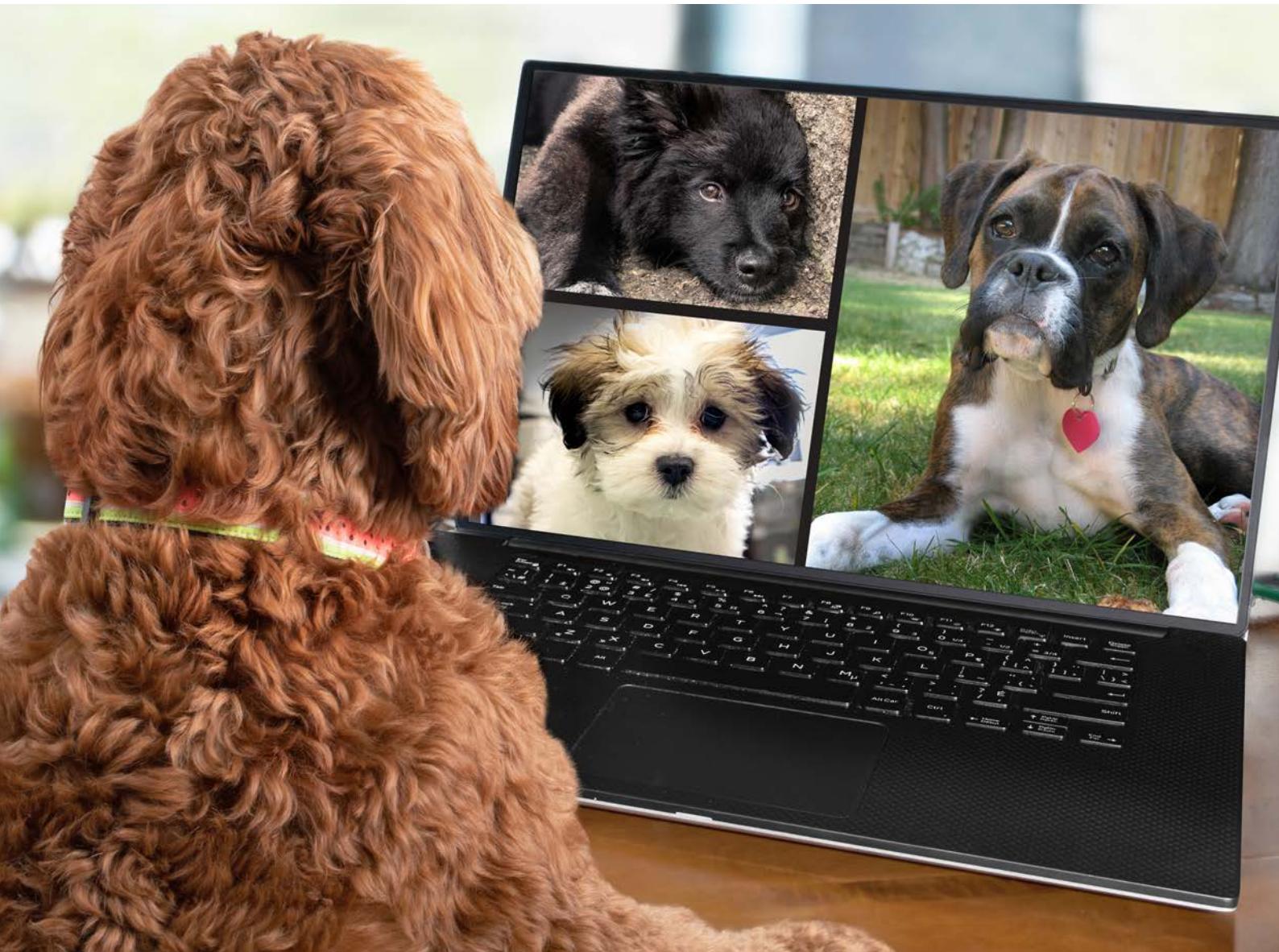
Jagger, a rescue dog who 'works' at Chained Dog Rehabilitation and Rehoming in Birkdale, was a "standout entry" according to the judging panel of Craig Williams from PETstock, Jane Kennelly from Frog Recruitment and Senior Sergeant PC Pedersen, Officer in Charge of the Police Dog Section, Tamaki Makaurau.

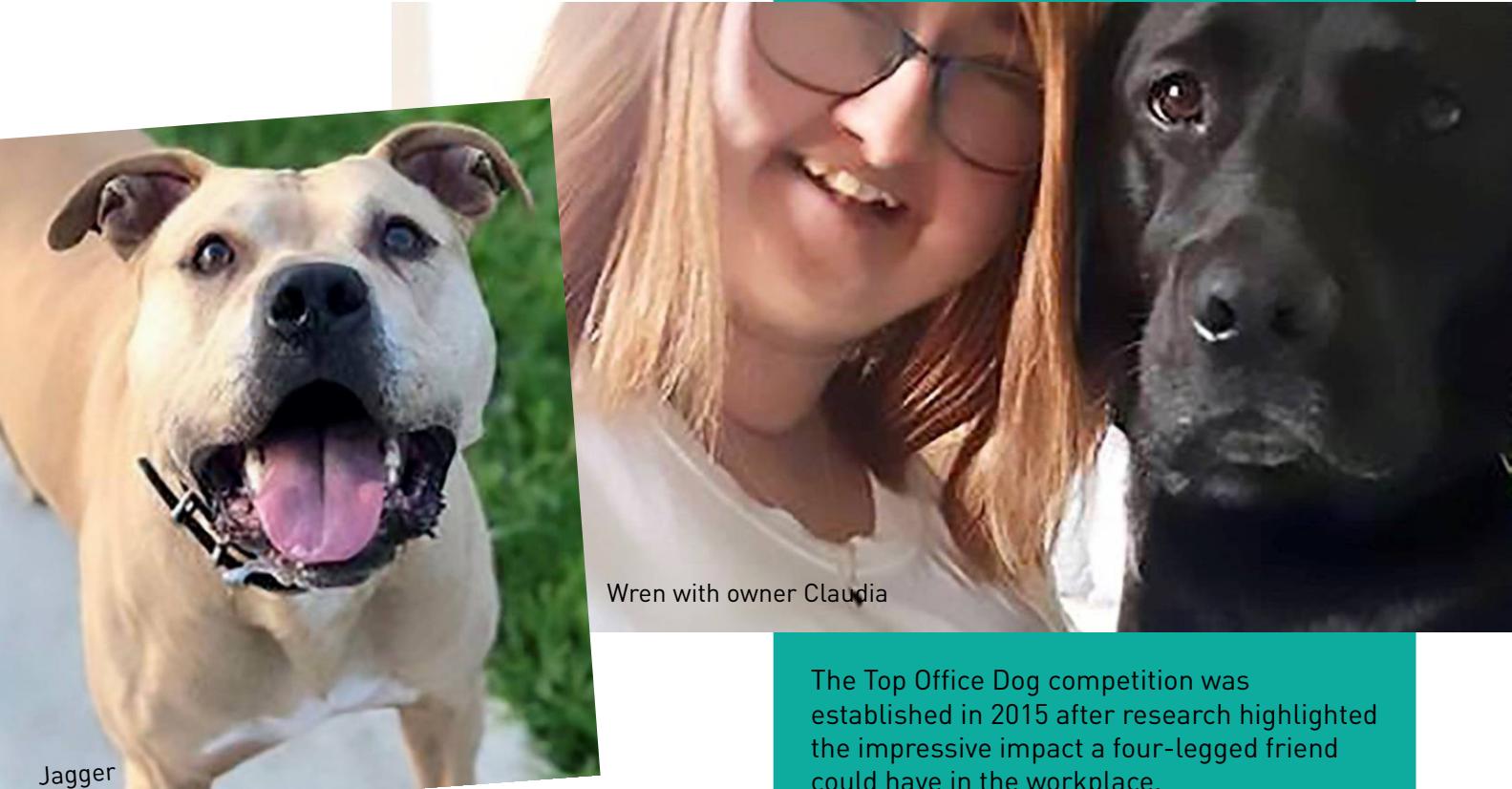
"Jagger is a vital member of staff; a foster brother to shut-down, neglected and abused dogs that arrive at the rescue centre," says Shannon.

"He is calm, patient and very tolerant even when they are growling him because they don't know better. He lies with them and helps them understand that they are OK now and there's nothing to fear. His understanding of what these dogs need is like nothing we've ever seen, and his job in this rescue, although difficult, is something he loves to do."

Jagger's owner, Amanda Fraser-Jones, runs the rescue service from home and says she was "beyond stoked" with the win.

"It is so cool that Jagger was chosen – he's a great advocate for rescue dogs. We get dogs coming here who are so shut down but Jagger puts up with them all and is the one who will snuggle up to them. They relax around him. Even though he's a big dog, he's no threat. One of his favourites is a small 2kg dog and he's so patient and really sweet with her. All the dogs adore him. He's a dog teaching other dogs – they speak the same language."





Jagger

Wren with owner Claudia

Wren, the winner of Top Dog with a Job, also caught the judges' attention.

"Wren's owner, Claudia, is permanently in a wheelchair and in 2018, during her last year of high school, she was paired with Wren. Wren helps her physically, such as picking things up, opening doors, pressing the 'walk' button, barking on command when she needs help, and more," says Shannon.

Claudia, who lives in Mt Roskill, says she is incredibly proud of her "best friend" winning the coveted award. "Wren is my working mobility dog and my companion. She's amazing. For the last two years she's been supporting me and I can't imagine life without her – she's definitely my top dog!"

The competition's third award, People's Choice, was awarded to Mino, an Auckland apartment dwelling Chihuahua Maltese Toy Poodle cross, who has his own Instagram account and 'works' at home.

Mino's owner, Ree, says she got Mino after the first lockdown, when she went through a three-week standdown with her employer, Air New Zealand.

"It was a really tough time and during March and April, my mental health was badly affected. Getting Mino really helped my stress levels during that time and I felt more energised having him around me. Then Air New Zealand restructured and I was able to secure a two day a week position working from home with Mino by my side. I think he was my lucky charm! He is fantastic support and the sweetest boy."

As top dogs in the pack, Jagger, Wren and Mino each received a prize package, including a trophy they can proudly display at their 'office'.

The Top Office Dog competition was established in 2015 after research highlighted the impressive impact a four-legged friend could have in the workplace.

Now a recent survey of 383 dog owners by Frog Recruitment has also found out that three out of four New Zealanders working from home (WFH) during the COVID-19 lockdowns said their pooch helped their mental wellbeing.

Barlow says it's well proven that dogs at work improve employee mental health, but they're also the main reason why people want to work from home.

"When workers were forced to work from home through the COVID-19 lockdown, adapting to an ever-changing work environment was stressful. Our research found a sharp rise in employee burnout, with more than 64 percent feeling more burnt out at work than they did prior to the lockdown. But there is much research to highlight the impressive impact a four-legged friend can have on workplace wellbeing – and more recently on the mental health of the WFH workforce.

"Dogs in the office or home office help their owners and colleagues by bringing positive benefits including improving morale, reducing absenteeism and stress-related illnesses, and helping to improve employees' mental health."

SPCA launches revamped animal welfare accreditation programme

SPCA has updated its animal welfare certification which is dedicated to improving the welfare of New Zealand's animals in both the farming and pet care sectors.

Formerly called Blue Tick, SPCA Certified will look to further inform and educate both farmers and consumers about the importance of animal welfare.

Leading the project is SPCA Chief Scientific Officer Dr Arnja Dale, who says all standards in the initiative have been updated using current evidence-based science in order to improve animal welfare. Taken into consideration were a wide range of factors, including current animal welfare science, legislation, pet care professionals and technical specialists, as well as industry best practice and practical farming experience.

"The Blue Tick programme was fit for purpose at its inception, however, over the past two decades farming practices, legislation and animal welfare science have changed significantly, as well as where practical improvements can be made on farm," Dr Dale says.

SPCA Certified was launched on 1 October.

"The switch to SPCA Certified has given us the opportunity to refresh our animal welfare standards and reframe them in the Five Domains model and include sentience as this is now enshrined in the Animal Welfare Act. This ensures that adherence to our standards warrant having the SPCA Certified logo on the food packaging or pet care business collateral.

"We've met with our international colleagues delivering similar initiatives and shared best practice on not only the most up-to-date scientific research in animal welfare but also in practical ways in which the standards can raise the bar of animal welfare through all parties – the animals, farmers, producers, pet care businesses, customers and consumers."

When choosing SPCA Certified products and services, consumers are assured they are helping raise standards of care well beyond the minimum legal requirements and providing a good life for New Zealand's animals.

One key change is the shift to implement 'Five Domains' rather than 'Five Freedoms' of animal welfare. The Five Freedoms focus on avoiding negative states such as pain and distress rather than providing animals with positive states of welfare.

A key point of difference is that the mental state of animals is now focused on. The Five Domains model has been widely adopted as a model of animal welfare.

Introducing the opportunity for businesses in the pet care industry to become SPCA Certified is an exciting development which Dr Dale says adds a new level of consumer confidence.

"We think animal owners would like assurance that the quality of care their pet receives meets SPCA standards," she says. "We are starting with businesses in the doggy day-care industry and we're developing additional standards for other pet care industries such as the dog training industry."

Dr Dale says what is most pleasing with the introduction of SPCA Certified is the positive approach a lot of farmers have had towards the programme. "We're seeing more and more suppliers wanting to join the initiative due to increased awareness of animal welfare and determination to do the best thing for the animals."

The SPCA Certified team has been working behind the scenes for more than 24 months, visiting farms and current suppliers as well as new producers and suppliers who are dedicated to better animal welfare.

"We've seen a major shift in attitudes to the importance of animal welfare in recent times, not just by farmers and pet care service providers, but by New Zealand consumers. They are genuinely interested about where their food comes from and how sustainable the practices are with a key focus on animal welfare."

Standards are reviewed by a team of highly qualified scientists at SPCA every three years. SPCA New Zealand governs SPCA Certified and writes the standards independently, while SPCA Certified implements the standards and ensures they're upheld by SPCA Certified members. All farms and businesses with SPCA Certification are independently audited (at least twice a year) and receive unannounced visits by QCONZ, assuring consumers that the businesses they are supporting are consistently meeting the strict certification requirements.

As well as existing standards for the layer hen (free range and barn), meat – chicken (free range) and meat – pigs (free range and free farmed), the SPCA Certified team are developing standards for barn raised meat chickens, beef cattle, meat sheep, dairy cattle, dairy sheep and salmon.

Products and services which bear the SPCA Certified logo will start appearing on shelves and at doggy day-care businesses over the next six months.

For more information, please visit:
www.spcacertified.nz.



MEET MYHOOMAN

Rescue pets are set to find forever homes faster, thanks to a world-first, Kiwi-designed animal shelter and adoption platform by Mars Petcare which has launched in New Zealand.

MyHooman streamlines the adoption process and reduces paperwork, ultimately freeing shelter teams up to focus on their animals. There's also a benefit for those looking to rescue a furry friend. Once animals are uploaded to the free platform, artificial intelligence and smart matching algorithms – the likes of which are typically seen in dating apps – accurately match animals with the most suitable adopters.

MyHooman has been designed alongside shelters and is the world's first truly end-to-end shelter management and adoption platform supporting everyone involved in the process – from the day an animal arrives at a shelter right through to joining its new family.

Mars New Zealand General Manager Pete Simmons says as a data-driven hub to connect people with the right pet, MyHooman will prevent adoptions from failing.

"Typically, people jump online to search for the pet they want – but that isn't always the breed or animal that's right for them. Globally, around a fifth of dogs adopted from a shelter end up back there each year, which is heart-breaking for animals and shelters.

"By using insights from shelters and Mars' Waltham Petcare Science Institute, MyHooman looks at the needs of every animal, and matches them to owners with the right lifestyle. This means pets are more likely to get a better human-match first time and avoid returning to the shelter system.

"Everything we do at Mars Petcare is centred on our purpose, a better world for pets, and a big part of this is our work to end pet homelessness. For the past decade, we've encouraged Kiwis to adopt a rescue dog through our PEDIGREE campaigns, but MyHooman is a completely new approach and we're confident it will help

the thousands of dogs in New Zealand shelters each year."

MyHooman has been co-designed with Kiwi shelters and follows 18 months of intensive work on shelter wellbeing at the Mars Innovation Hub at Colenso BBDO Auckland. Louise Burgess, from Last Lamppost Dog & Animal Rescue, says the new platform gives her team more time to focus on animal care.

"MyHooman is a game changer for shelters that will streamline the adoption process and truly put animals first. Shelters typically have limited resources and the adoption process can be time consuming so this tool, that has so many amazing features, will make that process much easier and free shelter managers like me up to save more animals."

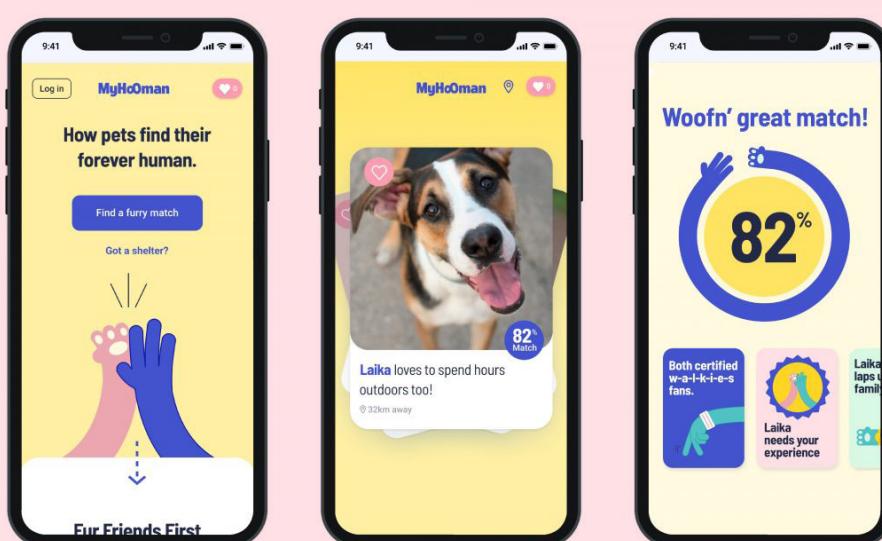
Executive Director for Mars Business and Innovation at Colenso BBDO Ahmad Salim says MyHooman has the potential to transform pet adoption.

"By using time-saving tech to simplify how shelters register, care for and share animals' profiles, MyHooman eases many of the pressures shelters face. Once animals are in the system, it can proactively target adopters with their best pet matches, meaning it can prevent great animals from waiting around in shelters.

"It's been one of the most rewarding parts of this journey – working with New Zealand's dedicated rescue community to develop a platform that can make a difference for animals around the world."

MyHooman is now available free of charge in New Zealand and will initially focus on dog adoptions. Shelters can sign up now and those looking to adopt a pet via the platform will be able to do so from December 2020.

Shelters can find out more and sign up for MyHooman via shelter.myhooman.com



Annual free pet health clinic a runaway success

Southern Institute of Technology (SIT) Veterinary Nursing students were run off their feet by hundreds of furry paws during the Free Annual Pet Health Clinic, with significantly more animals seen this year.

The event takes place in October every year, and this year there was an increase in capacity for the free service check on cats, dogs and rabbits. Around 400 of Invercargill pets had appointments, compared to 250 pets last year, due to an increase in the number of days the clinic functioned.

"It's great to be able to accommodate extra animals. A lot of people miss out every year. They only find out about the clinic and it's full already; it's nice not having to turn people away" says Vet Nursing tutor Mel Shuttleworth.

During the weeklong clinic, vet nursing students provided a range of health checks and services, including flea and worming treatments, nail trimming, microchipping and advice on animal husbandry, nutrition and dental care.

All services were free, but there was a discounted \$15 fee for microchipping for the animal to be included in the National Companion Animal Register (NZCAR).

Ms Shuttleworth said the most in-demand service by far was microchipping, with cats "way more popular" this year.

Ms Shuttleworth said the clinic was limited to the three species as it would be too stressful for other animals to cope with the clinic environment.

The clinic doesn't just benefit animals – it helps the students with their professional development.

Interacting with human clients is a fundamental part of veterinary nursing training, as is successfully operating as part of an animal care team.

Raffles and a sausage sizzle were also run during the week, with all proceeds going to the SPCA.



Congratulations to Petplan who were awarded a silver New Zealand Quality Service Award in the Pet Insurance category.

Running since 2015, the survey identifies the most satisfied customers across 40 different categories. The prestigious Quality Service Award recognises companies that truly understand consumers' needs.

Reader's Digest commissioned independent market research company Catalyst to survey New Zealanders' opinions of a range of service providers. A total of 1500 New Zealanders of a mixed demographic were asked to rate their experience of service provided by businesses/organisations.

In releasing the Quality Service Award results, Reader's Digest acknowledges it has been a time of "extreme difficulty" for customer service given lockdowns and other COVID-19 challenges. Yet the owners and staff of businesses listed as award winners rallied and their success is arguably more commendable than ever, says Reader's Digest Editor-in-Chief Louise Waterson.

She says that while the pandemic may have shifted the standard markers of business success, customer service has remained core among those success markers.



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If you would like to see your rescue/welfare group listed here, email info@petlife.co.nz.

Pet Life is not associated with any group listed within. This list has been put together to assist our readers with finding suitable rescue and welfare groups within their area.

PETS OF PONSONBY

New Zealand's newest online pet accessories store

New Zealand's latest specialty online pet store to dominate the marketspace has arrived and is ready for pet parents to scour. Pets of Ponsonby is an entirely online pet store, catering to an audience of four-legged, furry friends whose item wish list includes the likes of leashes, blankets, beds and toys.

Developed by pet lovers, for pet lovers, Pets of Ponsonby embraces design, function and the needs of Kiwi pets, offering offshore designer pet products to the New Zealand audience. The range is tailored to include companies who give back to animal welfare or support artisan handicrafts, allowing pet parents to shop consciously for their pet.

"It sounds like something you have almost certainly heard before, but I wasn't overly impressed with the products available in New Zealand for pets. Homewares ideal for pet owners and pet accessories from different corners of the world are what I wanted to bring to Pets of Ponsonby" says Roseanna Davies, Founder of Pets of Ponsonby.

Based in Auckland, New Zealand, the small team that makes up Pets of Ponsonby believe in quality design, collaborating with contemporary brands and companies whose ethics align with their own. Now, Kiwis

have access to beautiful pet products and a high end experience, all from behind their computer screen.

"Coming from a fashion design background, I struggled to shop for my cat and dog in New Zealand" says Rachel McIndoe, Account Director of Pets of Ponsonby.

"I wanted high end, beautifully designed products that reflected my personal taste and style. Products with a back story. There's something beautiful about owning a special piece that reflects quality workmanship or classic design principles, and why should pet products be any different? Sourcing my own items from overseas had become the norm for me and when I met Roseanna, our common goal was clear - let's make these beautiful brands more accessible for like minded, design conscious Kiwi pet owners! With Pets of Ponsonby, our aim is to bridge the gap between style and function".

Pets of Ponsonby is committed to providing those with a pet in their life, products for their pet that not only meet essential needs, but look and feel the part too. Offering high quality, functional accessories, care products, carriers and lounging supplies, Pets of Ponsonby is pet lover's new one-stop-shop for all things pet related.

Pets of Ponsonby can be found online at www.petsofponsonby.co.nz.



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