

Tid Bits



Bull Dogs back on top

The American Kennel Club reports that the iconic Bulldog has charmed its way back into the top 10 most popular breeds in America. Having long been used as a mascot for sports teams, the Bulldog has not been on the top 10 list of most popular breeds since 1935. The Labrador Retriever remains at the top of the list as most popular—a title it's held for 17 years straight.

The Bulldog was first recognised by the AKC in 1886 – just two years after the organisation's founding – and was most popular in 1915 when it peaked in 5th place. The breed's popularity ebbed and flowed throughout the mid-20th century, but since hitting a low of 41st place in 1973, its ranking has steadily increased. Interestingly, the Bulldog isn't on the city of Atlanta's most popular breeds, despite it being the long held mascot of the University of Georgia's Atlanta Bulldogs. And these figures just in for 2007...

2007 Most Popular Dogs in the U.S.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Labrador Retriever | 2. Yorkshire Terrier | 3. German Shepherd |
| 4. Golden Retriever | 5. Beagle | 6. Boxer |
| 7. Dachshund | 8. Poodle | 9. Shih Tzu |
| | | 10. Bulldog |

Pet Insurance gains momentum as an employee benefit

Still in the US, the Associated Press has reported that pet insurance is gaining popularity as an employee benefit. In the past six years, Veterinary Pet Insurance, the nation's largest pet insurer, saw its corporate accounts increase from 15 to a whopping 1,600 with 15% of the policies coming from corporate accounts. Pet insurance is still relatively rare with only 2% of pets in the US insured. However a factor in the growth comes from treatments and therapies not previously available are now common-place with pet owners happy for non invasive procedures like CAT-scans and MRIs to be carried out to screen for the early signs of illness. Corporations like Disney and Del Monte Foods are offering pet insurance as an employee benefit due to the increased role and importance that pets play in peoples' lives.

Anxious Pets line up for homeopathic remedies

Owners of anxious pets are encouraged to enrol for Australian trials of natural medicines to help overcome anxiety in pets brought on by fireworks, travel sickness and thunderstorms. Trials will be conducted by Sydney Animal Behaviour Service in conjunction with Professor Daniel Mill, a recognised specialist in Behavioural Medicine from the University of Lincoln in the UK. The trials are placebo based and neither the owner, the vet or the Sydney Animal Behaviour Service will know whether the pet has been administered the remedy. Vet practices interested in the trials should contact HomeoPet on (02) 9675 4388 and pet owners can also register directly for the trial.

Wetland area at Sydney Park makes dogs sick

Sydney Park, situated at St Peters has long been a favourite off-leash walking spot for dogs and their owners. A recent breakout in blue green algae has resulted in local vets attending some very sick dogs. Dog walkers are advised to keep dogs away from taking a plunge in the water, drink from it or eat the vegetation. Dogs that have come into contact with the wetlands areas at Sydney Park and are showing signs of illness or distress should be taken to the vet. City Rangers are patrolling the park on bicycles and warning dog owners. Further tests are being carried out on the other wetland areas at Sydney Park which are also likely to contain blue-green algae.

Blue-green algae cells are a natural part of aquatic ecosystems that are always present in the water in small, harmless numbers. These cells will multiply and grow, or 'bloom', when there is the right combination of environmental conditions including high nutrient levels, warm water temperatures, intermittent sunlight, and low flows. The algal bloom is expected to disperse naturally once the current environmental conditions change.

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