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Digital magazine

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The Profitable Practice

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a cooperative can
give independent
veterinarians an edge



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More Than Just Price

A look at the vendor selection process – and why your voice matters

By Bryan Munson, Director of Vendor Relations

Other ways to get involved are to engage with and purchase from our vendor partners! We build these programs to benefit the co-op owners and they're only as strong as the use they receive. If owners are not using the programs, the programs go away, simple as that.

When it comes to lining up products and services for our TVC Co-op Owners, the most important thing we look for in a vendor partner is someone who is willing to engage with our ownership. If a vendor is ready to be part of the conversation, take initiative and utilize the various marketing channels available at TVC, that is what is going to elevate their product or service in the eyes of our Co-op Owners.

Obviously, we also only want the best service-product mix as part of the program (an engaged vendor with a sub-par product or customer service is something we want to avoid), so we also have a defined selection process that helps ensure we're picking the right partners that address the true needs of our ownership. Most times, it can take 6-8 months to form a working partnership; in some cases it takes years. But we do our best to be able to give fair and equal consideration to all vendors and ensure they have an opportunity to take part in the process.

The process

TVC has a defined process that we walk every potential vendor through. After an initial introduction (this could be by phone, email or in-person at an event), a vendor is sent our Request For Proposal (RFP). It's a pretty simple document, but it helps us dial in exactly what the prospective vendor does and why they might be a good fit for the TVC program.

From there, they follow the RFP and submit to us a proposal that is reviewed by our Product Committee, comprised of TVC Co-op Owners that volunteer their time to give TVC feedback on vendors and other ongoing projects, initiatives or research we are doing. If the Product Committee likes the service and feels the program/

deal is a good one, they'll recommend it for Board review. Our President then briefs the Board on the vendor and the proposed program/deal.

If the Board feels comfortable with the service and the program, they will approve it. If either the Product Committee or Board has questions or concerns about the program, I will always revisit those with the vendor. In some cases, it just doesn't work out, but if the program is approved, we then finalize the paperwork and contract, put together a marketing plan and launch the program.

Ingredients for success

The best programs at TVC have four components:

- A clinic-level rebate
- A clinic-level growth rebate
- A TVC group growth/loyalty rebate
- The required TVC holdback (a percentage of sales that we use to market the vendor's services)

In all cases, there ends up being a mix, but the most successful programs follow this format and generally see sales growth Year Over Year in the 5-10 percent range. Our marketing team excels at communicating the value of our vendor partnerships to our Co-op Owners, and that's why we really want vendors that are engaged and ready to be willing participants with the Co-op, able to try new ideas and truly collaborate to drive purchases, which in turn, creates additional rebates for the entire TVC ownership and greater loyalty to our partners.

Getting involved

As I mentioned, we have a Product Committee that meets about once per month to discuss new potential vendors, as well as ongoing research projects, surveys, industry questions; really anything that we need immediate feedback on. To join, Co-op Owners can email me (bryan.munson@tvc.coop) and request to be added to the email list.

Other ways to get involved are to engage with and purchase from our vendor partners! We build these programs to benefit the Co-op Owners and they're only as strong as the

use they receive. If owners are not using the programs, the programs go away, simple as that. When programs go away, rebates go away. If that scenario continued on, before long, there would be no extra rebate programs and the independent vet would not have the buying power to compete with corporate groups or online retailers.

The whole point of joining a Co-op is to use it, and the value we bring to our Co-op Owners is designed to go beyond "price." There is a lot of wasted staff time in clinics price-shopping and flip-flopping between groups to save on a BOGO. On the whole, we believe Co-op Owners are always going to save more using TVC deals because of 1) the programs we've negotiated, but also 2) because of our profit-

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sharing opportunities, 3) our one-time only joining fee, 4) the business/CE education courses we offer and 5) our event convenings four times per year.

Our intention with TVC isn't JUST to provide the best price – it's to provide the best experience possible that INCLUDES the best prices while understanding the value that comes from all the other elements of TVC's programs. This includes Think Tanks™, PurrrchasePoints™, Benchmark Vet™, and our industry leading vendor program with the best leading and emerging companies serving veterinarians and more.

Vendor News

Hill's Professional Veterinary Group has gone social! Check out their **closed** Facebook group exclusively for Veterinary professionals and healthcare team members. Get the latest Hill's info on Nutritional topics; CE Conferences; Webinars; Blogs; and the latest updates. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Purina's Pro Plan Veterinary line has introduced Calming Care, a new calming probiotic supplement for dogs. Calming Care makes proprietary use of probiotic strain BL999 to help dogs maintain calm behavior. Improvement has been shown in dogs displaying anxious behaviors (excessive barking, jumping, pacing, and spinning); and helps dogs maintain positive cardiac activity during stressful events. [Click here for more details.](#)

TVC Annual Meeting 2019

Registration is open for the required TVC 2019 Annual Meeting scheduled for January 19, 2019 held in conjunction with VMX (formerly NAVC) in Orlando.

Attendance is required, either in-person or virtually, since we'll be voting on different items and our bylaws require that we meet a quorum. [Click here for a link to our Annual Meeting page.](#)

We really hope you'll join us in person in Orlando; here's why:

- Meet and greet TVC vendors and staff during our catered Happy Hour immediately following the meeting
- Meet other TVC Co-op Owners
- Enter in the Happy Hour raffle to win prizes from our vendors
- Get an in-depth report on TVC's financials
- Help elect the new Board slate
- Hear about the latest trends in the industry

Register now for VMX (**see the TVC promo code on the right side!**):



VMX Pricing	
REGISTRATION TYPE	PRICING
Veterinarian	\$825.00

For other registration pricing categories (such as Practice Manager, Vet Tech, etc.), [Click Here.](#)

Plus, as a TVC Co-op Owner, you can **save an additional 10%** when you enter the code **DISCOUNTTVC** on your VMX registration. Just be sure to click the "apply discount" button on the review page once you enter the code.

Here are the details:

- TVC 2019 Annual Meeting
- Saturday January 19, 2019; 3:30-6:00pm, Eastern Standard Time
- Meeting will last approximately 1 hour, followed immediately by a 1 ½ hour cocktail party
- The Executive Ballroom (new room this year; right across from the Junior Ballroom) in the Rosen Centre Hotel, 9840 International Drive Orlando, FL 32189

[Click here to RSVP for in-person or virtual attendance](#)

Take a bite out of Lyme.

NexGard® (afoxolaner) is the **ONLY** chew that combines all of the following benefits into the one that dogs prefer¹:

- ✓ Kills fleas
- ✓ Kills ticks — lone star ticks, brown dog ticks, American dog ticks, and black-legged (deer) ticks
- ✓ **And FDA-approved for the prevention** of *Borrelia burgdorferi* infections as a direct result of killing *Ixodes scapularis* vector ticks



¹Data on file.

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: NexGard is for use in dogs only. The most frequently reported adverse reactions include vomiting, pruritus, lethargy, diarrhea and lack of appetite. The safe use of NexGard in pregnant, breeding, or lactating dogs has not been evaluated. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures or neurologic disorders. For more information, see the full prescribing information or visit www.NexGardForDogs.com.

Conferences



[Register](#)

TVC Central: 2019 Chicagoland Veterinary Conference May 12 - 16 | Chicago, IL

Chicagoland Veterinary Conference is a great place to expand your knowledge and grow your network. TVC will be sponsoring a fantastic lineup of speakers and lecture topics you won't want to miss out on. **TVC Co-op Owners can receive 10 percent off their registration with promo code: TVC2019.**

[Click here](#) for more information on the conference.

Hope to see you at this great event!

Promotions

ASPCA Pet Health Insurance: Veterinary practice employees can save up to 30 percent on ASPCA Pet Health Insurance! And if you're participating in the ASPCA Pet Health Insurance Rebate Program, staff enrollments count toward your practice rebates! [Click here for details](#)

BI: Centragard: Buy a 3-dose carton, get a 1-dose carton FREE through December 31, 2018. [Click here for details](#)

Ceva: Q4 Promo: All types of "Buy This, Get That Free" on Pheromones; Clenz-A-Dent; Douxo; Pain and Mobility; Vectra; Vectra 3D; and Catego. [Click here for details](#)

Human Interest: New vendor of 401(k) plans tailored for the small business market. They have waived their \$499 set up fee exclusively for TVC owners. [Click here for details](#)

KVP Custom Orthotics: KVP has Custom Orthotics has just launched an exclusive rebate program with TVC. They are offering an \$85 rebate on each KVP Custom Orthotics brace! [Click here for details](#)

Label Value: Labels for vet offices (and everything else!). Save 10 percent off your order in addition to your 8 percent TVC discount with promo code TVC10. [Click here for details](#)

Merck Bravecto Client Offer: Pet parents can receive a \$15 rebate for 2 doses; Mix, Match, and save when you purchase any Bravecto product! [Click here for details](#)

One Place Capital: The "NO Loan" Simple Interest Loan with No prepayment penalties, NO blanket liens, and NO hidden fees just got even better – now there are NO payments until 2019! [Click here for details](#)

RapidBac Vet: Exclusively for TVC owners: 25 percent off the only rapid test for the detection of Gram-negative and Gram-positive bacteria in urine. [Click here for details](#)

Stratford Rx: Protect your clinic from internet pharmacies with your own private label quality products at special TVC pricing, complete with marketing support. Special Starter Pack offer. [Click here for details](#)

VetOne: Switch to VetOne and enjoy 11 percent to 111 percent savings on scores of everyday items for your clinic! [Click here for details](#)

Vetoquinol: All Dental Chews: Buy 3 Bags, Get 1 FREE (Mix & Match)! Bonus Offer: Spend \$400 or more on Vetoquinol dental products and get 12 Enzadent Fingerbrush kits FREE! Both offers end Feb. 28, 2019. [Click here for details](#)

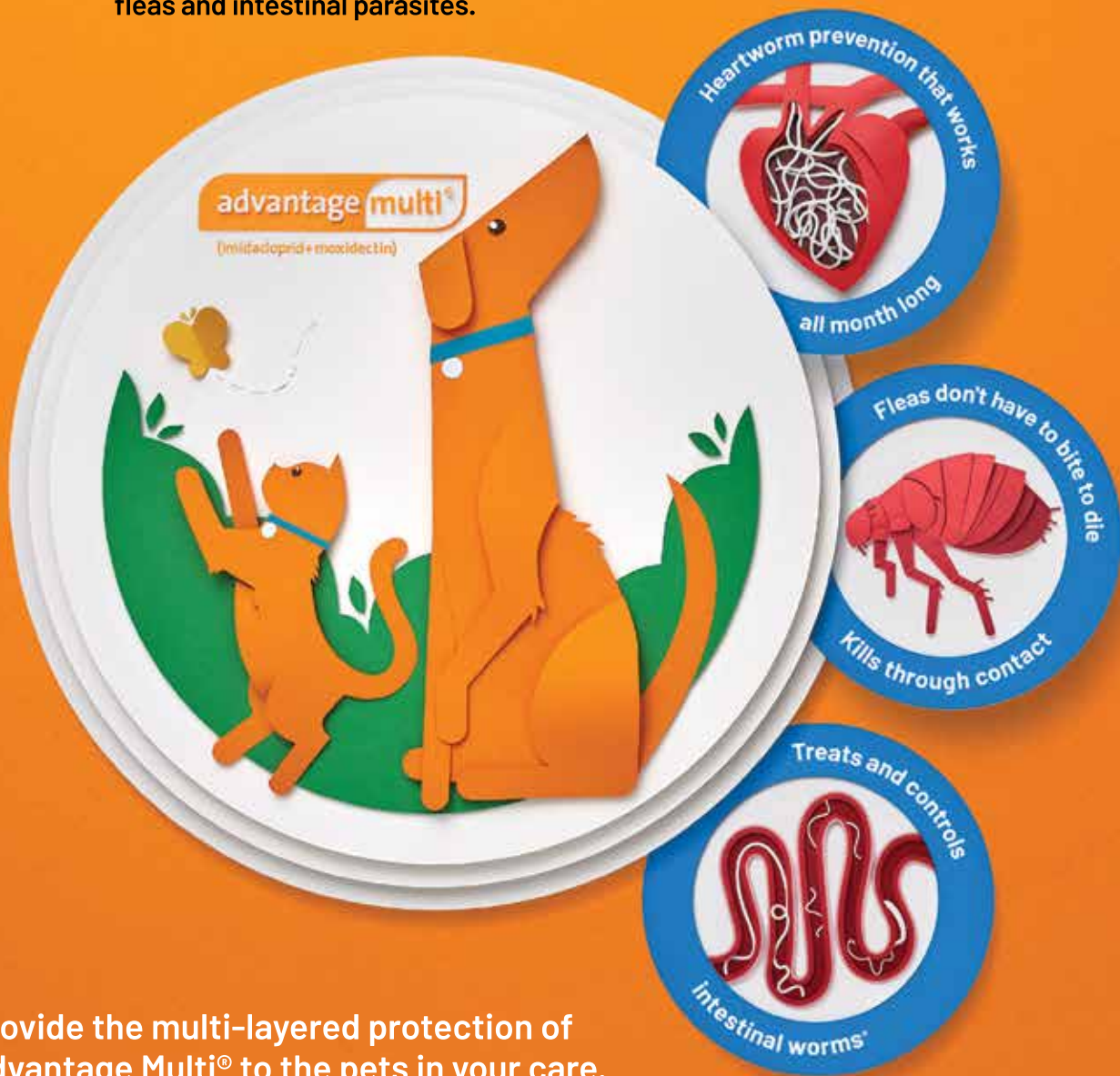
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Vetsource: New Q4 Perk: Tired of hearing your clients saying how they can get every product you recommend for less online? If you have a Vetsource online pharmacy, you can offer your clients 20 percent off their first Home Delivery order through December 31, 2018. Even better – the 20 percent off promo is combinable with other manufacturer promotions! [Click here for details](#)



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*Treats and controls roundworms, hookworms and whipworms in dogs and roundworms and hookworms in cats.

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The Profitable Practice

How membership in a cooperative can give independent veterinarians an edge



Karla B. Cunningham, DVM, saw

the value of a cooperative at a young age. Growing up, her father was a dairy farmer and member of a milk cooperative. She witnessed firsthand the importance of independent, small businesses needing to join together to compete against larger competitors in the marketplace.

"I understood from a very young age that small producers, or independent veterinarians, have struggled to get the same benefits as big farms or big veterinary hospitals," says Cunningham.

Banding together with other independent veterinary practices to get deals, rebates, and partnerships made sense to her; thus her decision to become one of the early TVC Co-op Owners. It's made good business sense for River's Edge Veterinary Hospital, Inc., too.

Outsourcing business savvy

Cunningham says she is like most veterinarians who went to school because they felt a calling to do medicine on animals. However, the thought of business school "makes most of us shudder in our shoes."

Brokering deals is not typically a veterinarian's strong suit. To have someone who has that business acumen to negotiate, and get down to the "brass tacks of a situation" with vendors and their products and services, "is quite impressive," says Cunningham. "I was member 106, one of first to adopt, and I was eager to take advantage of the different deals.

"We use the programs that fit," Cunningham continues. "We're not going to start purchasing something that doesn't fit my business just to have that extra vendor on my list. But, it just makes sense to look and see what vendors are available to use if you can."

Distributors, manufacturers, service providers – River's Edge has taken advantage of many TVC vendor programs. For instance, River's Edge switched their credit card processor to a TVC vendor, Harbor Touch, and saw immediate

benefits. "That's easy money you're picking up if you can get a better deal on your credit card provider."

Boost your bottom line

With the TVC programs and rebates in place, Cunningham says there is money left at the end of the year. "Sometimes it makes a difference from being a no-profit practice to being a profitable practice. You can get those better deals."

A lot of times people new to the business world are worried about revenue. While that's important, controlling



expenses is just as important, Cunningham says. "If you can save money, and you're spending less money on your products, then that makes all the difference in the world. Then you're getting that rebate check a couple times a year as a bonus too. I never count on it, so whenever I get it, I will ask myself 'What can I use this for?'"

Having money left over means River's Edge can consider purchasing more products. Or even local advertising to attract new clients. The important thing is being a TVC Co-op Owner gives them that option. "Anything that can help your bottom line, and the health of your business, helps lead to growth," says Cunningham. ■



Show Your Support

How everyone at veterinary practices can contribute to improving feline health care

Jane Brunt, DVM, isn't interested

in the negatives. Core vaccines may be down for the year, and feline visits may not be trending upward, but ... "I'd like to think that instead of looking down and contemplating our navel saying 'Oh, here we go again – cat owners won't do this, cat owners don't do that' – we are asking ourselves: What are opportunities we can take advantage of that are already available for helping veterinary practices with feline visits? How can we do better, and more, for cats?"

Indeed, from veterinarian to staff, there is still a tremendous opportunity for feline healthcare, says Brunt, Executive Director of the CATalyst Council. She offered several suggestions of areas that can be improved.

An emphasis on preventive healthcare for indoor cats

The notion that indoor cats don't get sick or don't need parasite prevention is bad medicine. "A case in point is

heartworm preventives." Heartworm disease is spreading to new regions of the country each year, according to the American Heartworm Society. Stray and neglected dogs and certain wildlife such as coyotes, wolves, and foxes can be carriers of heartworms. Mosquitoes blown great distances by the wind and the relocation of infected pets to previously uninfected areas also contribute to the spread of heartworm disease. And even indoor cats are not immune. "Indoor cats need heartworm prevention in all heartworm endemic areas," Brunt says. They also need to be on preventives for fleas and ticks, which carry diseases that cats, and humans, can contract.

A better understanding of feline fear and arousal

Knowing cats are different than dogs, you will certainly handle them differently, Brunt says. There is a rewiring that needs to happen with terminology. "We don't use the



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word restrain, we use the word handle,” says Brunt. “It’s a completely different mindset. It’s just thinking differently. With handling, what arouses cats? Arousal and fear are not aggression. Cats may become aggressive if they get really scared. If you think about it, if they are scared, rather than aggressive, wouldn’t you take a different approach? Wouldn’t your mindset be a little different?”

Utilize educational opportunities

There are plenty of resources related to feline care. For instance, the AAFP’s Cat Friendly Practice program has lots of valuable information, Brunt says. “The materials are useful and easy to understand and implement,” says Brunt. “There are obviously benefits when practices complete the steps required to have the Cat Friendly Practice Designation. They have access to handling guidelines and behavior guidelines from AAFP. Those are great resources.”

Outreach in advance of appointments

Veterinary practices can provide help for clients to overcome some of the barriers for cat visits. That would include things like asking the owner at the time of scheduling the appointment if they have trouble getting their cat in the carrier. Is there a way for the practice to help?

Reminders are also important, especially for new cat owner appointments. The fall off for excuses – such as the pet owner couldn’t get their cat in the carrier or catch the cat – is pretty big, says Brunt. “So, there should be a lot more touch points on not only confirming the appointment, but also providing resources, and tips for making that trip easier,” she says. “At the very least, if the veterinary practice knows an hour or two hours in advance that they’re not coming, then that opens up the appointment.”

Explore streams of new patient acquisition

One way to do that is to connect with shelters and adoption organizations. Do you have partnerships set up with local shelters, or offer programs to support adoptions and care, such as a free kitten kit for adopted cats? Those are opportunities for building relationships that can help with a stream of new patient acquisition. ■

Advantage Multi® for Dogs and for Cats (imidacloprid + moxidectin)

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

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

WARNING

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

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

INDICATIONS:

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

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

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

WARNINGS:

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

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

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

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

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

Causes eye irritation. Harmful if swallowed. Do not get in eyes or on clothing. Avoid contact with skin. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after handling. If contact with eyes occurs, hold eyelids open and flush with copious amounts of water for 15 minutes. If eye irritation develops or persists, contact a physician. If swallowed, call poison control center or physician immediately for treatment advice. Have person sip a glass of water if able to swallow. Do not induce vomiting unless told to do so by the poison control center or physician. People with known hypersensitivity to benzyl alcohol, imidacloprid, or moxidectin should administer the product with caution. In case of allergic reaction, contact a physician. If contact with skin or clothing occurs, take off contaminated clothing. Wash skin immediately with plenty of soap and water. Call a poison control center or physician for treatment advice. The Safety Data Sheet (SDS) provides additional occupational safety information. For a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or to report adverse reactions call Bayer Veterinary Services at 1-800-422-9874. For consumer questions call 1-800-255-6826.

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

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

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

For a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or to report adverse reactions call Bayer Veterinary Services at 1-800-422-9874. For consumer questions call 1-800-255-6826.

Advantage Multi is protected by one or more of the following U.S. patents: 6,232,328 and 6,001,858. NADA 141-251,141-254 Approved by FDA

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Pet Ownership Trends

AVMA releases latest stats on pet ownership and veterinary care



If you're looking for some good

news this holiday season, perhaps a glance at data released from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) will bring good cheer.

Pet ownership is on the rise in the United States, with dogs leading the way and large increases in the number of less traditional pets like poultry and lizards, according to the AVMA data.

The 2017-2018 edition of the Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook – what AVMA touts as the most comprehensive and authoritative source of data on pet ownership and related habits of U.S. pet-owning households – found that nearly 57 percent of all U.S. households owned a pet at end of year 2016. Approximately 38 percent of households nationwide owned one or more dogs – the highest estimated rate of dog ownership since the AVMA began measuring it in 1982. Cats were the next most popular pet, found in 25 percent of U.S. households.

Pet owners by state

According to AVMA, pet ownership is highest in more rural states. The 10 states that had the highest percentage of pet-owning households in 2016 were:

Wyoming (72%)	West Virginia (71%)
Nebraska (70%)	Vermont (70%)
Idaho (70%)	Indiana (69%)
Arkansas (69%)	Mississippi (65%)
Oklahoma (65%)	Colorado (65%)

Pet ownership is generally lower in urban states. The 10 states with the lowest percentage of pet-owning households were:

Rhode Island (45%)	South Dakota (46%)
New York (50%)	New Jersey (47%)
Maryland (49%)	Illinois (49%)
Massachusetts (49%)	Connecticut (50%)
Georgia (51%)	New Hampshire (52%)

Veterinary visits examined

The 2017-2018 Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook also looks at who visits a veterinarian, how frequently and under what circumstances. Survey findings show that dog owners have a higher propensity to obtain veterinary care than do owners of other types of pets. On average, in 2016, dog-owning veterinary clients made three visits to the veterinarian. Cat-owning veterinary clients made 2.4 visits.

“This is a fascinating look into the world of pets as well as the people and veterinarians who love and care for them,” said Dr. John de Jong, president of the AVMA. “Examining current trends in pet ownership and care provides our members with information they can use to better serve their clients and protect the health and welfare of their pets.”

AVMA members may download a complimentary copy of the report's Executive Summary. The entire report is available for purchase from the AVMA's website. ■

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Industry NEWS



Skin conditions tops among claims for one pet insurer

According to *Today's Veterinary Business*, Healthy Paws Pet Insurance dug into almost 500,000 claims to learn what brought its enrolled dogs and cats to a veterinarian over the 12-month period ending May 31. Skin conditions were the most-cited canine insurance claim, at 22 percent, while 29 percent of feline claims were linked to a stomach issue. The top claims for dogs in order were Skin conditions, Stomach issues, Ear infections, Eye conditions, Pain, Growths, Urinary tract infections, Allergies, Cruciate ligament tears and surgery, and Cancer. The top claims for cats were Stomach, Urinary tract infections, Skin conditions, Cancer, Eye conditions, Ear infections, Pain, Growths, Foreign-body obstruction, and Allergies.

Veterinary services spending up \$2.56 billion

According to the *Veterinary Spending Report: A GPS for Pet Businesses*, veterinary services is the second largest segment in the pet industry, *Pet Age* reported. In recent years, a high inflation rate, over 3.5%, has caused a reduction in veterinary visits and put spending on a roller coaster ride. In 2016, spending increased 5.6%. However, in 2017 inflation slowed markedly and consumers responded. Spending reached \$20.67 billion – up \$2.56 billion (+14.1%) from 2016.

AVMF donates to help Florida veterinarians recover from Hurricane Michael

As the extent of devastation from Hurricane Michael becomes clearer, and the long road to recovery becomes more evident, the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) has donated \$20,000 to help veterinarians and animals recover from the storm's impact. The \$20,000 AVMF donation was presented to the Florida Veterinary Medical Association (FVMA) Foundation, with \$10,000 being used for small animal care and \$10,000 to provide

care for horses and large animals. "Hurricane Michael's impact on multiple counties in the Florida Panhandle can only be described as devastating," said Phil Hinkle, executive director of the FVMA. "We are grateful for the AVMF's assistance. Lending full support to the victims of Hurricane Michael is now a priority for the FVMA." Toward that end, the FVMA Foundation has launched the [Hurricane Michael Relief & Recovery Fund](#) to accept donations to be used for relief and recovery efforts throughout Northwest Florida.

Doctors identify and stop the spread of super bugs through therapy dogs at hospital

AAHA NEWStat highlighted how doctors identified, and stopped, the spread of super bugs from therapy dogs to kids in the hospital. At Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, children receiving cancer treatment in the hospital's oncology unit began to show traces of *methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria (MRSA) in 2016. Doctors studied 45 children who interacted with four therapy dogs over the course of 13 visits in 2016 and 2017 and discovered that kids who spend more time with the dogs had a six-times greater chance of coming away with MRSA than kids who spent less time with the dogs. Among the kids who had no MRSA prior to the dogs' visits, 10% showed exposure to MRSA after the dogs left. Doctors also found MRSA on close to 40% of samples taken from the dogs. Researchers suspect the dogs picked up the bug from other patients during their visits. During the study, researchers asked the dogs' owners to start bathing the animals with a special shampoo before each visit, and during the visits, the dogs were patted down every 5 to 10 minutes with disinfecting wipes. Those steps dramatically decreased the bacteria level on the dogs, said Kathryn Dalton, VMD, MPH, coauthor of the study, who also admitted that prior to the study, the hospital's protocols regarding contact between patients and therapy dogs "wasn't strictly enforced."

Centragard™

(epinomectin and praziquantel
transdermal solution)

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

Description:

CENTRAGARD is a transdermal solution containing epinomectin and praziquantel available in 0.3 mL and 0.9 mL unit applicators to treat cats from 1.8 lbs to 33 lbs. Each mL of CENTRAGARD contains 4 mg of epinomectin and 83 mg of praziquantel, as well as the inactive ingredients (dimethyl isosorbide, glycerol formal, and butylated hydroxytoluene). Epinomectin belongs to the avermectin class of anthelmintics and is a mixture of homologous components referred to as epinomectin B1a and B1b. Praziquantel is a pyrazinoquinoline anthelmintic.

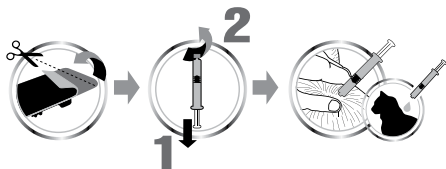
Indications:

CENTRAGARD is indicated for the prevention of heartworm disease caused by *Dirofilaria immitis*, and for the treatment and control of roundworms (adult and fourth stage larval *Toxocara cati*), hookworms (adult and fourth stage larval *Ancylostoma tubaeforme*, adult *Ancylostoma braziliense*), and tapeworms (adult *Dipylidium caninum* and *Echinococcus multilocularis*) in cats and kittens 7 weeks of age and older and 1.8 lbs or greater.

Dosage and Administration:

CENTRAGARD is dosed at a minimum of 0.055 mL/lb (0.12 mL/kg), which delivers a minimum dose of 0.23 mg/lb epinomectin and 4.55 mg/lb praziquantel. Administer the entire contents of a CENTRAGARD unit applicator topically once a month as specified in the following table:

Cat Weight (lb)	Volume (mL)	Epinomectin (mg)	Praziquantel (mg)
1.8-5.5	0.3	1.2	24.9
5.6-16.5	0.9	3.6	74.7
16.6-22.0	0.3+0.9	4.8	99.6
22.1-33.0	0.9+0.9	7.2	149.4



To apply CENTRAGARD pull back the plunger of the unit applicator slightly and remove the cap. Part the hair in one spot on the midline of the neck between the base of the skull and the shoulder blades, place the tip of the unit applicator on the skin and apply the contents directly on the skin. If the weight of the cat requires a second application, apply the contents in the same manner as described above in the same location. Discard applicator after use.

Heartworm Prevention:

For prevention of heartworm disease, CENTRAGARD should be administered once a month. CENTRAGARD may be administered year round or at a minimum, should start 1 month before the cat's first expected exposure to mosquitoes and continuing at monthly intervals until at least one month after the cat's last exposure to mosquitoes. If a dose is missed and a 30-day interval between doses is exceeded, administer CENTRAGARD immediately and resume the monthly dosing schedule.

When replacing another monthly heartworm preventive product in a heartworm prevention program, the first treatment with CENTRAGARD should be given within one month of the last dose of the former medication. At the discretion of the veterinarian, cats older than 6 months of age may be tested to determine the presence of existing heartworm infection before treatment with CENTRAGARD.

Treatment and Control of Roundworms, Hookworms and Tapeworms:

CENTRAGARD treats and controls roundworms (adult and fourth stage larval *Toxocara cati*), hookworms (adult and fourth stage larval *Ancylostoma tubaeforme*, adult *Ancylostoma braziliense*), and tapeworms (adult *Dipylidium caninum* and *Echinococcus multilocularis*) after a single administration or when given monthly as part of a heartworm prevention program. Cats may be exposed to and can become infected with roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms throughout the year, regardless of season or climate. Clients should be advised of appropriate measures to prevent reinfection of their cat with intestinal parasites. Because the prepatent period for *E. multilocularis* may be as short as 26 days, cats treated at the labeled monthly intervals may become reinfected and shed eggs between treatments.

Human Warning:

Not for human use. Keep out of reach of children. Avoid contact with the application site for 5 hours following treatment. Wash hands after administering the product. If the product accidentally gets into the eyes, flush thoroughly with water. In case of accidental ingestion, or if skin or eye irritation occurs, contact a poison control center or physician for treatment advice.

Precautions:

Do not administer orally. Cats may salivate excessively and vomit if CENTRAGARD is accidentally administered orally or is ingested through licking/grooming the application site (see ANIMAL SAFETY).

The safety of CENTRAGARD has not been tested in breeding, pregnant or lactating cats.

The safety of CENTRAGARD has not been tested in kittens less than 7-9 weeks of age or weighing less than 1.8 lbs (0.8 kg).

Adverse Reactions:

In a well-controlled field study emesis, anorexia, lethargy, temporary clumping or spiking of the hair, or mild, transient skin reactions (itching, hair loss) were reported. When cats licked the application site after treatment, temporary excessive salivation was observed. Oral ingestion of CENTRAGARD may also result in hypersalivation, vomiting and/or lethargy. In margin of safety studies, transient neurological signs such as ataxia, disorientation, lethargy, and pupil dilation were observed in some cats. Correct application will minimize the occurrence of such events.

To report suspected adverse events, for technical assistance or to obtain a copy of the SDS, contact Merial at 1-888-637-4251.

For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or online at <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth>.

The Safety Data Sheet (SDS) provides additional occupational safety information. For customer service or to obtain product information, including the SDS, call 1-888-637-4251.

Information for Owner or Person Treating Animal:

Echinococcus multilocularis is a tapeworm found in wild canids and domestic cats. *E. multilocularis* can infect humans and cause serious disease (alveolar hydatid disease). Owners of cats living in areas where *E. multilocularis* are endemic should be instructed on how to minimize their risk of exposure to this parasite, as well as their cat's risk of exposure. Although ML-635 was 100% effective in laboratory studies in cats against *E. multilocularis*, no studies have been conducted to show that the use of this product will decrease the incidence of alveolar hydatid disease in humans. Because the prepatent period for *E. multilocularis* may be as short as 26 days, cats treated at the labeled monthly intervals may become reinfected and shed eggs between treatments.

Mode of Action:

Epinomectin binds to glutamate gated chloride channels that are present in invertebrate nerve and muscle cells and increases the permeability of the cell membrane to chloride ions that triggers hyperpolarization of the nerve or muscle cell resulting in paralysis and death of the parasite.

Praziquantel's mode of action is not precisely known but treated tapeworms undergo muscular paralysis accompanied by a rapid influx of calcium ions and the disruption of the tegument.

Effectiveness:

Effectiveness studies were conducted with an early formulation (ML-635), containing 8.3% fipronil, 0.4% epinomectin, 8.3% praziquantel, and 10% (*S*)-methoprene. The doses of epinomectin and praziquantel in ML-635 are equivalent to the final formulation of CENTRAGARD (epinomectin and praziquantel transdermal solution).

Heartworm Disease Prevention:

In well-controlled laboratory studies, ML-635 provided 100% effectiveness against induced heartworm infections after a single application.

Treatment and Control of Roundworms, Hookworms, and Tapeworms:

In well-controlled laboratory studies, ML-635 provided >90% effectiveness against natural and/or induced roundworm (adult and fourth stage larval *Toxocara cati*); hookworm (adult and fourth stage larval *Ancylostoma tubaeforme*; adult *Ancylostoma braziliense*), and adult tapeworm (*Dipylidium caninum*; *Echinococcus multilocularis*) infections.

Animal Safety:

Margin of Safety Study: A combination of fipronil, epinomectin, praziquantel, and (*S*)-methoprene was applied topically to 7 to 9 week old healthy kittens at 1, 3, or 5X the maximum dose (8 cats/group) six times at 28 day intervals. One 5X kitten exhibited ataxia, disorientation, and lethargy for 12 hours and exhibited pupil dilation for 24 hours following the 3rd treatment. This 5X kitten exhibited ataxia, disorientation, and lethargy for 6 hours, and moderate pupil dilation for 24 hours following the 4th treatment, and had pupil dilation following the 5th treatment. Hypersalivation was observed for one hour for one 5X kitten following the 1st treatment and one 3X kitten following the 4th treatment. One 5X kitten had slow pupillary light responses for one day after one treatment and one 3X kitten had slow pupillary light responses for 3 hours after one treatment. One control cat had marked pupil dilation and slow pupillary light responses lasting two hours after one treatment. Immediately post-treatment cats in all groups scratched and groomed the application site.

Study in Heartworm Positive Cats: Three groups (0X, 1X and 3X) of 12 young, adult cats, 4.7 to 6.6 months of age, were experimentally infected with adult heartworms (*D. immitis*) by venous transplantation. All cats were negative for heartworm antibody, antigen and microfilariae prior to transplantation. Two weeks after transplantation, immunoserology verified positive antigen and the presence of microfilaria in all enrolled cats. A combination of fipronil, epinomectin, praziquantel, and (*S*)-methoprene was applied topically to cats at 1X or 3X the maximum exposure dose once every 28 days for three consecutive treatments. One cat in the 1X group exhibited cyanotic mucous membranes and tachypnea for 24 hours following the first treatment. The cat recovered and exhibited no abnormal signs following two subsequent treatments. There was no difference between the treatment groups in the number of adult *D. immitis* recovered at the end of the study.

Oral Administration Study: Oral tolerance was evaluated to assess the effects of accidental oral ingestion. Sixteen cats (8 male and 8 female) ranging in age from 9 - 10 months were studied. Eight cats were orally administered a combination of fipronil, epinomectin, praziquantel, and (*S*)-methoprene at 1X the maximum exposure dose; the 8 control cats were sham dosed. All 8 treated cats immediately exhibited hypersalivation after oral administration, and 2 cats vomited and 3 cats were lethargic during the 1-2 hour post-treatment observations. Treated cats continued to hypersalivate and lick lips/mouth for 1-2 hours after oral administration. Cats were monitored for 14 days thereafter, during which one treated cat vomited on Day 12.

Storage Information:

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

How Supplied:

CENTRAGARD is packaged as a single dose in 0.3 mL (for cats 1.8 – 5.5 lb) and 0.9 mL (for cats 5.6 – 16.5 lb) applicators.

Each size applicator is available in cartons containing 1, 3 or 6 applications.

NADA 141-492, Approved by FDA

Manufactured for:

Merial, Inc.,

Duluth, GA 30096-4640

USA

Made in France

CENTRAGARD™ is a trademark of Merial.

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Revision date: Feb 2018

NexGard® (afoxolaner) Chewables

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

Description:

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

Indications:

NexGard kills adult fleas and is indicated for the treatment and prevention of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*), and the treatment and control of Black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), American Dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), Lone Star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*), and Brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) infestations in dogs and puppies 8 weeks of age and older, weighing 4 pounds of body weight or greater, for one month. NexGard is indicated for the prevention of *Borrelia burgdorferi* infections as a direct result of killing *Ixodes scapularis* vector ticks.

Dosage and Administration:

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

Dosing Schedule:

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

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

Flea Treatment and Prevention:

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

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

Tick Treatment and Control:

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

Contraindications:

There are no known contraindications for the use of NexGard.

Warnings:

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

Precautions:

Afoxolaner is a member of the isoxazoline class. This class has been associated with neurologic adverse reactions including tremors, ataxia, and seizures. Seizures have been reported in dogs receiving isoxazoline class drugs, even in dogs without a history of seizures. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures or neurologic disorders (see **Adverse Reactions** and **Post-Approval Experience**).

The safe use of NexGard in breeding, pregnant or lactating dogs has not been evaluated.

Adverse Reactions:

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

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

Table 1: Dogs With Adverse Reactions.

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

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

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

In the US field study, one dog with a history of seizures experienced a seizure on the same day after receiving the first dose and on the same day after receiving the second dose of NexGard.

This dog experienced a third seizure one week after receiving the third dose. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. Another dog with a history of seizures had a seizure 19 days after the third dose of NexGard. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. A third dog with a history of seizures received NexGard and experienced no seizures throughout the study.

Post-Approval Experience (July 2018):

The following adverse events are based on post-approval adverse drug experience reporting. Not all adverse events are reported to FDA/CVM. It is not always possible to reliably estimate the adverse event frequency or establish a causal relationship to product exposure using these data.

The following adverse events reported for dogs are listed in decreasing order of reporting frequency for NexGard:

Vomiting, pruritus, lethargy, diarrhea (with and without blood), anorexia, seizure, hyperactivity/restlessness, panting, erythema, ataxia, dermatitis (including rash, papules), allergic reactions (including hives, swelling), and tremors.

Contact Information:

For a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or to report suspected adverse drug events, contact Merial at 1-888-637-4251 or www.nexgardfordogs.com.

For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or online at <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth>.

Mode of Action:

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

Effectiveness:

In a well-controlled laboratory study, NexGard began to kill fleas four hours after initial administration and demonstrated >99% effectiveness at eight hours. In a separate well-controlled laboratory study, NexGard demonstrated 100% effectiveness against adult fleas 24 hours post-infestation for 35 days, and was >93% effective at 12 hours post-infestation through Day 21, and on Day 35. On Day 28, NexGard was 81.1% effective 12 hours post-infestation. Dogs in both the treated and control groups that were infested with fleas on Day -1 generated flea eggs at 12- and 24-hours post-treatment (0-11 eggs and 1-17 eggs in the NexGard treated dogs, and 4-90 eggs and 0-118 eggs in the control dogs, at 12- and 24-hours, respectively). At subsequent evaluations post-infestation, fleas from dogs in the treated group were essentially unable to produce any eggs (0-1 eggs) while fleas from dogs in the control group continued to produce eggs (1-141 eggs).

In a 90-day US field study conducted in households with existing flea infestations of varying severity, the effectiveness of NexGard against fleas on the Day 30, 60 and 90 visits compared with baseline was 98.0%, 99.7%, and 99.9%, respectively.

Collectively, the data from the three studies (two laboratory and one field) demonstrate that NexGard kills fleas before they can lay eggs, thus preventing subsequent flea infestations after the start of treatment of existing flea infestations.

In well-controlled laboratory studies, NexGard demonstrated >97% effectiveness against *Dermacentor variabilis*, >94% effectiveness against *Ixodes scapularis*, and >93% effectiveness against *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*, 48 hours post-infestation for 30 days. At 72 hours post-infestation, NexGard demonstrated >97% effectiveness against *Amblyomma americanum* for 30 days. In two separate, well-controlled laboratory studies, NexGard was effective at preventing *Borrelia burgdorferi* infections after dogs were infested with *Ixodes scapularis* vector ticks 28 days post-treatment.

Animal Safety:

In a margin of safety study, NexGard was administered orally to 8 to 9-week-old Beagle puppies at 1, 3, and 5 times the maximum exposure dose (6.3 mg/kg) for three treatments every 28 days, followed by three treatments every 14 days, for a total of six treatments. Dogs in the control group were sham-dosed. There were no clinically-relevant effects related to treatment on physical examination, body weight, food consumption, clinical pathology (hematology, clinical chemistries, or coagulation tests), gross pathology, histopathology or organ weights. Vomiting occurred throughout the study, with a similar incidence in the treated and control groups, including one dog in the 5x group that vomited four hours after treatment.

In a well-controlled field study, NexGard was used concomitantly with other medications, such as vaccines, anthelmintics, antibiotics (including topicals), steroids, NSAIDs, anesthetics, and antihistamines. No adverse reactions were observed from the concomitant use of NexGard with other medications.

Storage Information:

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

How Supplied:

NexGard is available in four sizes of beef-flavored soft chewables: 11.3, 28.3, 68 or 136 mg afoxolaner. Each chewable size is available in color-coded packages of 1, 3 or 6 beef-flavored chewables.

NADA 141-406, Approved by FDA

Marketed by: Frontline Vet Labs™, a Division of Merial, Inc.
Duluth, GA 30096-4640 USA

Made in Brazil.

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