

Collars just got smarter

A NEW smart collar that allows owners and vets to continuously monitor pets' health is rolling out in the UK.

The PetPace collar allows owners and vets to track the health of cats and dogs of 3.6kg or more.

The wireless smart collar uses miniature, non-invasive sensors to read an animal's temperature, pulse, respiration, activity patterns, positions and heart rate variability. If the collar detects any abnormalities, a text alert is sent to owners and veterinarians.

The data can help spot early signs of illness, disease and behavioural issues.

Asaf Dagan, chief veterinarian for PetPace,

said: "PetPace closes the communication gap between pets, owners, and vets, enabling pets to 'tell' us how they feel. This lets owners rest assured their pets' ailments would not go unnoticed."

The collar, launched in the US in 2014, retails for \$150 (£101) with a \$15 (£10) monthly fee.

For more information, visit www.petpace.com



Better stewardship solution to AMR, say dermatologists

FOLLOWING Government forecasts on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), vets are being urged to use antibiotics responsibly and maintain high standards of hygiene.

AMR was included on the National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies for the first time, with officials predicting an AMR blood infection outbreak could affect as many as 200,000 people in the UK – potentially killing 80,000.

The risk register document states: "High numbers of deaths could also be expected from other forms of AMR infection."

The Bella Moss Foundation (BMF), a charity that promotes prudent antimicrobial use and

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hygiene in human and veterinary medicine, said vigilance was needed. Two of its clinical advisors have reiterated calls for good hygiene and sensible use of antibiotics.

Tim Nuttall, head of dermatology at the University of Edinburgh Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, said there was genuine concern about returning to a pre-antibiotic era.

"While new drugs are wel-

comes, the long-term solution involves better antimicrobial stewardship," Dr Nuttall said.

"This will mean the public putting less pressure on clinicians for antibiotics for themselves or their animals, better diagnosis and treatment by clinicians, first-class standards of hygiene and infection control and better ways of managing infections without using antibiotics – many cases can be managed by addressing the primary disease and using antiseptics."

David Lloyd, chairman of veterinary dermatology at the RVC, shared the concern.

"The great majority of bacterial infections are still caused by organisms sensitive to existing antibiotics. If we use these

drugs wisely, levels of resistance are likely to decline, but there is an urgent need in both human and veterinary fields to promote the adoption of best practice in the maintenance of hygiene and the prudent use of antibacterial drugs."

He added bacteria would likely develop resistance to new drugs if they were used unwisely. "We should therefore also concentrate on measures that reduce our dependence on antibacterial drugs," he said.

BMF believes developing countries are more likely to suffer from AMR outbreaks – as opposed to the localised episodes seen in care homes, prisons or veterinary and animal rescue settings in the UK.

"It requires international action," said Prof Lloyd, focusing on the "two key areas" of disease prevention and reduced use of antibacterial drugs, applied to human and veterinary medicine and livestock production.

"In farming, good hygiene and husbandry methods that reduce stress among animals

will also reduce infection and, therefore, the need for antibacterial drugs," he said.

"Vaccination will continue to be a very important method of disease prevention in both human medicine and animal husbandry."

BMF has launched a special self-audit tool, created by veterinary experts including Dr Nuttall, to help practices maintain their hygiene standards.

The free resource helps practices check their hygiene procedures and infection controls are working, and will also help Practice Standards Scheme members comply with new hygiene modules, set to come into force in November.

BMF has produced a Clean Hands Challenge video, which explains how basic hand hygiene is so important in stopping infections, before taking viewers through a demo of good washing technique.

BMF founder Jill Moss is appealing for donations and hopes practice members will consider organising fund-raising events.

Companion animal antimicrobial use

THE findings of research into the use of antibacterial agents in small animal veterinary practice in the UK will be presented at a meeting in London on May 11.

The research, funded by the VMD, was undertaken by the Veterinary Epidemiology, Economics and Public Health Group at the RVC and investigated levels of companion animal antimicrobial usage and prescribing behaviour.

The researchers say multi-drug resistance in bacteria is a growing problem in human and animal medicine, and small animal practice has not received sufficient attention as a reservoir of multi-resistant infections.

Central to addressing multi-drug resistance in companion animal veterinary practice is establishing a clear understanding of the situation, and the study aimed to characterise and quantify systemic antibacterial usage in cats and dogs using de-identified electronic patient records collected via the VetCompass database.

Antibacterial usage will be described by species and geographic location and according to the frequency of use, the duration of therapy and estimated daily dose.

The meeting will be held from 2pm to 5pm in the council room at the RVC's Camden Campus.

Cattle industry to streamline data

A £282,000 project to develop a prototype system to streamline data exchange in the cattle industry has been given the green light.

The 12-month feasibility project is being coordinated and project managed by the beef and dairy divisions of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB).

The prototype could effectively work as a search engine to facilitate data exchange between Government, industry and private databases, with key information being presented through a single portal, like at auction markets, for example. The livestock industry data exchange hub could also, for the first time, provide the cattle industry with a facility

to underpin risk-based trading for economically important diseases, such as bovine viral diarrhoea, John's disease and bovine TB.

While the initial focus is on animal disease, it is envisaged the framework developed could be expanded to other areas of data collection, which could greatly benefit the industry.

AHDB is working with more than 20 industry collaborators including databases, farm management software suppliers, auction markets and abattoir system providers.

Norfolk farmer John Cross, who is chairing the project steering group, said: "This is a really exciting opportunity, where industry itself has

taken the initiative to develop what has been needed for a long time. It has the potential to increase operating efficiency, reduce farmer cost and increase our capacity to control economically important diseases. All the information relating to each animal is out there, but in different locations. Making this information more available at key points will be a significant step forward."

Agri-Tech Catalyst is run by Innovate UK and the Research Councils. A catalyst is a form of research and development funding focusing on a specific priority area, helping take projects from the research stage to as close to commercial viability as possible.

Three is magic number for Dengie

A TRIO of new recruits have joined the sales team at horse feed manufacturer Dengie.

Jo Harrow takes the role of area manager for the north of England, Hannah Atkins becomes area manager for the Wales and west region, while regional manager Danielle Gautrey will oversee the east midlands and East Anglia.

National sales manager Laura Dolphin said: "We are delighted to have these three extremely experienced sales managers on board as we drive the Dengie brand forward. Jo, Hannah and Danielle all have a passion for horses and really believe in the benefits of providing a healthy fibre diet.

"They are fantastic ambassadors for the Dengie brand and will work tremendously hard to support our loyal network of customers."

In brief

■ BODMIN MOOR RESCUE:

A rescue operation to save a group of malnourished ponies from Bodmin Moor has been described by Redwings Horse Sanctuary as "an amazing team effort" after local vets, farmers and councillors lent a hand. The stallion, mare and foal that were found running loose and in need of urgent veterinary intervention have been relocated and given treatment, but no owners have come forward. They were rescued from the spot where some scenes from television series *Poldark* were filmed and have been named Ross, Demelza and Julia accordingly.

■ **STOCK BOOST:** An animal charity in Thailand has benefited from a stock boost after a UK company donated 300 brushes and bundles of bandages to help the cause. The Soi Dog Foundation, which cares for more than 300 abused and abandoned dogs, described equine wholesaler Trilanco's donation as "invaluable" as supplies are always desperately needed. For more information, visit www.soidog.org

■ LIVESTOCK EVENT AWARD:

The Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers (RABDF) has won a top award for its live robotic milking and feeding demonstration, featuring 40 cows, which was on display at Livestock Event 2014. RABDF won against stiff competition to claim "Best Feature Area" at the Exhibition News annual awards, which celebrate outstanding achievements across the exhibition industry.

■ DIFFUSER EFFICIENCY:

The efficiency of Ceva's range of diffuser products have been enhanced following a \$10m (£7m) investment. The new Adaptil and Felipay ranges include improved technology, packaging and reduced cost.

■ PRACTICE SAFETY: Vet Mark

Turner has launched a website dedicated to the emerging field of risk management. The aim is to help practices improve this aspect of their clinical governance strategy. For more information, visit www.safetyinpractice.co.uk

■ JOINT PREMISES:

Two companies have joined forces to offer a bespoke service to pet owners in Glasgow. McDonald Vets and Wizard of Paws, a one-stop dog shop offering a range of products and services including a self-service dog wash, have opened a joint premises in Bearsden. For more information, visit www.petsnvet.com and www.wizardofpaws.org

■ ANIMAL FIRST AID: St John

Ambulance Cadets in Bristol enjoyed an evening with a difference, learning how to give animal first aid, recognise emergencies, identify poisons and assess animal welfare. The session, delivered by Avon Lodge Vets, was positively described by one youngster as "sick".