



## Dog Meadow – March/April 2024

Welcome to our March/April newsletter. The last few months have been busy and we have had our hands full daily. We're passionate about what we do, so prepare for a bit of a read with this newsletter. We'll update you on the canine influenza pandemic; and our ongoing construction to improve the lives of our animals. Finally, we'll discuss concerns about indoor doggie daycares. Thank you for being with us and supporting us. We're happy you're joining us to summarize some of the goings-on at Dog Meadow.



## **REVISITING THE CANINE RESPIRATORY DISEASE**

On January 10, 2024, Dr. Scott Weese posted on his **Worms and Germs** blog, "Cases of canine infectious respiratory disease complex around most of the US and Canada seem to be waning, if not back to normal. Since we have no formal surveillance, we have to rely on a variety of data sources for information about this, and none of them (for me, at least) are suggesting that we have anything remarkable going on right now with regard to CIRDC."

### **Background**

In August 2023, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) received reports of an atypical canine infectious respiratory illness being seen in dogs in the Portland Metro and Willamette Valley areas. As of their last public update, ODA had received over 200 reports of atypical canine infectious respiratory disease (CIRDC) from Oregon veterinarians. Some of these reports were about illnesses that occurred earlier in the summer of 2023, prior to August. Veterinarians in other states, such as New Hampshire, have reported similar canine illnesses as far back as summer 2022.

### **Investigation**

ODA has worked with reporting veterinarians and specialists at all the major US veterinary agencies (too many to list here) and other specialists to investigate the causative agent behind these cases.

In December 2023, the USDA stated that genetic testing showed common causes of canine infectious respiratory disease in the cases it investigated.

**In January 2024**, the University of New Hampshire Veterinary Diagnostic lab reported that it found a potential novel bacterial respiratory pathogen in 14%

(31/226) samples they tested. The report states that the data is preliminary and should not change how veterinarians treat respiratory illness cases.

### **Should Dog Owners Be Worried?**

They suggest caution rather than worry. The number of cases reported to ODA represented a small percentage of Oregon's dog population.

It is believed the recent increase in cases is primarily due to a rise in dog ownership, a decrease in overall vaccination rates during the COVID pandemic coupled with an increase in dog socialization as pandemic restrictions ended, and an increase in the popularity of flat-faced breeds that are more susceptible to respiratory illness.

### **CIRDC Background**

Periodic outbreaks of Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex (CIRDC) can occur in a dog population and, while some cases can be serious, most dogs recover. Transmitted by respiratory droplets, both viruses and bacteria can cause CIRDC.

CIRDC cases more commonly occur in animals housed in shelters, boarding, or training facilities rather than in animals housed in private homes, especially those with limited access to other dogs.

Symptoms of CIRDC include coughing, sneezing, nasal and/or eye discharge, and lethargy. Veterinarians treat cases according to the dog's symptoms and severity of symptoms. There is no one-size-fits-all treatment. Some dogs may require antibiotics or other medications. Most dogs, especially those vaccinated against respiratory illness, experience mild illness.

Very young or old dogs, dogs with underlying conditions, or brachycephalic breeds may face more challenges if they contract a respiratory illness. If your dog has a lingering cough, weakness, loss of appetite, difficulty breathing, worsening of illness, and/or a cough that causes the dog to vomit or makes it hard for the animal to breathe, your dog should be seen by its veterinarian.

## **Precautions Against Canine Respiratory Illness**

### **For Dog Owners**

- Vaccinate your dog as recommended by your veterinarian. This may include vaccinations for canine influenza, Bordetella, parainfluenza and canine adenovirus type 2.
- Avoid communal water bowls and toys, and clean these items thoroughly.
- Avoid playdates with unknown dogs. Socialization is important for your dog, so you might consider creating a playgroup of known dogs that are also vaccinated.
- Avoid or limit your dog's exposure to settings with unknown dogs, such as off-leash dog parks.
- If your dog is sick, please keep them at home and seek veterinary care, including – PCR testing to help determine the cause.

### **What Dog Meadow is Doing**

- All dogs must be current on their vaccinations against canine influenza, Bordetella, parainfluenza, and distemper.
  - Sick dogs should not be brought in. Noticeably sick dogs will be dismissed upon arrival.
  - If your dog has had any of the following symptoms in the last few days: cough, sneezing/congestion, diarrhea, decreased appetite, and/or low energy. Those dogs should visit only when feeling well again.
  - Water bowls are replenished and cleaned regularly. We clean and disinfect shared areas and equipment regularly.
  - Finally, our 14-day no-contact policy is still in effect. This includes if you take your dog to the groomer.
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### **RUN. CHICKEN. RUN.**

There's a running joke among hobby chicken farmers about spending a small fortune on a chicken coop, only to finally get an egg after months of raising a few chickens. Some enthusiasts end up investing upwards of \$2500 or even more. But for many, the expense goes beyond just the promise of fresh eggs; it's about providing a safe and appropriate home for these feathered friends.

Laura and I have been vegan for quite some time, so the idea of spending money on rebuilding a run to reap the rewards of fresh eggs doesn't apply to us. However, that doesn't mean we don't understand the value of creating a suitable environment for our rescue chickens and ducks.

### **A Labor of Love**

Taking on the responsibility of caring for rescue animals is no small feat. With the

ongoing maintenance and healthcare to ensure the animals have a balanced diet and a safe environment, the costs can quickly add up. With this upgrade, a new pond with filter and rock structure are in the works.

Despite the financial investment, the joy and satisfaction of providing a good home for these animals far outweigh the monetary expenses. It's a labor of love, driven by a desire to give these animals the quality of life they deserve.



*A lean-to was attached to the barn to provide shade and protect the flock from rain and snow. There will be doors at either end of the run. Finally, the pond area will be placed another 16ft to the left (picture-bottom left)*

### **More Than Just Eggs**

For many, raising chickens and ducks is about more than just the eggs they produce. It's about building a connection with these animals and appreciating them for the unique personalities they bring to the table. Whether it's the quirky antics of a

curious chicken or the playful nature of a duck splashing around in a pond, these animals have a way of capturing our hearts.

Creating an appropriate environment for our rescue chickens and ducks is not just about meeting their basic needs; it's about enriching their lives and allowing them to exhibit natural behaviors. From providing ample space to roam and forage to ensuring they have access to clean water and nutritious food, every aspect of their care is designed with their well-being in mind.



*A movable tractor trailer was built for the ducks, and the chickens were placed in the smaller coop in the front of the house temporarily during construction of the new, larger run.*



*Adelaidasofia, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons*

## **INDOOR DOGGY DAYCARES: ARE THEY SAFE AND SANITARY?**

The popularity of doggy daycares has soared, offering a solution to busy pet owners who want their furry friends to get exercise and socialization during the day.

However, a new trend has emerged in the doggy daycare industry: strictly indoor facilities. While these indoor daycares claim to offer a safe and sanitary environment, concerns about the health, behavior, and well-being of dogs in these settings have been raised by pet owners and experts alike.

## **The Sanitation Debate**

One of the primary concerns with indoor doggy daycares is sanitation. Traditional outdoor daycares have the advantage of natural surfaces that are easier to clean and naturally disinfect in the sunlight. Indoor facilities, on the other hand, face challenges in maintaining cleanliness, especially when it comes to urine and feces.

### **Specialized Flooring: A Solution or a Problem?**

Indoor daycares often boast about their specialized rubber flooring, which they claim is easy to maintain and sanitary. According to a popular franchise doggy daycare, "their compressed rubber flooring is similar to that used in high-end daycares and offers excellent sanitation." The claim is that the flooring resists odors, and the certified team members clean messes immediately to minimize the spread of parasites in feces.

A Reddit user who owns a doggy daycare elaborated on their cleaning protocols, stating that they spend a massive amount of time and money on cleaning and general cleanliness. He claims they use a powered floor scrubber daily, spread a cleaning solution on the floor, and mop it up. Additionally, they use products that seal all of the seams and the top surface of the floor, and finally, reseal the porous surface twice a year.

While these measures may sound reassuring, the question remains: can specialized flooring truly prevent the retention of odors and bacteria? The pores in rubber flooring could potentially retain urine and feces, and even a minor surface scratch of 1-2mm could harbor bacteria and odors. Furthermore, sealing the floor only addresses the surface and does not guarantee the elimination of bacteria in the pores.

### **High-Tech HVAC Systems: A Fresh Air Guarantee?**

Indoor daycares also often highlight their high-tech HVAC systems that suck away odors and circulate fresh air. While this may help with odor control, it does not necessarily address the issue of sanitation and the potential health risks associated with indoor environments.

## **Behavioral Concerns: The Risk of Unhousebreaking**

Another significant concern with indoor doggy daycares is the potential for dogs to become unhousebroken or confused and stressed regarding indoor elimination issues. Dogs are taught not to eliminate indoors. Therefore, dogs that go to strictly indoor daycare environments will initially hold their urine/feces for an incredibly long time, hoping to go outside, but will eventually have to go indoors. As you can imagine, this is confusing and even stressful to most dogs. This can partially un-

housebreak the dog as well. Even if a dog remains housebroken in their own home, they may begin to urinate or defecate in other environments where they feel it is acceptable, such as a friend's home or a store, after they have spent time in these indoor daycares. This regression in housebreaking can create problems for both the dog and the owner.

## **Space Limitations and Safety Risks**

Finally, the lack of space in indoor daycares is a significant issue. Many indoor facilities have small rooms where 20-30 dogs are placed, which can create a high-stress environment and increase the risk of confrontations and injuries. Unlike humans, dogs need space to play and avoid confrontations, making tight environments potentially dangerous for both the dogs and the staff.

In an article by Denise Mazzola, CPDT – KA: Problems with Doggy Daycare she is passionate about these issues. Denise writes, **"I've visited doggie daycares from Virginia to New Hampshire, and most are seriously overcrowded. The two I visited in Arlington, VA never let the dogs outside, NEVER. The dogs eliminate in the same room where they played. Why is that acceptable? Dogs are hardwired to NOT eliminate where they have to eat or sleep. To force the house-trained dog to crap where he has to play, sleep and drink is as horrible as it gets."**

In regards to safety, Denise goes on to say, **"Most daycares put 20+ dogs in too small a room. They can't run, play or move around without being in another dog's space. I've walked through many daycares where one dog is clearly giving body signals that say they do not want to play, they are also called distance-increasing signals, but other dogs are still pestering that dog to play.**

**The dog that doesn't want to play will in most cases escalate to growling, showing teeth, and possibly, as a last resort, fighting. You'll get the call that your dog caused a fight and gets kicked out. Consider it a blessing in disguise. Your dog can now relax at home and not be so completely stressed out."**

You can read Denise Mazzola's in its entirety here: **Problems with Doggy Daycare**

## **Conclusion**

While indoor doggy daycares may offer convenience and protection from the elements, they come with their own set of challenges and risks. Concerns about sanitation, behavioral issues, and safety cannot be ignored, and pet owners should carefully consider these factors before choosing an indoor daycare for their furry friends. As with any pet care decision, it is essential to research and visit facilities, ask questions about cleaning protocols, staff training, and playgroup sizes, and ultimately choose a daycare that prioritizes the health, safety, and well-being of the dogs in their care.



At Dog Meadow, we do not have these issues since our dogs spend most of their time outdoors. Their indoor time is spent napping and relaxing while others play outside. The flooring is made of engineered waterproof material, is rarely soiled, and is extremely easy to maintain.

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## Dog Meadow Blog

Laura Evans, Lady of Dog Meadow, writes a Dog Meadow blog entry on a weekly basis (more or less). She shares life at Dog Meadow as well as trials and tribulations in life as a whole. Every entry includes an easy-to-follow recipe at the end. We encourage you to read it [here](#).

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### Did you know...

You can do something to help Dog Meadow? Yes, you can! And it takes less than a minute. If you follow us on Instagram or Facebook, "liking" and/or sharing our posts greatly increases our exposure and ensures that your dog will always have doggy friends to play with here at Dog Meadow.

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## Bookings

Please remember to book your dog's stay early at Dog Meadow. **Booking requests must be made and confirmed via email.** We require deposits for all stays. It is up to you to reach out to us if and when you are ready to book your dog's stay. Booking

requests must be made and confirmed via email. If you do not have an email confirming a reservation for specific dates, you do not have a reservation.

**With that said, we remind you to make sure that your dog's vaccinations are up-to-date. We encourage you to check your records and make appointments with your dog's vet, if needed, to ensure that he is in good health.** You can find our **requirements** on our website.

Finally, let's all be safe and kind to one another.



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