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OCTOBER 2024

# WELOVEPETS

SOUTH AFRICA

*Alzheimer's*  
IN YOUR PETS  
-AN OWNER'S  
**GUIDE**

*Parrot*  
Communication  
MIMICRY OR  
LANGUAGE

THE ULTIMATE  
DOG FRIENDLY

*Wine*  
tasting

**5 THINGS**  
YOU WANT TO  
KNOW ABOUT  
*Cats*



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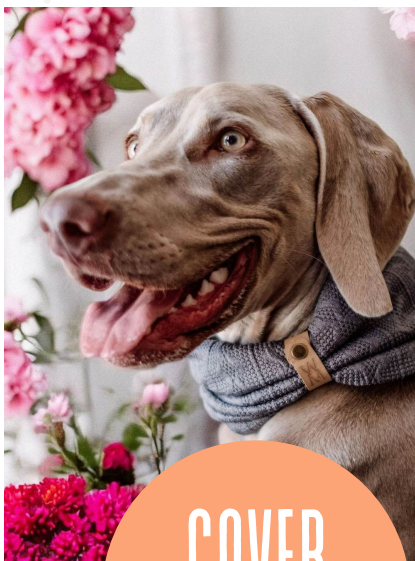
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## WILD MONGOO PETS

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Treat time doesn't have to be unhealthy and it sure as heck doesn't have to be boring either! Pawsome Raw has a great range of healthy treat options for the pet in your life.

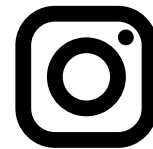
**SHOP NOW**

# Healthy *natural* TASTY treats

Treats are an important part of our relationship with our dogs. Pet owners use them as chews, training aids or rewards to encourage good behaviour. And sometimes they are just that - a treat! Natural dog treats are typically made from nutrient-rich ingredients, that contains essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Apart from being tasty, they smell heavenly to your dog, piquing your pup's interest. Natural treats do not contain any nasties, such as harmful toxins, chemicals, preservatives, additives or hormones that are often in mass-produced treats. Chewy natural treats could aid in your pooch's dental health by reducing plaque buildup and tartar. They will have happier tummies and as part of a balanced diet, will help to maintain a healthy weight for your dog. Here are some of our favourite natural treats.



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT - FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM



*Craig Mitchell is the Founder and Owners of Poochy Coo. He is known on the various trails and greenbelts around Cape Town as "The Ultimate Dog Walker".*

**Craig started taking his friends' and family's dogs with him on exciting trails and hikes - and that is how Poochy Coo was born..**

# SPOTlight

## HIS LATEST ADVENTURE...

Raising funds for SPCA Cape of Good Hope and The Great Trek, Craig is walking dogs at the rate of his Instagram Following.

For the 12 weeks leading up to the Cape Town Marathon on 19-20 October 2024, Craig will be walking dogs to the rate of his Instagram following - EVERY DAY!

I use the term "walking" loosely - on day 5 he "walked" 50 dogs. On Day 18 there was "CHAOS" on the mountain when he took on the challenge of walking 10 - yes TEN - rambunctious Golden Retrievers. Craig knew he needed back up and took his trusted dog handler Steven with on this adventure. **CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH THE FUN!**



Life is good! I'm so grateful to be back doing what I love - dog walking! Taking a break made me realize how lucky I am to spend my days exploring amazing places with furry friends by my side. Now, focusing on charity dog walks has given me a new perspective and purpose. Today's adventure took me down an epic waterfall slide in Cape Town - one of the many hidden gems I get to discover! Feeling truly blessed to call the mountains of Cape Town my office.

The other event Craig is donating towards, is the Great Trek. His dad, Mark Mitchell (60) started an epic journey from Cape Agulhas, in August of 2023, across Africa. He will finish his Great Trek in Nordkapp, Norway. Mark will deliver a specimen of Spekboom to the Botanical Gardens of Oslo in Norway. His aim, to attract funding to plant at least 7.2 billion trees, shrubs and plants.



WATCH THE REEL HERE

## Adventure runs in the Family!



TOTAL TRIP DISTANCE

18000km

DISTANCE TRAVELLED

6607km

NUMBER OF DAYS WALKED

210 days







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# *The Good, & Bad & the Random*

## PET SITTING 101

by Lee van Huyssteen  
*Belle Lumiere Foto*





So, you're going away on vacation (or maybe just a work trip), and your fur babies can't tag along. The solution? A pet sitter, of course! But before you hand over your house keys to someone who will feed, walk, and maybe sing lullabies to your pets, there are a few things to consider. Let's dive into the wonderful, sometimes worrisome, and occasionally weird world of pet sitting.

## *Pros & Cons*

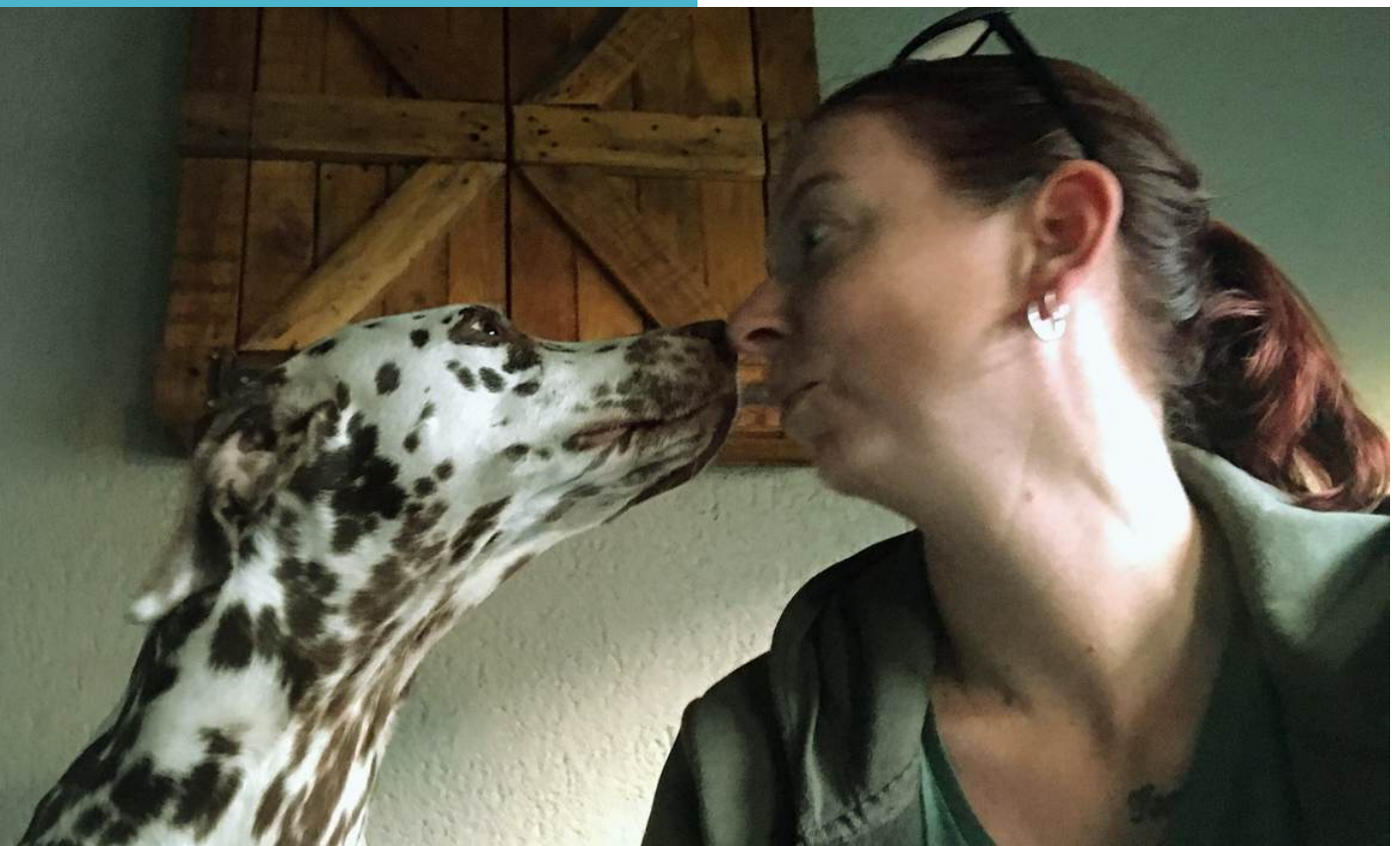
Home pet sitting is a win-win for both pets and owners. Pets get to stay in their happy place, surrounded by familiar comforts like their beds, squeaky toys, and the spot on the couch you pretend is off-limits, keeping them stress-free and content, while your sitter caters to your pet's specific (and sometimes quirky) needs, whether it's serving food diced to exactly one-quarter inch cubes or handling that 3 am burst of zoomies.

On top of personalized care, having a pet sitter doubles as home security, making your house look lived-in while you're away, which is far less tempting to any would-be intruders.

On the other hand, letting a stranger into your home can bring up major trust issues since you're essentially handing over the keys to your kingdom.

While most sitters are completely reliable, it can still feel strange to leave everything you love in someone else's care.

Privacy might also be a concern, as the sitter could have access to personal spaces, and if the thought of them stumbling upon your pile of laundry makes you cringe, it's something to consider.





I've got you covered, keep reading!

## *References, Contracts, and the All-Important Meet-and-Greet*

Hiring a pet sitter isn't something you should leave to chance—it's important to do your homework. Start by asking for and checking references, even if the sitter seems charming and responsible. Talk to past clients to get a feel for how their experience went, especially how their pets behaved afterward. Was your dog content, or did you come back to itchy skin issues? References can give you insight into how well the sitter handles their job and cares for animals.

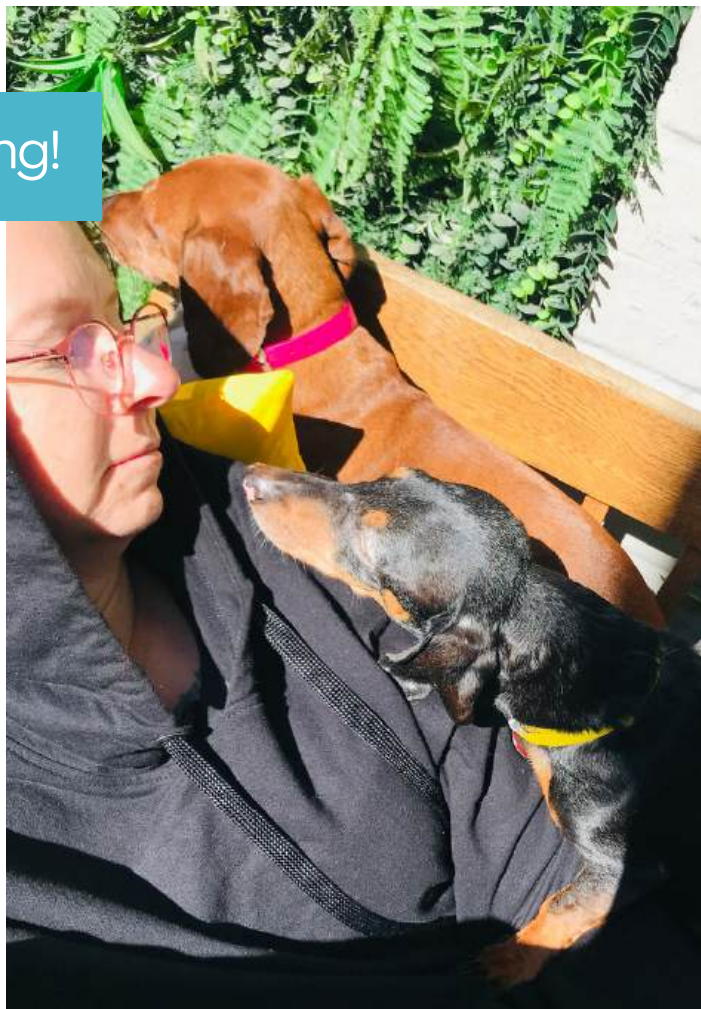
It's also smart to put everything in writing. A contract may not save lives, but it'll definitely save your sanity. Most sitters will have Ts & Cs in place for you to read over, but no judgment if they don't (admin isn't for everyone). Just make sure of those nitty-gritty details for both parties such as: when the sitter arrives, what tasks they're responsible for, and how much they're being paid (the hourly, daily and long stay rates vary by experience and location, ask around), vet and contact info, etc. If anything goes wrong, you'll be grateful you have it all spelled out clearly.

Before heading off on your trip, make sure to arrange a meet-and-greet between the sitter and your pet. This introduction helps smooth things out and gives you a chance to see how your pet reacts to them (fingers crossed for no growling or hiding under the couch).

It's also the perfect opportunity to review any last-minute questions, instructions and requests and ensure your sitter is comfortable with everything.

## *Be Honest About Your Pet's Weird Quirks (We All Have Them)*

This is not the time to sugarcoat. If your dog only respond to commands if you sing them and your cat has a habit of bringing guests 'gifts', your sitter needs to know! Fully and honestly informing your sitter about your pet's behaviours, quirks,



and routines can make all the difference between a smooth sit and a frantic phone call.

Got a turtle who freaks out when they see the colour red? All of that needs to go in your pet's "sitter manual." Basically, if it's part of your pet's daily routine, your sitter should be clued in – no matter how weird or embarrassing it may seem – We don't judge, we've seen a LOT!

## *Expectation Setting: Feedback Is Your (Second) Best Friend*

Want daily selfies of your pet snuggled in bed, or only a quick WhatsApp now and then to make sure all is well? Be clear with your sitter about what kind of feedback you expect. Some pet parents love a constant stream of updates (who wouldn't want a daily pic of Sir Rupert the Third?), while others only want to be contacted in case of an emergency. It's up to you, but make sure your sitter knows how much info you're after.

## *The Holiday Sitter Rush:*

So, here's the pro-est of tips: BOOK EARLY, especially around public holidays, long weekends, and school breaks. Want a sitter over Christmas or New Year's? You better be planning by, like, July. Pet sitters are in high demand during December and January, and you don't want to end up stuck. Trust me, there's nothing more stressful – contact your friends, fam, or local pet magazine (see what I did there) TODAY to ask for referrals and availability.

### *5 Uncommon but Important Things to Tell Your Sitter*

Sure, feeding schedules and walk times are obvious, but here are five less-common things you should always mention:

1. **Security System:** It's not just about the 'how to' and alarm code, but also giving your sitter the company name and number in case they feel something is amiss.
2. **Pet Peeves (Literally):** Does your dog hate deliveries, is terrified of thunder and doesn't like her ears touched?? Does your cat freak out at the sight of their reflection, cucumbers or hearing running water? Let the sitter know what triggers your pet's epic freak-outs AND how to help them if it happens.
3. **Food Glorious Food:** Maybe your dog loves cheese, but it gives them...well, let's just say a rough time. Maybe it's normal that they surround you like raptors when the ice maker goes off, because who doesn't love ice?? Let the sitter know what's a no-go and a hell yeah.
4. **Alone Time:** How long can your pet be left unattended and what is the routine? It might seem like nothing to some, but others' pets have serious separation anxiety or destructive behaviour and will only last so long. Is a one hour shopping trip too much, or is a 4-6 hour outing not a problem at all? Do they need their blankie, their toys and a treat in their crate, or are they perfectly happy outside with water and sunlight?
5. **Home Care Expectations:** If you have deliveries coming, does the housekeeper come on a Thursday at 7am, do you need plants watered or trash taken out... don't forget to mention it.



Pet sitting is a great option, but like any relationship, it's all about communication. Be upfront, set expectations, and make sure your sitter is well-informed. With a little planning and some honest conversations, you can enjoy your time away knowing your pets (and home) are in safe, capable hands! And hey, you might even get some cute photo updates along the way.



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# SWARTLAND HOUSE

## PET FRIENDLY CLARENS



There's no better time to book a getaway in the beautiful town of Clarens than now! Swartland House is the perfect place to experience the charm and tranquility of this stunning location.

From the moment we arrived, we were captivated. The peace and comfort of Swartland House is unmatched. Drinking coffee in front of the wood burners in the lounge and master bedroom was the highlight of our evenings, providing warmth and a perfect touch of rustic luxury. Our stay was made even more special by the impeccable hospitality of Pam and Walkers. They were always available to answer any questions, making us feel right at home.

THE BLEND OF RUSTIC FARMHOUSE CHARM AND MODERN LUXURY IS AMAZING, CREATING A UNIQUE AND INVITING ATMOSPHERE WE DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE.

CONTACT  
072 456 5009  
swartlandhouse@gmail.com

**DOG FRIENDLY**  
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# JOZI



Swartland House is beautifully renovated, maintaining its rich history while offering contemporary amenities for a memorable stay. The large lounge and open-plan kitchen are perfect for gathering, and the three en-suite bedrooms provide privacy and convenience for all guests. The enclosed stoep and wood burners are ideal for the colder winter months. The accommodation also offers DSTV and WiFi, ensuring we stayed connected throughout our visit. Indoor and outdoor braai facilities are available.

The home is neat and well-organized, fresh, and full of everything we could need. Honestly, everything was perfect, and we did not want for anything. Love, love the place!

Clarens is an easy three to four hours' drive from Johannesburg and has become a long weekend mecca for those after an arty, sleepy hollow with just enough entertainment not to be dull. It's a cute, quaint little town with so much to do. Vibrant, plenty of shopping opportunities and great food. The shops are great, the cafés and restaurants are fantastic, and the surroundings are picture-perfect. It is a great place to spend a few days.

Swartland House is far enough from town to provide peace and tranquility but close enough when you need to get into town.

We will not only return, but highly recommend it to others. If you are looking for a perfect blend of comfort, luxury, and rustic charm, you won't be disappointed! And of course, it is pet friendly!

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# Savour & SNUGGLE

## Creation Wine Estate's Dog-Friendly Delight

**by Vicki Fox**

Going on a wine pairing that caters to all the senses is the ultimate indulgence—and even the doggy menu was next level when it came to both presentation and taste. This month, we visited Creation Wine Estate in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley of Hermanus, and it's a must-visit if you're ever in the area.

Upon arrival, we could tell how popular Creation is—the parking lot was quite full, but luckily, we didn't have to circle for long. While making our way to the restaurant, we allowed the dogs to stretch and sniff before settling them down at our table.

It was a beautiful, sunny winter's day, but we were still happy to sit near a heater. Inside, we were warmly welcomed and shown to





our table. There were heaters strategically placed throughout the restaurant, so no need to worry about staying cozy. Cobalt quickly settled by the heater and enjoyed the view through the window before dozing off.

Once seated, we were offered still or sparkling water, and our dogs were given a fresh bowl of water as well. Creation offers many options beyond their à la carte menu, including a Wine and Food Pairing and a Plant-Based Wine and Food Pairing. Fortunately for us, we were treated to the Wine and Food Pairing Experience, which is presented in chapters—just like a storybook!

## Appetizer

We kicked things off with Watercress and Parsnip Soup paired with Creation Sauvignon Blanc. Our waitress added a few drops of the wine to the soup, and the flavours were extraordinary—setting the tone for an incredible experience. We were off to a great start and looked forward to the next item on the menu.

## Chapter 1

Next came Creation Viognier with Agedashi Tofu. I wasn't sure what to expect, as it was my first time trying tofu. The waitress gave us each a piece of silk and explained how the silk heightened the senses, making the wine taste silkier and more luxurious. First, we sipped the wine and then closed our eyes, rubbing the silk between our fingers and sipped the wine again. Immediately the wine tasted silkier and more luxurious and the flavour changed. Paired with the tofu, it was one of the most flavourful dishes I've ever had!

## Chapter 2

Next, the waitress brought us Periwinkle shells. It immediately brought back childhood memories of holding the shell to our ears and hearing the ocean. The wine was Creation Reserve Chardonnay, served with Trout, Leeks, Wild Garlic, and Caviar.



Similar to the previous tasting, we first tasted. Then we were asked to close our eyes and hold the shell against our ear and smell and sip the wine again. This truly elevated the experience—heightening the aromas and flavours of the Chardonnay. I have never experienced Chardonnay on this level. The aromas that you could pick up were mind blowing, tasting like a completely different wine. The wine beautifully complimented the trout which was just as mouth-watering as the wine. Meanwhile, the 4 dogs were still snoring away under the table, unaware of what was happening.

**Creation Wine Estate**

Hemel-en-Aarde Road  
Hermanus  
028 212 1107

[info@creationwines.co.za](mailto:info@creationwines.co.za)





## Chapter 3

This one was for the dogs. The waiter brought a menu for the dogs – the perfect timing in the middle of our experience instead of doing it right at the start.

It was a tough choice because everything on the doggy menu looked amazing:

- Pooch Platter (*Chicken or Beef with Brown Rice & Steamed Vegetables*)
- Fishy Treat (*Salmon with Vegetables*)
- Snack Pack (*Biltong and Doggy Biscuits*)

We chose the Pooch Platter, for our well-behaved doggies, who were oblivious to what was happening around them. I have never seen such a good-looking plate of food. They used the freshest of vegetables, I almost tasted them. We woke the dogs up and took them for a quick walk outside to stretch their legs before giving them their well-deserved meal. While Jenna was trying to take a photo of her three, Cruz and Image were both eyeing out Boss's meal.



Back in the restaurant our waitress came past with our next wine and meal. As we moved on to red wines, we were pleasantly surprised by the Creation Reserve Pinot Noir, paired with Springbok, Celeriac, Peas, Goat's Milk Cheese, and Jus. Neither myself or Jenna are fond of red wine, but these wines were amazing and made the white wine drinkers very happy.

Once again we had to close our eyes, smell the perfume and then smell and drink the wine. I have never been good at picking up flavours when I smell wine, but this journey that we had taken was amazing and picking up smells was very interesting. This was also the most amazing Springbok that I have ever tasted, the wine complimented the meal perfectly.

*“Jenna and I were very relaxed at this stage enjoying the sun, easy vibes, food and wine and could not believe we still had two more chapters to go.”*

## Chapter 4

With the dogs settled again and returning to their afternoon nap, we were ready for the fourth chapter. We enjoyed Creation Syrah Grenache, served with Bone Marrow, Broth, Capers, Lemon, and Cape Seed Loaf. The marrow bones were cleaned off entirely.

*... sorry dogs - no scraps for you this time!*





## Chapter 5

Finally, we ended on a sweet note with Creation Fine Cape Vintage, paired with a delectable Chocolate and Hazelnut Torte. Jenna and I both have a sweet tooth and this was spot on. The flavours of coffee and orange were divine. It tasted as good as it looked. The wine and desert made for a perfect finish to this memorable sensory journey.

## What to expect from us next

Have you made your December holiday plans yet? Or are you one of those who decide on the spur of the moment to get away for a day or two? We will be telling you all about Winfall Cottages in Robertson in the next issue of WeLovePetsSA



*We stayed at Klein Waterval Plaas in Tesselaarsdal, just a 20-minute drive away—a perfect place to unwind after such an indulgent afternoon. You can find more details in the August 2024 edition of We Love Pets SA.*







WILD MONGOO



# Wild Mongoo

pet

EMPOWERING WOMEN,  
ONE PAW AT A TIME



## Handmade, Stylish Pet Products with a Purpose

Wild Mongoo Pet is not your typical pet brand. Launched from the heart of George, South Africa, Wild Mongoo Pet is a bespoke pet lifestyle brand dedicated to spoiling your beloved fur-children with stylish, hand-crafted products - all while empowering women from disadvantaged backgrounds. The journey of Wild Mongoo Pet is intertwined with a greater mission: to uplift and transform the lives of women trapped in cycles of poverty, abuse, and marginalization.

### HOW WILD MONGOO PET WAS BORN

The story behind Wild Mongoo Pet began with founder, Lindsay Hogan. Lindsay's personal journey of compassion and empowerment is what drives the brand today. After getting married, she volunteered at a children's home, where she met and adopted her oldest son. This experience opened her eyes to the deep needs in her community.

“Through my years of volunteering, I realized that the most sustainable way to help children was by empowering their mothers,” Lindsay shares.

This realization led Lindsay to work with various charitable projects, but one initiative stood out - working with women who made hand-rolled paper beads. Witnessing the talent and resilience of these women planted the seed for what would eventually become Wild Mongoo. Inspired by their strength, Lindsay envisioned a platform where ordinary women, like herself and her friends, could make a difference by sharing the skills and talents of Africa's strong women with the world. Thus, Wild Mongoo was born.

From there, Wild Mongoo Pet followed, offering a range of pet products while continuing the mission of woman empowerment. What sets Wild Mongoo Pet apart is that every product sold contributes directly to the welfare and economic independence of women in need.





## OUR VISION: EMPOWERING WOMEN TO FLOURISH & BLOOM

At the heart of Wild Mongoo Pet is a powerful vision: to help women trapped in cycles of poverty, abuse, and prostitution find hope and a future. We do this through a holistic approach—offering psychological, spiritual, medical, and economic support. Our programs not only teach valuable business and life skills but also provide our women with the tools they need to achieve financial independence.

When you purchase from Wild Mongoo Pet, you are supporting a larger cause. You are helping women thrive, offering them the opportunity to provide for their families and break free from oppressive circumstances. **Our mission is clear: to empower women so they can flourish, just like the beautiful products they create.**



Each purchase empowers women in need, providing them with skills and opportunities for a brighter future.

## WHAT WE DO: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH TRAINING & CRAFTMANSHIP

Wild Mongoo Pet focuses on creating luxurious, handmade pet products, ranging from cozy beds and blankets to chic pet wear and pet parent apparel—all crafted with love and attention to detail. But behind each product is a bigger story—our women are learning to not only create but to run their own small businesses.

Through our WM Wild Fire initiative, women receive comprehensive small business and personal finance training. We teach them how to manage their finances, handle stock, and market their businesses. Some of the products made during their training may not pass quality control, but instead of discarding these items, we provide them as starter boxes for the women to sell. The profits they make fund their next stock, creating a self-sustaining cycle of growth and empowerment.

We also provide medical care through partnerships with local health professionals, 'Door of Hope', professional counseling support, and even safe housing for those who need it most. By offering these services, we create an environment where women can heal, learn, and grow, allowing them to rise above their circumstances and take control of their futures.

### Featured Products - Style meets Functionality

Our pet products are designed not just for function but to bring a little bit of luxury into your pet's life. Here are a few highlights from our range:

- **Hand-Crafted Leather Pet Collars and Leashes:** Made from 100% locally sourced materials, these collars and leashes are both durable and stylish, ensuring your pet looks their best.
- **Luxury Pet Accessories:** This collection, including bowties, bandannas, and ID tags adds a touch of elegance to your pet's wardrobe, ensuring they always look their best.
- **Pet Parent Apparel:** Allows proud pet parents to show your love for your fur babies while supporting our mission.



## Wholesale Opportunities: High-Quality Products that Give Back

Wild Mongoo Pet doesn't stop at direct sales. We offer wholesale options at a great discount for pet shops, boutiques, vets and other retailers looking to stock unique, high-quality pet products that make a difference. By partnering with us, retailers not only provide their customers with beautifully made products but also contribute to the empowerment of women from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

If you're a pet shop or retailer interested in carrying our products, we'd love to discuss wholesale opportunities with you. Help us spread the message of empowerment while offering your customers the very best in pet products.

At Wild Mongoo Pet, we believe in the power of community. There are many ways you can get involved and support our mission:

- **Buy Our Products:** Every purchase directly supports our training programs and helps a woman build a brighter future.
- **Resell Our Products:** Become an accredited wholesaler and stock our range of high-quality, purpose-driven pet products.
- **Corporate Gifting:** Looking for unique, meaningful corporate gifts? We offer custom corporate gift solutions that give back to our women and their communities.
- **Donate:** If you're passionate about our cause but don't need any pet products at the moment, you can still make a difference. Visit our website to make a donation and support our initiatives.



[www.wildmongoopet.com](http://www.wildmongoopet.com)

TOGETHER, WE CAN EMPOWER WOMEN &  
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# My dog *is a vegan*

written by *Sasha Wein*

*Veganism is a lifestyle and ethical stance aimed at excluding all forms of exploitation and cruelty to animals. This philosophy views all animals as sentient beings, capable of experiencing the world subjectively. Therefore, the ethical imperative is to avoid harming any animal, treating all with the same compassion we show our pets. For dogs, this means not feeding them products derived from other sentient animals.*

---

**V**egan feeders believe that dogs are opportunistic omnivores and do not require meat to thrive. A vegan diet for dogs consists of plant-based foods, excluding meat, fish, dairy, and eggs. Instead, their nutrition comes from plant-based ingredients, ensuring they receive all necessary nutrients.

## **Transitioning Your Dog to a Vegan Diet**

Switching your dog to a vegan diet involves careful planning and consideration. As responsible pet parents, it's crucial to ensure any dietary changes provide all the nutrients required for a balanced and healthy diet. Here's how to start:

**Research:** Stay updated with the latest findings and available options for plant-based dog foods.

**Consult Your Vet:** Discuss any dietary changes with your veterinarian. Be aware that some vets may lack knowledge about vegan diets for dogs, as traditional animal-based diets dominate veterinary nutrition.

**Gradual Transition:** Slowly introduce the new diet by mixing it with the current food, gradually increasing the vegan portion while monitoring your dog for any changes.

## **Vegan Dog Food Options in South Africa**

The South African market currently offers limited vegan dog food options, but awareness and demand are growing:

**VegaPro:** South Africa's first 100% plant-based dog food kibble.

**Vondis:** Offers a vegan frozen dog food option.



A woman with long dark hair is smiling and holding a small, scruffy dog. The dog is wearing a white shirt with a colorful floral pattern and a small black tag that says "floof.". The background is a blurred green foliage.

*“While not a professional expert, I am a dedicated dog parent and a vegan. My journey to understanding and implementing a vegan diet for my dog, Indi, involved extensive research and self-education.”*



## Key Nutrients in a Vegan Diet for Dogs

To ensure a balanced vegan diet, dogs need the following nutrients:

**Protein:** Essential for dogs, available from lentils, chickpeas, soy, quinoa, and yeast. These plant proteins also have lower saturated fats.

**Carbohydrates:** Provide energy and fiber, found in sweet potatoes, brown rice, and oats.

**Fats:** Rich in omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, from sources like canola oil, flaxseed oil, and sunflower oil.

**Vitamins and Minerals:** Essential for various body functions, ensuring a full range of these nutrients is crucial.

### PROCESSED VS NATURAL FOOD

Veganism does not inherently prioritize natural over processed foods. It is up to each dog parent to decide what approach works best for their pet.

### COOKED VS UNCOOKED

There is no definitive answer here. The choice between cooked and uncooked vegan dog food depends on individual preferences and what works best for your dog.

We chatted with Cape Town based Tessa Grace, owner of the spirited rescue dog Indiana (4 years old). Indiana has been Vegan. She says: “While not a professional expert, I am a dedicated dog parent and a vegan. My journey to understanding and implementing a vegan diet for my dog, Indi, involved extensive research and self-education.”

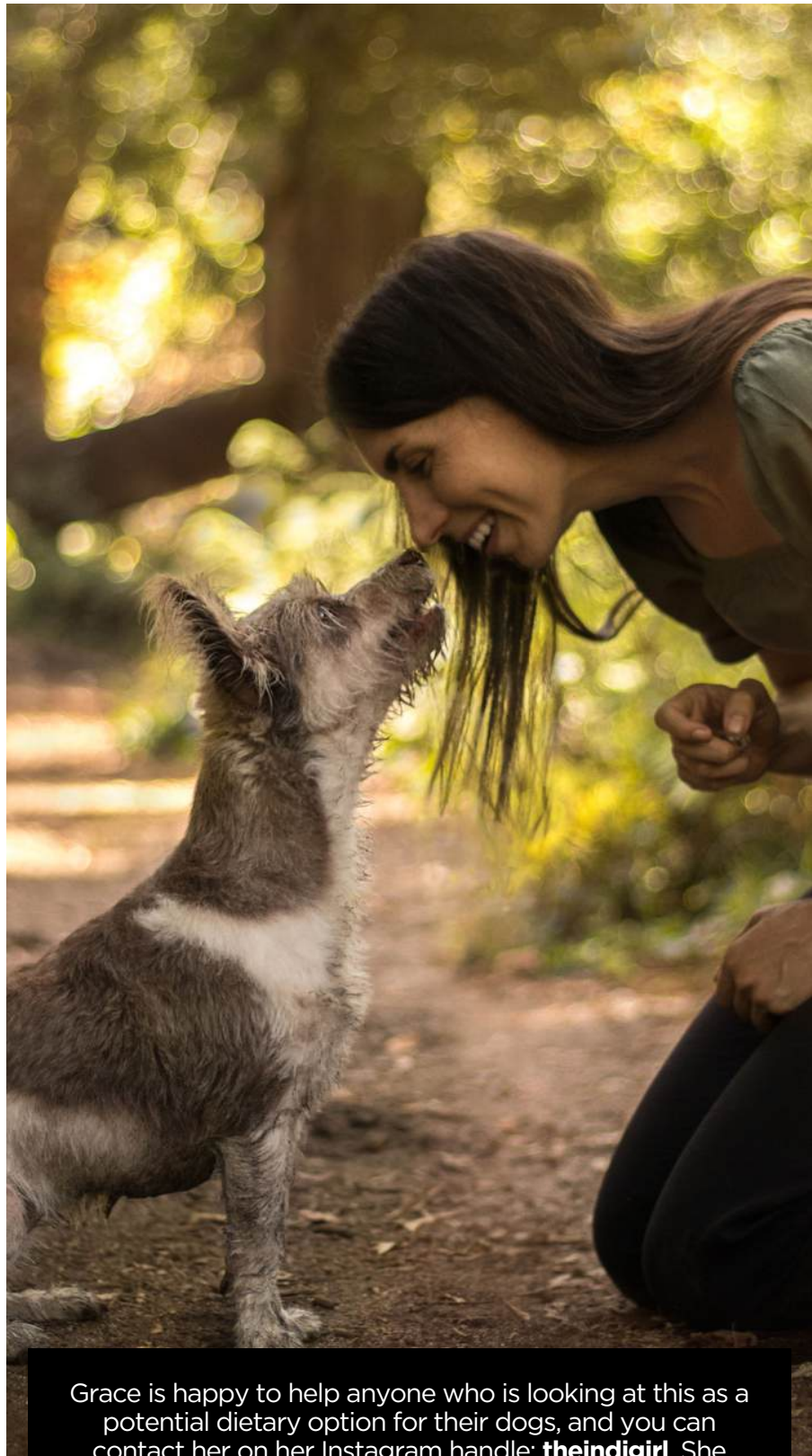
For those considering a vegan lifestyle for themselves and their pets, Grace suggested these resources:

**Challenge 22:** An initiative offering free guidance on transitioning to veganism.

**Veganuary:** Encourages people to try veganism in January and beyond.

**YouTube Speeches:** Gary Yourofsky’s “The Most Important Speech You Will Ever Hear” and Earthling Ed’s “You Will Never Look at Your Life the Same Way Again.”

The opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the editor. This article is to educate about a vegan diet. Pet owners are encouraged to research any dietary changes and discuss them with their veterinarian.



Grace is happy to help anyone who is looking at this as a potential dietary option for their dogs, and you can contact her on her Instagram handle: **theindigirl**. She says, “The transition to veganism is often easier than anticipated, and it’s a compassionate choice that benefits all animals. Be the voice for the voiceless—be kind, go vegan.”



## Addressing Skepticism and Potential Challenges

Plant-based diets for dogs have been shown to be healthy and safe over the long term. Various studies and decades of anecdotal evidence from countries with established vegan dog food markets, such as the UK, support this.

A UK study in 2023 (Dominguez-Oliva) says that while there is ongoing research into the effects of vegetarian and vegan diets on pets, findings to date suggest these diets can be nutritionally adequate for dogs and cats.

While a vegan diet can be nutritionally complete for dogs, it requires careful formulation to meet all their nutritional needs. This is true for any diet, not just vegan ones. A nutritionist we consulted explains that while a vegan diet can be nutritionally balanced, it's important to consider whether dogs are suited to process plant matter.

Digesting plant proteins and carbohydrates can be tough on a dog's system, so anti-inflammatory ingredients are usually preferred. There are also concerns about how dogs on a vegan diet get essential fatty acids like EPA and DHA, which are important for reducing inflammation, supporting heart and brain health, and maintaining eye function.

Dogs can't efficiently convert ALA, a plant-based omega-3, into EPA and DHA. These crucial fatty acids are typically found in marine oils, like fish oil. Since fish aren't part of a vegan diet, dogs rely on plant-based omega-3s, which some scientists believe are not ideal for dogs or humans.



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Cats are fascinating creatures, which many are fortunate to share their lives with. Let's look at five things you may not know about the mysterious felines you share your life with.



# 5 THINGS

YOU'VE ALWAYS  
WANTED TO KNOW  
ABOUT CATS



# 1 WHY DO CATS PURR?

People often assume that a cat purrs because it is happy, however, researchers have found it is much more than that. Cats often purr during labour, after hunting and even when in pain. It has been suggested that the frequency of purring can aid in the healing process and reduce pain.

Purring is also used as a form of communication between cats and other cats or people. There is a difference between a purr when a cat is asking for food and a purr when they are content and settled.

Kittens can purr almost from birth and can usually be heard purring when suckling from their mother.

# 2 WHY DO CATS KNEAD?

When they are first born kneading is a vital tool that cats use when feeding. Treading against the teat stimulates the flow of milk making it easier to suckle.

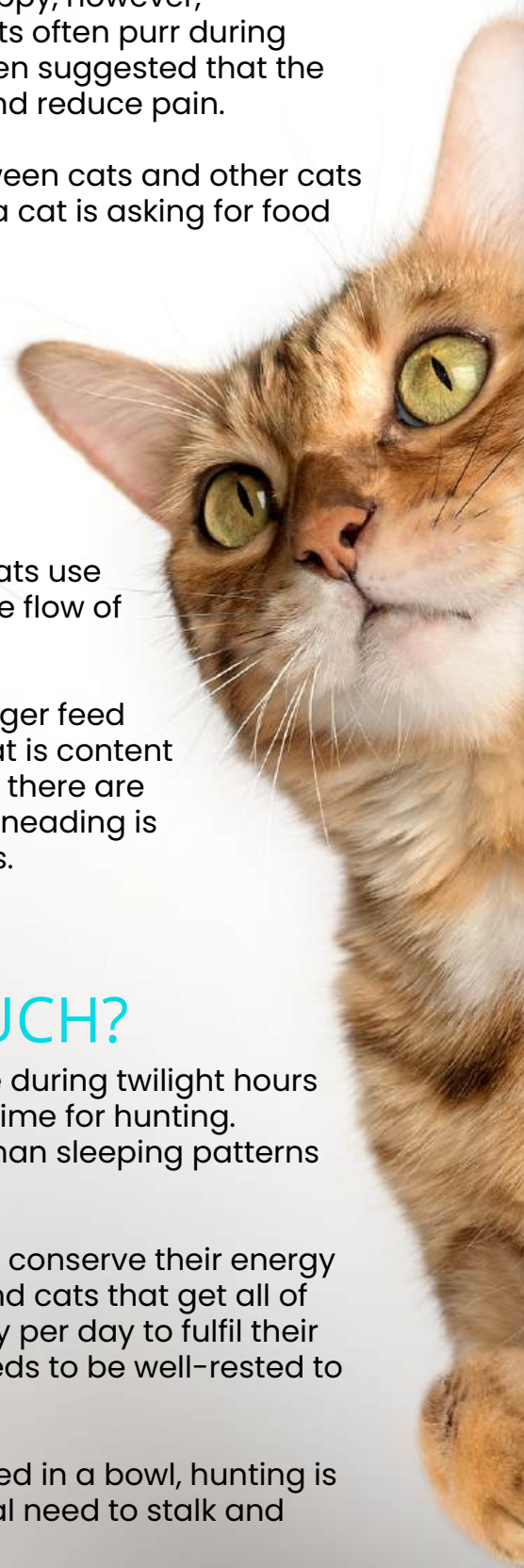
This behaviour often continues even when they no longer feed from their mother. Kneading is usually seen when a cat is content or relaxing and is associated with happy emotions. As there are scent glands between a cats paws, it is thought that kneading is used to spread their scent on familiar people or things.

# 3 WHY DO CATS SLEEP SO MUCH?

Before domestication, cats naturally were most active during twilight hours when the sun was dim as this provided the optimum time for hunting. However, nowadays, many cats have adjusted to human sleeping patterns and can be seen hunting during the day.

The average cat needs 12-16 hours of sleep per day to conserve their energy for their hunting hours. Hunting uses a lot of energy and cats that get all of their food via hunting would need to catch 10 - 20 prey per day to fulfil their nutritional needs as their prey is often small. A cat needs to be well-rested to be able to hunt efficiently.

Although many cats live in a home where food is served in a bowl, hunting is still essential to a happy life. Cats still have a biological need to stalk and catch prey.





# 4 WHO DO CATS HAVE WHISKERS?

Whiskers are highly sensitive, thick hairs that frame a cat's face and are also found on their front legs. They help cats perceive their environment by detecting objects or changes in airflow. When whiskers touch something or sense movement, they vibrate and send signals to the brain, helping cats navigate.

Whiskers are especially useful in the dark, as they can detect subtle changes in airflow when an object is nearby, allowing cats to adjust their movements accordingly. They also protect the face, particularly the eyes, by sensing objects before they come too close, giving the cat time to move away. Additionally, whiskers assist with balance and help cats determine if they can fit through tight spaces.

**BY SASCHA ODAYAR**

COAPE QUALIFIED ANIMAL BEHAVIOURIST

# 5 WHY DO CATS LIKE BOXES?

Cats love boxes and hiding in containers, so it's important to have these available in their home environment. Boxes provide a safe space where cats can retreat, whether they are feeling stressed by external factors or facing conflict with other cats in the home. The enclosed space helps them feel secure and protected.

Boxes also support a cat's natural hunting instincts. Hiding inside gives them a concealed vantage point, allowing them to observe their "prey" and wait for the perfect moment to pounce.

**Cats are truly fascinating creatures. Many of the behaviors we find cute actually serve a purpose and are vital to their survival. So next time your cat displays a playful behavior, consider how it might be helping them thrive in their environment.**



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# ONTSLUIT JOU HOND SE BESTE-SELF!

deur Monique de Jager

# 6

## REDES

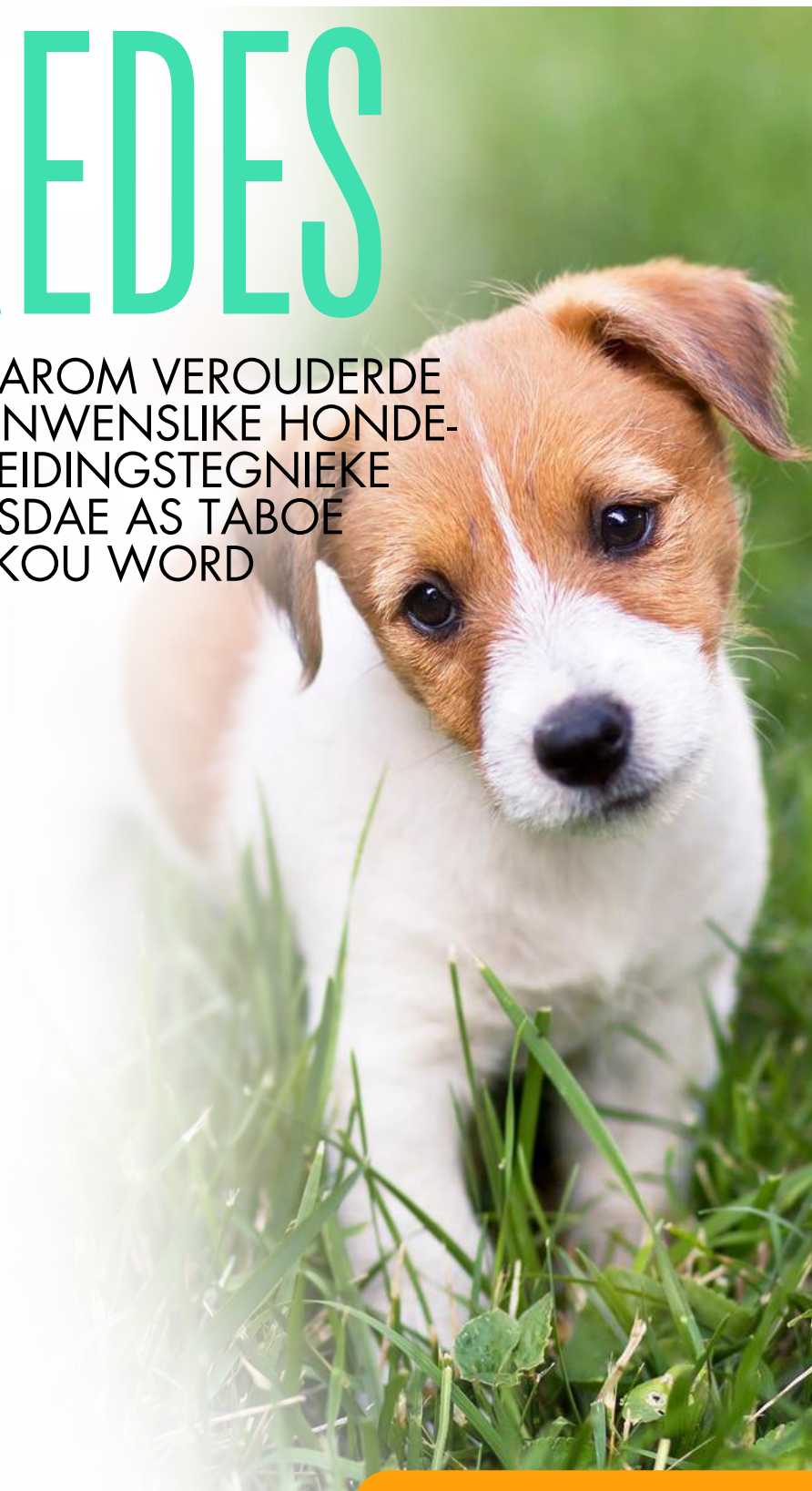
WAAROM VEROUDERDE  
& ONWENSLIKE HONDE-  
OPLEIDINGSTEGNIEKE  
DEESDAE AS TABOE  
BESKOU WORD

### 1 SLEUTELFIGURE

soos Dr. Ian Dunbar, 'n veearts en gedragskundige, het in die 1980's die voordele van diere-vriendelike metodes beklemtoon. Dunbar beweer dat menswaardige benaderings die welstand van die hond bevorder en effektiewe leer bevorder. In 1984 het Karen Pryor in haar boek "Don't Shoot the Dog" die positiewe invloed van klikkers op die leervermoë van honde benadruk. Ons weet vandag dat hierdie metode tot die honde se emosionele toestand spreek, wat verantwoordelik is vir die verwagting om belonings te ontvang.



**Vir ons  
Afrikaanse Lesers**





## 2 EMOSIONELE STELSLS

Sosiale spesies het sewe emosionele stelsels waarvan vier meer positief, en drie as meer negatief beskou kan word. Wanneer een van die drie negatiewe stelsels geaktiveer is gedurende opleiding kan die hond eenvoudig nie nuwe aksies of konsepte leer nie. 'n Vergelyking kan help om hierdie konsepte in perspektief te plaas. Wanneer iemand arachnofobies is, en 'n reuse tarantulla op sy hand in die Franse klas het – sal hy nê gedurende daardie les kan fokus of die nuwe woorde kan aanleer/onthou nie omrede die simpatiese sensustelsel geaktiveer is (dit berei die mens/dier voor vir veg of vlug aksies). Dieselfde beginsel geld vir honde: honde kan nie effektief nuwe gedrag aanleer wanneer hulle onder spanning, intimidasie of vrees toestande verkeer nie - dit is fisiologies onmoontlik.



## 3 WETENSKAPLIKE NAVORSING

bevestig voortdurend die voordele van positiewe leermetodes oor meer tradisionele benaderings wat straf insluit. Studies toon dat positiewe metodes nie net gelykstaande of beter resultate lewer nie, maar ook geen van die langdurige emosionele skade of mediese komplikasies veroorsaak wat dikwels met strafmetodes geassosieer word nie.

'n "Gebalanseerde leermetode" behels die gebruik van beide straf en belonings. Straf word toegepas wanneer die hond nie instruksies volg nie, en belonings word gegee wanneer die hond wel die taak korrek uitvoer. In hondeopleiding sluit strafmetodes die gebruik van sjokhalsbande, intimiderende lyftaal, kwaai stemtoon, en "choke/prong" halsbande in, wat fisiese ongemak veroorsaak om die hond se gedrag te beheer. Hierdie metodes kan die hond se emosionele toestand op die langtermyn benadeel, die leerproses belemmer, en mediese komplikasies veroorsaak soos nekbeserings en velirritasie om etlike voorbeelde te noem. Die gebruik van 'n wurgketting kan lei tot verhoogde spanning en fisieke pyn, dit inhibeer die hond se vermoë om nuwe gedrag aan te leer en belemmer toekomstige positiewe resultate. Wurghalsbande beperk die hond se bewegings en inhibeer hom om afstand te maak wanneer die hond bedreig voel. Dit veroorsaak frustrasie en kan ontaard in oormatige blaf, spring en word gereeld verkeerdelik as aggressie bestempel.

## WAARSKUWINGS TEKENS

Daar is waarskuwingstekens wat kan aandui dat 'n honde-opleidingstegniek moontlik onaanvaarbaar is. Hierdie sluit die gebruik van die Alfa-teorie en onrealistiese beloftes oor resultate in. Wanneer die instansie nie kwalifikasies het nie en ook nie die hond se emosionele toestand in ag neem nie. Metodes wat die hond kan skade aanrig (fisies en emosioneel) is ook bo aan die lys.



Positiewe metodes, ook bekend as “**force-free**” benaderings, fokus op beloning eerder as straf. Hierdie metodes sluit “luring”, “shaping”, en “capturing” in. **Luring** behels die gebruik van lekkernye om die hond se gedrag te rig, **shaping** beloon stap-vir-stap tot die gewenste gedrag aangeleer is, en **capturing** beloon spontane gedrag. Dit is belangrik dat die beloning onmiddellik na die aksie gegee word om die verband tussen aksie en beloning duidelik te maak. Hierdie metode sal ook soms van “jackpotting” gebruik maak. **Jackpotting** is wanneer die hond sukkel met 'n spesifieke taak en dit suksesvol bemeester, kry hy sommer drie lekkernye en of ander prys (verbale prys, speel) in plaas van die gewone standaard beloning. Sodoende maak ons seker die hond verstaan dat dit inderdaad die gewenste aksie en of gedrag was.

## 4 KULTURELE & ETIESE VERANDERINGE

speel 'n belangrike rol in die ontwikkeling van nuwe perspektiewe oor diere, veral honde. Deesdae word honde toenemend gesien as deel van die gesin en as beste vriende eerder as bloot wagdiere. Hierdie kultuurverandering lei tot 'n groter fokus op dierewelsyn en -regte. Mense neem dikwels hulle honde saam op vakansies en in hondevriendelike openbare plekke, wat die toenemende erkenning van die rol van honde in mense se lewens weerspieël.

## 5 PROFESSIONELE ORGANISASIES

soos onder andere die SPCA en COAPE speel 'n kritieke rol in die bevordering van dierewelsyn en die bevordering van beste praktyke in diere-sorg en gedrag. Hierdie organisasies dra by tot verhoogde bewustheid en begrip van die noodsaaklikheid om diere met respek en deernis te behandel.

# 6 BEWUSMAKING & OPLEIDING

sal voortdurend 'n kritieke fokusarea bly, met die doel om meer mense by die hedendaagse standaarde van honde-opleiding te bring.

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- Does training method matter? Evidence for the negative impact of aversive-based methods on companion dog welfare - [LEER MEER HIER](#)
- Dogs are more pessimistic if their owners use two or more aversive training methods - [LEER MEER HIER](#)
- Lead pulling as a welfare concern in pet dogs: What can veterinary professionals learn from current research? - [LEER MEER HIER](#)
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# As jou katjie allergies is vir meer as net die brak langsaan

**Jou troeteldiere dink waarskynlik alreeds dat hulle mense is, maar het jy geweet hulle baie van dieselfde gesondheidsprobleme as mense kan ervaar?**

Een hiervan is allergieë, en dit kan beide katte en honde affekteer. Ons verstaan maar alte goed hoe belangrik jou troeteldier vir jou is, en dis waarom Virseker Troeteldierversekering dekking bied vir:

## Dekking vir allergieverwante veeartsbesoeke

Ons dek veeartsenykundige konsultasies en ondersoeke wat verband hou met allergieë, solank dit nie voorafbestaande toestande is nie. Dekking sluit die volgende in:

### Diagnostiese toetse

Die koste van diagnostiese toetse wat gebruik word om allergieë te identifiseer, soos veltoetse of bloedtoetse.

### Langtermynbestuur

Aangesien allergieë dikwels lewenslange toestande is, bied ons dekking vir die deurlopende bestuur van allergieë.

### Sekondêre toestand-dekking

Allergieë kan lei tot sekondêre probleme soos velinfeksies of oorinfeksies. Ons planne dek die behandeling van hierdie verwante toestande.



### Behandelingsdekking Verskeie behandelings vir allergieë, insluitend:

- Medikasie soos antihistamiene of kortikosteroïede
- Allergie-inspuitings of immunoterapie
- Aktuele behandelings vir velirritasies

### Voorkomende sorg-voordele

Voordele wat kan help met allergievoorkomings soos vlooi-, bosluis- en parasietvoorkoming (belangrik vir die voorkoming van vlooi-allergie-dermatitis).

**So hou jou vierpootvriend veilig en gesond met  
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**Sluit nou aan!**

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# PARROT COMMUNICATION

## MIMICRY OR LANGUAGE?

*We are all familiar with the amazing ability of birds to mimic various sounds, including the human voice. Our fascination with this ability remains one of the most common catalysts for the decision to keep a bird as a pet. Traditionally it was believed that while birds could become superb imitators, they were doing just that, copying sounds without understanding their meanings.*

Several different types of birds are known for their talking abilities. The African Grey, with its deep, serious voice is arguably the supreme talking bird. Amazons may also develop an enormous vocabulary and speak in a sweeter, more comical voice. They are also talented singers. Eclectus, Lories, Macaws, Cockatoos and even the humble Budgerigar are also prized for their vocal talents. In this second group, however, some individuals will excel and others learn very little human speech. Hen budgerigars, cockatiels and cockatoos tend to speak less than their male counterparts.

Mynah birds, Crows, Ravens etc. will also talk well and are often less shy about using their voices in front of strangers than the sometimes temperamental parrots.

There is an enormous variation in talking ability even between birds of the same species. Some baby parrots will say their first word before weaning and some will only learn a few whistles throughout their whole lives.

Although many bird owners will swear that their pets know exactly what they mean when they verbalise, until fairly recently no scientific research had been performed to test this theory.

It is very easy for a lay person to believe that their bird is communicating effectively while, in fact the bird is simply following clues in body language or repeating a learned sequence of sounds, as in (Owner removing cage cover) "Good Morning Pumpkin" (Owner placing food bowl in cage) "Mmm Yummy Food".

**Dr Irene Pepperberg**, an American researcher into the evolution of thought has spent over thirty years working with African Grey parrots and studying their ability to actually speak with intent and understanding. Alex, Dr Pepperberg's first subject was a very ordinary bird, bought from a pet shop and could use over 100 vocal labels for different objects, actions and colours, could distinguish between different shapes and textures and even make up his own descriptive words to name new objects.



“Nothing that does not talk  
Will enter this house”

*Gabriel Garcia Marquez*



**By Dr Dorianne Elliott Dip Vet Nur BVSc**  
Avian and Exotic Animal Veterinarian  
Valley Farm Animal Hospital



*All parrots have different quirky personalities and Alex was apparently quite bossy, ordering “his” humans around and also praising and berating the other birds in the lab in turn during their lessons.*

As closely as can be approximated, intelligent parrots seem to have similar emotional development to that of a human four year old (which explains the occasional tantrums and sulking fits!)

Dr Pepperberg's research has shown that birds learn most readily by observing interaction and talking between other members of the flock (in this case, the human researchers).

Tapes and videos proved useless as teaching materials with the birds learning only the sounds made by the researchers as they set up the recordings.

This teaching technique, where the parrot observes a human model interacting with and rewarding a human “rival” and thus learns appropriate responses is named the “model vs rival” technique and shows some promise for assisting the education of neurodivergent and non-verbal human children as well.

Alex, Dr Pepperberg's original test subject sadly passed away in 2007 at the age of 31 years from an acute heart condition or stroke but he is succeeded by several other “ordinary” parrots that have shown similar abilities in cognition and language acquisition.

One of the most fascinating interactions to observe is where several parrots, or parrots and other pets such as dogs use human language in order to communicate with one another without a person being involved in the conversation.

Parrots will often call dogs and order them about using human words and birds have been observed leading whole conversations with one another.

Many owners are saddened by their bird's fondness for mimicking only the voice of their spouse. African Greys especially are fond of mimicking the voice of their least favourite owner (perceived to be a rival in their affections), in order to attract the attention of their favoured human.

I must say in conclusion: as a veterinarian who often admits avian patients to our hospital, one can gain a fascinating (and sometimes embarrassing) insight into the home life of a client by the things said by their birds while in our care. So just remember that old saying: ***“Live as though you could sell the family parrot”.***







# BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

## WHAT IS A FOSTER PARENT?

A foster parent is somebody who is willing to give temporary care and housing to one of our dogs or cats while we search for a forever home for that pet.

They assist Dogtown in networking and advertising their foster pet and then refer any interested parties to Dogtown to go through the official adoption process.

Foster parents shower their foster pets with love and affection.

Foster parents are matched with a suitable dog/cat in our care which they then take into their home and provide them with a loving, family environment while we search for a forever home for them.

## DOGTOWN HAS 3 TYPES OF FOSTERING

### SHORT TERM

These are usually emergency fostering where a pet needs to be placed for a few hours or a few days until we are able to take that pet into Dogtown.

### LONG TERM

The foster will commit to fostering the pet for weeks or months, until we find a suitable forever home.

### END OF LIFE CARE

This is a very special type of foster which is specifically focused on our senior dogs and dogs who are terminally ill. Our dream for them is to spend the remainder of their time, whether it be weeks, months or years, in a loving home as part of a family.

[CLICK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A DOGTOWN FOSTER PARENT](#)

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# The Rainbow of Dog Poop

written by Retha van der Walt

## Your Guide to Dog Poop Colour & What it means - **Part 2**

*Diarrhea is often just an inconvenience, but it can also indicate underlying health issues that need attention, ranging from minor dietary indiscretions to more serious health concerns. While the symptoms of diarrhea are fairly obvious (runny poo), your dog's poop can tell you a lot about your dog's diarrhea, how to treat it and when it warrants a vet visit:*



[www.pawsomeraw.com](http://www.pawsomeraw.com)







## WHAT THE COLOUR MEAN

**Green Poop:** If you spot greenish stool, don't panic! It's often just a sign that your dog has been munching on grass. However, if the green colour sticks around, it could point to a gallbladder issue or other digestive problems. If this hue persists, it's best to check in with your vet to rule out any serious concerns.

**Blue Poop:** Blue poop is a big red flag and usually means your dog has ingested rat poison. Many rat poisons are dyed blue for safety reasons. If you see blue poop, rush to the vet immediately. Bring a stool sample if you can for a quick diagnosis.

**Orange / Yellow Poop:** This sunny shade often points to liver disease or issues with the biliary system. Since the liver plays a crucial role in digestion and detoxification, persistent orange or yellow poop means it's time for a vet visit to check your dog's liver function and overall health.

**Red Poop:** Seeing red in your dog's stool can be alarming. It might be something minor, like a small injury from straining, or something more serious like an inflamed intestinal tract or parvovirus. If red poop is a regular occurrence, it's important to have your vet check it out to rule out conditions like colitis or gastrointestinal ulcers.

**Black/Tarry Stool:** This is a serious one. Black or tarry stool often indicates bleeding in the upper gastrointestinal tract. It could be a sign of ulcers or other internal bleeding conditions, so immediate veterinary attention is needed.

**Grey/Greasy Poop:** If your dog's poop looks grey and greasy, it might indicate a problem with the pancreas, such as pancreatitis. This condition can be quite painful and requires urgent veterinary care.

**White Poop:** White, rice-like grains in your dog's stool are a telltale sign of tapeworms. These parasites are usually picked up from fleas or contaminated soil and can be treated effectively with deworming medication. White chalky poop can also be caused by foods high in calcium, including raw diets.

## WHEN TO GO TO THE VET

Most of the time, mild dog diarrhea clears up on its own and isn't something to worry about. Simple diet changes and home remedies usually do the trick. However, there are certain symptoms that could indicate a more serious problem.

Here's a handy list to help you know when it's time to call the vet:

## BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

If your dog is lethargic, has pale gums, or can't keep food and water down along with having diarrhea, it's definitely time for a vet visit.



## BLOOD IN THE STOOL

While a few streaks of blood might just be from straining or minor irritation, severe bloody diarrhea or black, tarry stools can mean an infection or internal bleeding. This needs immediate veterinary attention. If your puppy has diarrhea with blood, it could be a sign of parvovirus, which is also an emergency.

## APPETITE LOSS

It's not uncommon for a dog to skip a meal or two if they're feeling off, but if they refuse to eat for longer, especially if they seem lethargic, it's a sign that something more serious might be going on.

## STRANGE BOWEL MOVEMENT PATTERNS

If your dog's diarrhea lasts for several days, it could be a sign of a significant digestive issue that needs veterinary care.

## DEHYDRATION

Diarrhea can lead to dehydration, which can damage your dog's kidneys. To check for dehydration, gently pinch the skin at the back of your dog's neck. It should spring back right away. If it takes a moment to return, your dog might be dehydrated.

## SPECIAL CASES

Puppies, small dogs, senior dogs, and dogs with existing health conditions (like intestinal parasites, diabetes, Cushing's disease, or cancer) are more vulnerable. Diarrhea can quickly cause serious problems in these dogs due to rapid dehydration and nutrient loss. Early veterinary intervention is crucial.

**Keep an eye out for these signs and take action quickly to ensure your furry friend gets the care they need.**

**EMAIL: [orders@pawsomeraw.com](mailto:orders@pawsomeraw.com)**

For more information on top grade, premium quality nutrition for pets, **Contact Pawsome Raw**. We have Petfood nutritionists that will assist you with advice on dealing with your pets' allergies.

## Essential Tests for Chronic Diarrhea

- **Parasite Test:** In-clinic tests can sometimes give false negatives. It's better to request a reference lab test and use a formalin-containing vial for stool collection. The two basic tests recommended are:
  - Faecal Flotation Test
  - ELISA Antigen Test
- **Faecal Smear:** This quick clinic test can identify specific pathogens like *Clostridium*, which can sometimes cause bloody diarrhea. Other pathogens can also be recognized with this test.
- **Blood Tests and Pancreatic Function:** These tests include an organ chemistry screen, a complete blood count, pancreatic markers, or a tropical disease panel, especially if you live in a warmer climate or have recently travelled with your pet.
- **X-rays or Ultrasound:** These imaging techniques are used to check for abnormalities, foreign objects, and tumours in the intestinal tract.
- **Bacterial Culture:** This test checks for the presence of pathogens such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, or pathogenic strains of *E. coli* in the intestines.

## Additional Tests to Consider if Diarrhea Persists

- **Faecal Cultures:** Sometimes done at the first vet visit if a dog is very ill or later on if there is no response to treatment.
- **Hormone Testing:** Testing for hormonal disorders like Addison's disease and hypothyroidism should be done if your dog has recurrent digestive issues.
- **Diet Allergy Tests:** Testing for allergies can help manage your dog's food hypersensitivity, but it doesn't address the root cause if the immune system is overwhelmed. While eliminating certain components from their diet can help relieve acute diarrhea in the short term, it might lead to nutritional deficiencies and increased diet hypersensitivity if core issues like toxicity, a deficient kibble-based diet, vaccine side effects, and stress aren't addressed.



South African  
Guide-Dogs  
Association

# Raise A Future Assistance Dog And Positively Impact A Life Forever

Are you looking to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals with visual impairments, physical disabilities, and children on the Autism Spectrum? Consider becoming a Volunteer Puppy Raiser for the South African Guide Dogs Association.

As a Puppy Raiser, you'll have the heartwarming opportunity to receive a puppy from the Association at 8 weeks old and care for them until they are about 16 months old. You'll be able to attend weekly training sessions and take your furry friend to public spaces to help them adapt and gain real-life experiences.

During this time, the Association will cover all food and vet bills, and you'll receive guidance and support from a dedicated puppy-raising supervisor. Should you need to go away, your supervisor will ensure that the puppy is taken care of in a temporary home.

If you would like to make a difference, please reach out to [AlidaP@guidedog.org.za](mailto:AlidaP@guidedog.org.za) or visit [www.guidedog.org.za](http://www.guidedog.org.za) for more information on how to become a Puppy Raiser.

To become a Puppy Raiser, you should be at least 18 years old, have a fondness for dogs, demonstrate patience, and be physically fit with flexible hours. Your commitment will be vital, as it can last up to 16 months. Joining the Volunteer Puppy Raising Programme means you'll be contributing to the SA Guide-Dogs Association for the Blind's vision of creating a nation where every individual with visual and physical disabilities can embrace freedom and independence.



by Dr Paul van der Merwe  
President - South African Veterinary Association

# VETERINARY MENTAL HEALTH

## How It Impacts Animal and Human Health

**Veterinarians can be grouped into two categories: those who care for companion animals, ranging from pets like rabbits to horses, and those who ensure the health and welfare of animals we use for food production, such as dairy cows and chickens. While their roles may differ, both groups play a critical role in animal health, which in turn, affects human well-being.**

It may come as a surprise to learn that not only do veterinarians play a direct role in the health and welfare of animals, but humans too. Although veterinarians may not directly deliver health services to humans, ensuring your pet or production animals are healthy is key to making sure humans will not get diseases from animals and that the food, that comes from animals, is healthy, wholesome and safe.

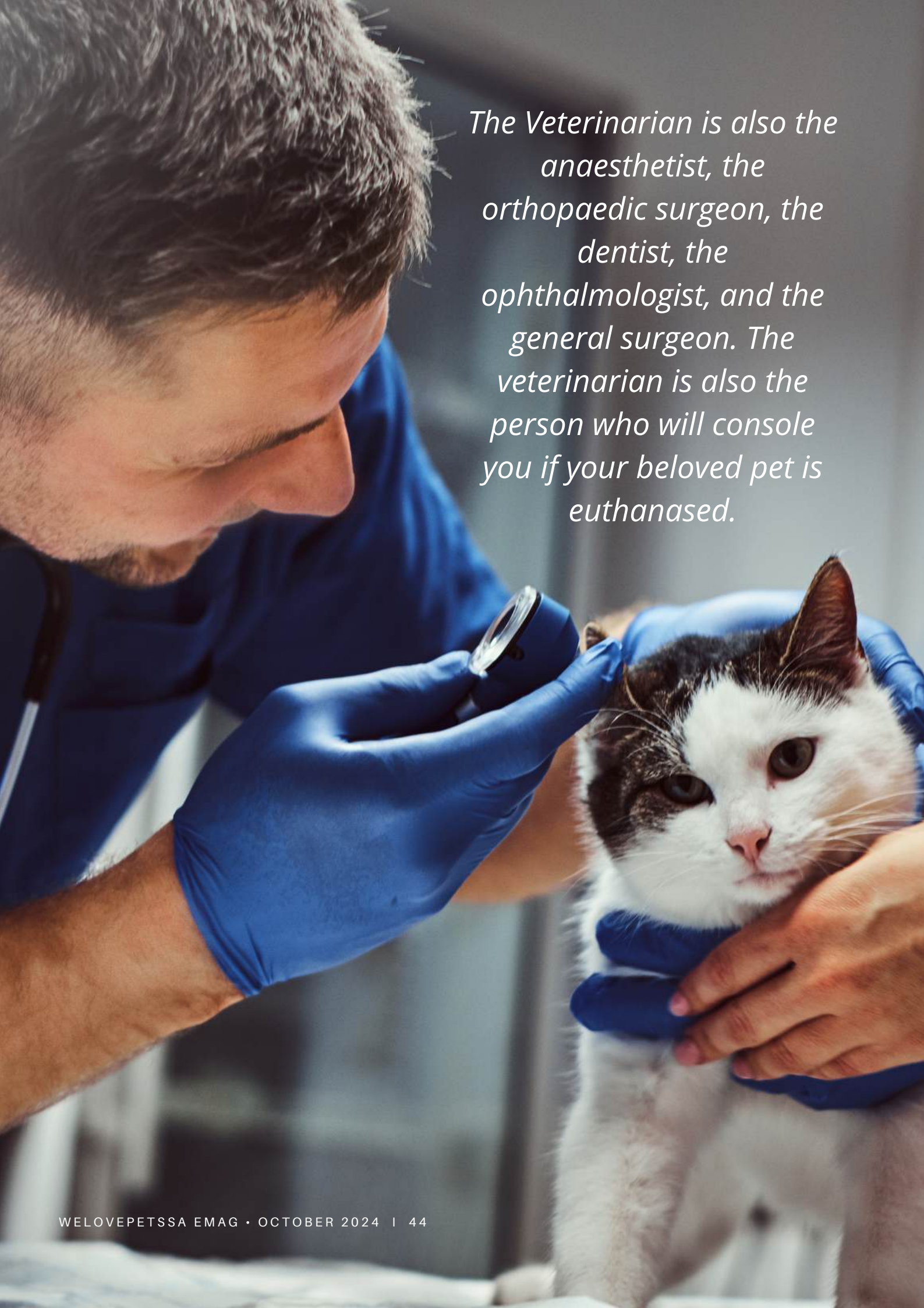
It's well-known that companion animals are beneficial for our mental health and well-being. They provide emotional support, reduce stress, and offer companionship. Veterinarians ensure that our pets remain healthy, safeguarding the animal's welfare and the well-being of pet owners. However, veterinarians themselves often face enormous stress, which can impact their mental health.

Why do we say that?

### The Financial And Emotional Strain On Veterinarians

Becoming a veterinarian is challenging. The degree is one of the most demanding and expensive to pursue. Many students graduate with significant debt, which can take years to repay. Despite what many people think, veterinarians don't necessarily earn large salaries, and setting up a practice requires a considerable financial investment. Unlike doctors, who may only need a consulting room, veterinarians must equip their practices with expensive medical equipment such as X-ray machines, anaesthesia equipment, and blood analysis tools, not to mention operating theatres and kennels. In addition, they must employ receptionists, nurses, and animal handlers.



A close-up photograph of a male veterinarian with short brown hair, wearing blue scrubs and blue nitrile gloves. He is focused on examining the ear of a black and white cat using a handheld otoscope. The cat is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression. The background is a soft-focus clinical setting.

*The Veterinarian is also the  
anaesthetist, the  
orthopaedic surgeon, the  
dentist, the  
ophthalmologist, and the  
general surgeon. The  
veterinarian is also the  
person who will console  
you if your beloved pet is  
euthanased.*



This financial pressure, combined with the emotional toll of working with animals and their owners, often leads to stress, burnout, and even depression. Veterinarians face the added challenge of providing a wide range of medical services—from routine check-ups and vaccinations to complex surgeries. They are expected to offer comprehensive care, often 24/7, and deal with emotionally difficult situations like euthanasia.

It may be good to remember that even if he or she does not set up their own practice, the person they work for or locum at, had to do it and may still be paying off on that, including their own study debt.

## Financial Pressures And Poor Remuneration

Veterinarians, particularly those working in South Africa, face financial difficulties that are a significant source of stress. A report by the World Organisation for Animal Health on Veterinary Services in South Africa, identified poor remuneration as a key reason why many veterinarians leave the country to work abroad. This trend affects both public and private sectors, with veterinarians in private practices struggling to maintain profitable businesses while offering affordable services.

Being under financial stress and trying to “survive” often plays out in a breakdown in relationships with colleagues, leading to competition between practices and damaging professional relationships. Over time, this contributes to the mental health crisis within the profession, with many veterinarians experiencing depression, burnout, post-traumatic stress and sleep disturbances. In South Africa, approximately 38% of veterinarians show clinical symptoms of depression, with younger veterinarians being the most affected.

## Client Expectations

Another major factor impacting the mental health of veterinarians is client expectations. It is often expected that a veterinarian must see your animal when you, without an appointment, arrive at the clinic, but are we not more patient to sit and wait for a doctor even though we made an appointment for a specific time? Furthermore, it is then expected of your veterinarian to render an all-inclusive service,

often with specialist care such as surgery, eye examinations and dentistry, hospitalise your animal if necessary and at the end dispense medicines normally done by a pharmacy in human medicine. That service is also often expected 24/7, every day of the year. Is your expectation for human health care the same? Are we not more than willing to take our children to another facility, even another town for some specialist services such as x-rays, sonars, dentistry and operations?

These three factors are inseparable from each other, but the stress they bring to veterinarians has a huge impact on their mental health, causing veterinarians to be one of the professions with the highest suicide rates.

In a survey, it was found that about 38% of veterinarians met the minimum cut-off for clinical symptoms of depression. If taken there are about 4000 veterinarians registered in South Africa, then about 1520 suffer some level of depression. Of this group, about 64% reported experiencing suicidal or self-harm thoughts, which is about 973 veterinarians. About 7%, or 280 of veterinarians probably have Severe Major Depression, of which 218 of them reported thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Most concerning though, is that about 55 veterinarians experience these thoughts (nearly) every day.

***Although these trends were found across all ages, it is found that young veterinarians who just graduated and who need to complete their one year of Compulsory Community Veterinary service, are most affected.***

## The Burden On Young Veterinarians

Newly graduated veterinarians face unique challenges. After six years of intense study, many enter compulsory community service, often in rural areas with limited resources. This sudden shift from a supportive university environment to a more isolated and demanding role can lead to stress and feelings of inadequacy. Not only is the jump from being a student in a protected environment huge, but also the realisation of real-world responsibilities.

These concerns have been recognised and a mentorship program has been developed and instituted to help new graduates transition into the workforce. Each mentee who signed up for the program is allocated a mentor who is a veterinarian in clinical practice as close as possible to the mentee who can assist them with all support issues, including clinical services. The program has shown major successes but is unfortunately also very expensive and the SA Veterinary Association is urgently looking to take hands with supporters of the program. While this program has been successful in providing practical and emotional support, it lacks a focus on mental health. Plans are underway to integrate a resilience program, though this is dependent on funding.

***We need to equip as many veterinarians as possible to look not only after themselves, but also colleagues and other members of the veterinary team, the principle of care to the caregivers.***

## How Can You Help Your Veterinarian?

As pet owners, we can play a role in supporting veterinarians' mental health by managing our expectations. Ensure your requests are reasonable and understand the limitations veterinarians face. Discuss fees openly, plan for emergencies by considering pet insurance, and

take responsibility for your pet's health through regular vaccinations, parasite control, and routine check-ups.

It's also important to trust your veterinarian's expertise. While a quick Google search might give you some answers, a veterinarian's years of training provide a deeper understanding of the complex causes and treatments for your pet's health issues.

## Supporting The Veterinary Workforce

South Africa needs a healthy, vibrant veterinary workforce to ensure the health and well-being of both animals and humans. By recognizing the challenges veterinarians face and adjusting our expectations, we can help alleviate some of their stress. For the love of your pet, and the health of the veterinary profession, support your veterinarian however you can. If you're interested in contributing more directly, consider reaching out to the South African Veterinary Association to learn how you can help support initiatives like the mentorship and resilience programs.

***Our pets and food supply depend on a healthy veterinary workforce. Let's all play a part in making sure veterinarians are supported and appreciated for the essential work they do.***





# PETS AS THERAPY SA

*ENRICHING LIVES THROUGH ANIMAL COMPANIONSHIP*



## Volunteers Needed

Join our team and make a difference in your community!



We are looking for dogs and cats that are happy, healthy, friendly, and confident. They should enjoy interacting with strangers and be comfortable in new environments.

We are looking for handlers who can display confidence in handling their dog/cat in various situations.

**ATTENTION!**

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# A call for Change

## The Hidden Crisis in South Africa's Animal Welfare

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South Africa's animal welfare sector is in crisis. Despite 150 years of effort, this crucial area remains completely unregulated, leaving the country's animals vulnerable and unprotected. At the heart of this issue are the men and women responsible for upholding the Animals Protection Act of 1962 — the animal welfare officers and inspectors. But their numbers are shockingly low, and their training inadequate to prepare them for the challenges of their role.

The exact number of inspectors is unknown, but rough estimates suggest there are fewer than 250 across the country. This includes inspectors from organizations like the SPCA, which, despite having 70 societies, may have no more than 100 inspectors. Other groups like the Animal Anti-Cruelty League, Horse Care Units, and various independent organizations contribute just a handful more. In a country the size of South Africa, this shortage is alarming.

### **The Role & Function of an Animal Welfare Officer**

An Animal Welfare Officer/Inspector, if authorised under the hand of a Magistrate is charged to, in that district, uphold and enforce the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 in that

district. This would include various associated legislation and regulations as it pertains to animals and their welfare.

There is also great emphasis on the role of an Animal Welfare Officer/Inspector to educate owners and communities on good animal husbandry practices and acceptable primary health care requirements for the various species of animals they encounter.

Authorised Animal welfare officers (AWO) are law enforcement officers. One could go as far as saying they are "Animal police". They respond to complaints, educate where needed, issue warnings that must be complied with and where required, they may confiscate animals and lay criminal charges against offenders.

Animals and their welfare are indicative of potential challenges in their environment, society as a whole or in private homes. Their welfare largely functions as the proverbial "canary in the mine" highlighting potential dangers or threats. There's a well-established link between animal cruelty and human violence, and AWOs are often the first to spot signs of deeper problems within homes or communities. But the system meant to support these officers is broken.



## The Way Forward

Currently, there is no recognised qualification for AWOs in South Africa. Training is unregulated, often conducted "in-house" with no standards, oversight, or accreditation. Some organisations even offer online training, claiming to produce "qualified" inspectors. This leaves both officers and the public in a vulnerable position, where those enforcing animal welfare laws may lack the necessary skills or authority.

Recognising this crisis, the **Agency for Human and Animal Welfare and Empowerment (AHAWE)** has stepped in to lead the charge for change. AHAWE recently launched a public survey, which confirmed the urgent need for the establishment of a professional animal welfare authority. The response was overwhelming, and the results, now in their final stages of analysis, will soon be published.

AHAWE is now spearheading the development of a formal, standardised qualification for animal welfare officers in South Africa. This qualification will align with several SAQA unit standards and will be taught by experienced AWOs who are certified facilitators and assessors. The aim is to create a respected and recognised career path for AWOs, providing them with the skills and recognition they deserve for their vital work.

Animal welfare in South Africa is at a turning point. It's time to end the ego-driven, fragmented approach that has dominated the sector for too long. With standardised training and a unified authority, we have the opportunity to create real, sustainable change that benefits both animals and society as a whole. The future of South Africa's animals depends on it.

## The question is... Will we seize this moment?







[info@ahawe.co.za](mailto:info@ahawe.co.za)

## WHO is AHawe?

**AGENCY FOR HUMAN AND ANIMAL  
WELFARE AND EMPOWERMENT**

AHawe is a registered Non-Profit Company (NPC 2017/065191/08) dedicated to the welfare of animals and the communities they live alongside. Recognising the inextricable bond between humans and animals, AHawe believes in the moral responsibility to protect not only animals but also the most vulnerable in society — including children, the elderly, and the voiceless.

At its core, AHawe values integrity, transparency, and collaboration, working without bias, fear, or favour alongside like-minded organisations and stakeholders across the animal welfare sector. Their mission is to provide unwavering support, education, and services to both formal and informal animal welfare groups, rescues, shelters, and the public.

AHawe's team consists of experienced and qualified animal welfare inspectors, offering "Inspector for Hire" services to assist smaller organisations in enforcing animal welfare laws and responding to reports of cruelty and neglect. They are also committed to continuous education through public campaigns, inspector training, and outreach initiatives, ensuring that animal welfare standards are upheld and improved across South Africa.

In addition to hands-on support, AHawe provides advisory services to both the public and corporate sectors, helps with fundraising efforts, assists in sourcing proper animal handling equipment, and offers legal support in prosecuting offenders under the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962.

Guided by the motto "To Serve and Protect," AHawe is a vital force in promoting the welfare of both humans and animals, striving for a safer, more compassionate society for all.



# AHawe

Agency for Human and Animal Welfare and Empowerment





# MICHELLE WOLMARANS

**FOUNDER & DIRECTOR OF AHawe**

for local communities. She spearheaded the ACT-ion pages to educate children on animal welfare.

Michelle is a certified facilitator, assessor, and moderator, and has developed training materials based on SAQA standards to empower those in the animal welfare sector.

Michelle Wolmarans is a passionate advocate for animal welfare with over 40 years of experience in animal care, training, and protection. As the founder and director of AHawe, Michelle has dedicated her life to improving the standards of animal welfare in South Africa.

Michelle's impressive background includes serving on National and Provincial KUSA committees, earning provincial colours for dog sports, and working closely with professionals like Professor Odendaal and Dr. Louis Nel to establish the South African Companion Animal Institute (SACAI).

She has held key roles in community outreach, including chairing the Oudtshoorn SPCA, launching mobile veterinary clinics, sterilization drives, and educational programs

As the founder of AHawe and having been directly exposed to the cruelty and suffering of animals for years, at all levels in society as an inspector, as well as experiencing firsthand the challenges that animal welfare organizations or groups face on a daily basis, Michelle has committed her life to do everything possible to ensure that the fractured animal welfare sector can heal and become regulated. That a formal recognized qualification becomes available to animal welfare officers / inspectors and to our youth as a formal career option in South Africa, affording them the recognition, dignity and respect they deserve, and to continue with targeted public awareness and education campaigns for owners/guardians of animals to ensure that they are adequately informed and equipped to see to the sustainable health and welfare of their animals.



*“In pursuit of WELFARE and JUSTICE  
through EDUCATION and TRAINING”  
Michelle Wolmarans*

# Genetic Eye Disorders

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in canines

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***Our pup's eyes can tell us so much about what they're feeling-whether they're wide open and alert or slowly drooping as they drift to sleep. Unfortunately, these vital organs that our pups use to navigate the world are also susceptible to hereditary eye disorders.***

Out of all the genetic disorders in canines, eye-related diseases have been described and characterised the best. This is due to the fact that the eye is an easily accessible organ, making it easier to identify any irregularities. At the time of writing, 30 different mutations have been found, concerning all sorts of genetic canine eye diseases. Let's take a closer look into how the eye functions:

Light enters the eye and passes across the cornea, a clear, protective layer of the eye, and is then controlled by the lens, which can change its shape and focus light to form the clear image seen by the dog. At the back of the eye is a light-sensitive layer known as the retina, onto which the focused light goes. This gets converted into electrical or neural signals, which move across the optic nerve until it reaches the brain. The cells known as photoreceptors, which are located in the retina, can detect light and affect the perception of colour. These cells, namely rods and cones, provide our dogs with vision in dim or limited light (rods) as well as bright light or for seeing colours (cones). Behind the retina, there lies what is known as the vascular layer of the eye- the choroid. This layer provides the retina with oxygen and the nutrients it needs to function. Irregularities in any of the structures of the eye can result in vision disturbances and abnormalities.

To find out if your pup is at risk, have a read through our overview of some eye-related conditions:



## **PROGRESSIVE RETINAL ATROPHY (PRA)**

Progressive retinal atrophy is a hereditary eye disorder that affects the retina. The affected dog will lose their vision over a period of time as the photoreceptors weaken, with most dogs becoming fully blind within two years from the first symptoms. The rods usually break down first, causing night blindness, followed by the cones, resulting in the dog becoming completely blind. PRA can affect dogs at any age, from puppies to adults. The early-onset version is sometimes referred to as retinal dysplasia. PRA can affect many dog breeds, which includes (but is not limited to): *Golden Retrievers, Dachshunds, Spaniels, Irish Setters, Corgis, Chinese Cresteds, Shetland Sheepdogs, Huskies, Samoyeds, Schnauzers, American Pit Bull Terriers and American Staffordshire Terriers.*

## GONIODYGENESIS & GLAUCOMA

Glaucoma refers to a group of conditions that increases pressure of the eye, damaging the optic nerve and causing loss of vision. There are several types of glaucoma, with primary glaucoma being presumed to be genetic in several dog breeds. Primary glaucoma can occur in two forms:

1. **Angle-closure glaucoma:** This happens when an abnormal or narrow opening in the eye prevents fluid from draining properly.
2. **Open-angle glaucoma:** This occurs without a narrowed or closed opening.

The most widespread cause of primary glaucoma in dogs is goniodysgenesis, where abnormal fibres block the eye's ability to drain fluid. *Breeds like the Flat Coated Retriever, American Cocker Spaniel, Bassett Hound and Boston Terrier are more prone to glaucoma.* In particular, *Great Danes* have a high chance of inheriting glaucoma due to goniodysgenesis.

Another type of glaucoma, **primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG)**, has been well-studied in Beagles. A specific genetic variant is linked to the disorder, where affected dogs develop pressure that is very high, between 8 and 16 months of age, despite having normal drainage openings of the eye.

- **Primary cataracts** are passed on from the parents to the puppies.
- **Secondary cataracts** develop due to other eye conditions, such as PRA and glaucoma.

In most cases of primary hereditary cataracts, it will appear in both eyes and progresses over time which leads to the dog becoming blind. Cloudy or bluish-grey eyes are the first tell-tale symptom of heritable cataracts. The first symptoms will appear anywhere between a few weeks to a few months, resulting in the pup being blind by age two or three.

Things such as exposure to UV light or antioxidant levels also influences cataracts.

*Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Boston Terriers and French Bulldogs* are among the breeds in which hereditary cataracts are inherited in an autosomal-recessive pattern\*.

## CANINE MULTIFOCAL RETINOPATHY

Canine Multifocal Retinopathy (CMR) is a genetic eye disorder caused by mutations in the BEST1 gene, which produces the protein crucial for the proper formation of the retina's pigment epithelium.

## PRIMARY LENS LUXATION (PLL)

PLL is a hereditary disorder where the ligaments holding the lens break down, causing it to become dislocated. This can lead to partial (subluxation) or complete (luxation) dislocation of the lens, which results in the dog having problems with their vision or becoming blind. Terriers and terrier mixed breeds are more susceptible to the condition.

## HEREDITARY CATARACTS (HC)

A canine hereditary cataract causes the lens in a dog's eye to become cloudy, which affects the dog's vision and can possibly lead to blindness. Cataracts can be divided into two groups, primary and secondary.





CMR has three types: **CMR1**, **CMR2**, and **CMR3**. While each type involves various genetic mutations, they all share the same symptoms. These include lesions of varying sizes on the retina, which may lead to minor retinal folding. Symptoms typically appear early in the pup's life, with little or no progression after the dog is one year old.

## ACHROMATOPSIA

Achromatopsia, also called 'canine day blindness', is a condition where dogs find it difficult to see in bright sunlight. In full sunlight, their sight becomes blurry, but it improves as the light dims. The disorder was first found in humans, but we now know that it affects *Labrador Retrievers* and *German Shepherds*. It is caused by issues in the cones of the retina. This disorder manifests as reduced vision, shaking eyes (pendular nystagmus), trouble seeing colours (colour blindness), and sensitivity to light (photophobia). It is inherited in an autosomal recessive pattern (a pattern of genetic inheritance where the offspring inherits two copies of a mutated gene, one from each parent).

### Where can I get genetic health tests done?

At ZooOmics we provide both health and colour testing as well as DNA profiles for both canine and feline. We utilise innovative technology for our mutation testing and provide you with certificates for all testing done, which can be submitted to registrars and breed societies.

Contact us at [info@ZooOmics.co.za](mailto:info@ZooOmics.co.za) for any enquiries on sample collection, shipping of samples, sample processing and services offered. Alternatively visit our website at [www.zooomics.co.za](http://www.zooomics.co.za) to download our sample submission form.



## COLLIE EYE ANOMALY (CEA)

Collie eye anomaly (CEA) is an inherited eye condition which is caused by irregularities in the choroid. The condition is known to affect *Border Collies*, *Australian Shepherds* and *Shetland Sheepdogs*. A common tell-tale sign of the disease is a thinning choroid, which will develop early on in a dog's life. The disorder also causes defects in the sclera (the white part of the eye), such as small pits in the optic nerve. Some dogs may have twisted blood vessels in the retina or folds herein, and in severe cases, the retina can detach, which causes the dog to become blind. There may also be occasional bleeding inside the eye. Symptoms of CEA can extend from mild to severe, depending on the dog.

## DRY EYE CURLY COAT SYNDROME (CCS)

Dry eye curly coat syndrome is an inherited disorder which affects both the skin and the eyes of the dog. Dogs with CCS cannot form tears, which causes the cornea to become inflamed. Without tear production, the dog's eyes are unable to filter out dust or dirt, resulting in infections and ulcerations which may result in the dog becoming blind. CCS is unique to the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel breed and can also be detected in younger dogs.

*Inherited eye disorders in dogs can vary greatly, with some disorders present from birth but have symptoms only showing later in life. This is why it is important to get your dog tested for these disorders, specifically tests for their breed. Inherited eye conditions can sometimes be linked to other health issues, and certain breeds are more predisposed to specific eye disorders. The severity of these ranges from mild, treatable cases to more serious ones that may eventually lead to a dog permanently losing their vision. It's crucial to obtain your dog from a reputable breeder who is aware of the dog's medical history and to check up on their eye health regularly with a vet.*

*While some breeds are at higher risk, it doesn't guarantee that every dog of that breed will develop an eye disorder. Regular monitoring and early intervention can help manage potential issues effectively.*



## DNA PROFILE

A unique genetic fingerprint that can be used for:

- registration to a regulatory body
- animal identification
- parentage verification.

ZooOmics uses **19 microsatellite markers** including the **12 markers** recommended by the **International Society for Animal Genetics (ISAG)**.



**ZooOmics™**, the animal genetics division of inqaba biotec™ (est. 2002) has been dedicated to providing accurate genetic tests and exceptional client service for over a decade to sub-Saharan Africa.



# A GUIDE FOR PET OWNERS RECOGNISING ALZHEIMER'S IN PETS

WITH DR FALON OLFSEN

As pet owners, we often think of our furry friends as eternal sources of joy, companionship, and love. They grow alongside us, sharing in our daily lives, routines, and milestones. Yet, just as humans can experience cognitive decline with age, our pets can also suffer from a condition known as cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS), which is similar to Alzheimer's disease in humans. This condition is particularly prevalent among older dogs and cats, and it can be heart-wrenching to witness the changes in a once vibrant and alert companion.

## UNDERSTANDING COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION SYNDROME (CDS)

Cognitive dysfunction syndrome is a neurodegenerative disorder that affects a pet's memory, learning, and awareness. It primarily occurs in senior dogs and cats, usually those over the age of 9. While the exact cause of CDS remains unclear, it is believed to result from a combination of genetic, environmental, and age-related factors. Just like Alzheimer's in humans, CDS is progressive, meaning that symptoms worsen over time.



The condition is characterised by the accumulation of certain proteins in the brain, which leads to the death of brain cells. As these cells die, the brain shrinks, leading to impaired cognitive function. Unfortunately, there is no cure for CDS, but early detection and management can help slow the progression of symptoms and improve the quality of life for your pet.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CDS IN PET

Recognising the signs of CDS in pets can be challenging, especially since many symptoms can be mistaken for normal aging. However, it is crucial to be vigilant and observe any changes in your pet's behaviour. Here are some key signs to watch for:

### Disorientation

Pets with CDS may seem confused or lost in familiar environments. They may struggle to find their way around the house, get stuck in corners, or appear to stare blankly at walls.

### Changes in Sleep Patterns

Pets with CDS often experience disruptions in their sleep-wake cycle. They may become restless at night, pace around the house, or have difficulty settling down to sleep.

### House Soiling

A pet that was previously well-trained may begin to have accidents indoors. This can occur due to confusion or a decreased ability to remember where the appropriate elimination areas are.

### Altered Interaction with Family Members

Pets with CDS may show a decrease in social interaction. They may become less responsive to their owners, show less interest in affection, or exhibit unusual behaviours such as excessive barking or meowing.

### Changes in Activity Levels

Some pets may become less active and lose interest in playing or going for walks. Conversely, others may exhibit repetitive behaviours such as pacing or circling.



### Decreased Responsiveness

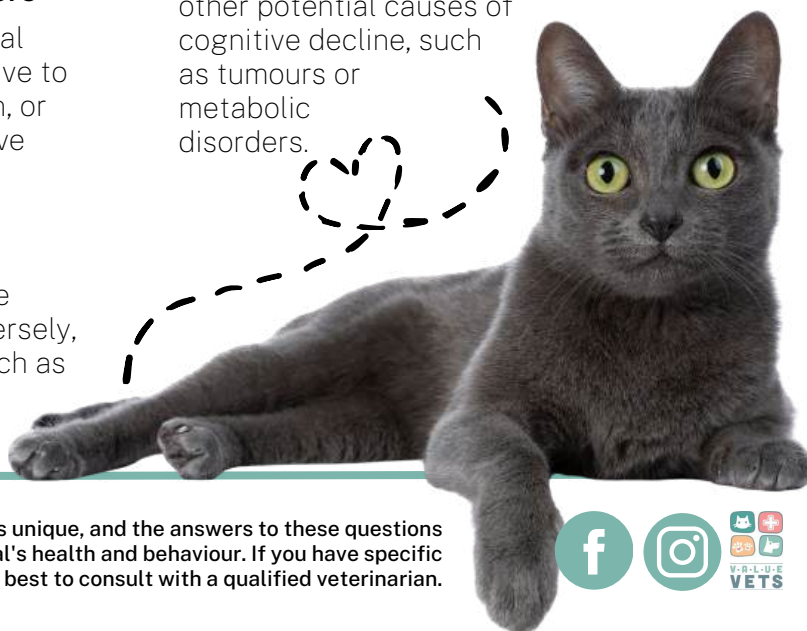
Pets with CDS may appear less aware of their surroundings and may not respond to commands, their name, or familiar sounds as they once did.

### Increased Anxiety or Irritability

Pets with CDS may become more anxious or irritable, especially in situations that previously did not bother them. They may also become more clingy or exhibit signs of separation anxiety.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR PET HAS CDS

If you notice any of these symptoms in your pet, it is essential to consult with your veterinarian as soon as possible. A thorough examination, including blood tests and possibly imaging studies, can help rule out other potential causes of cognitive decline, such as tumours or metabolic disorders.



It's important to keep in mind that every pet is unique, and the answers to these questions may vary depending on the individual animal's health and behaviour. If you have specific questions or concerns about your pet, it's always best to consult with a qualified veterinarian.





While there is no cure for CDS, several treatment options can help manage the symptoms and improve your pet's quality of life. These may include dietary changes, environmental enrichment, and medications that support brain function. Supplements such as omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and certain vitamins may also be beneficial in slowing the progression of the disease.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR PET HAS CDS

Caring for a pet with CDS requires patience, understanding, and a willingness to adapt to their changing needs. Here are some tips to help you and your pet navigate this challenging time:

### Maintain a Consistent Routine

Keeping a consistent daily routine can help reduce confusion and anxiety in pets with CDS. Try to feed, walk, and engage with your pet at the same times each day.

### Provide Mental Stimulation

Engaging your pet in activities that challenge their mind can help slow cognitive decline. Puzzle toys, training exercises, and interactive games are excellent options.

### Create a Safe Environment

As your pet's mobility and awareness decrease, it's essential to ensure that your home is safe. Remove obstacles that could cause injury and consider using baby gates to limit access to potentially dangerous areas.

**While it can be difficult to watch your beloved pet experience cognitive decline, it is important to remember that with proper care and management, pets with CDS can continue to live happy and fulfilling lives. By recognising the signs early and working closely with your veterinarian, you can help your pet maintain their quality of life for as long as possible.**



ACUPUNCTURE | HYDROTHERAPY | PHYSIOTHERAPY | WEIGHT MANAGEMENT



# WELLNESS CENTRE

# RABIES

COMBATING THE SCOURGE OF RABIES  
THROUGH PRACTICAL TACTICS

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*World Rabies Day was on September 28, and the spotlight turned to this fatal, yet preventable disease and the importance of raising public awareness on getting vaccinated. In South Africa, rabies remains **prevalent** in regions such as KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo. Dogs, both domesticated and wild species, remain the primary source of transmission.*

Beyond South Africa, rabies is still widespread in more than 150 countries with **40%** of victims being children in Asia and Africa. Boehringer Ingelheim, a leader in animal health, currently contributes to the '**Zero by 30**' global goal to eliminate rabies by 2030. To accomplish this target, vaccination recommendations have evolved to encourage more frequent vaccinations for household pets. This shift is particularly relevant in regions where there are higher numbers of positive rabies cases in animals.

Jaisheila Keshav, Head of Animal Health South Africa at Boehringer Ingelheim, emphasises the importance of regular vaccinations: "Rabies is almost always fatal in humans, but its prevention is remarkably simple through dog vaccinations and preventing dog bites. In high-risk areas, it is now recommended that animals be vaccinated annually to mitigate the increased environmental risks and challenges associated with rabies transmission. This will help contribute to transforming lives for generations that extend beyond short-term goals and enable a long-term environment where rabies is eliminated."



## PLAYING AN ACTIVE PART

Boehringer's dedication to eradicating rabies is evident through its interventions and partnerships in South Africa. Last year, Boehringer Ingelheim's Animal Health team, alongside the Sustainable Development teams and the South African Veterinary Association Community Veterinary Clinics (SAVA-CVC), supported an extensive rabies vaccination campaign in Gqeberha, a region identified as having the highest incidence of both animal and human rabies cases in the country. The campaign was in response to the worst outbreak of rabies in the history of South Africa. The goal was to vaccinate 16,000 dogs against rabies, and the teams exceeded this target by vaccinating almost 18,000 dogs within just eight months. This underscores Boehringer's commitment to protecting both human and animal lives through effective vaccination campaigns.

Going beyond these vaccination efforts, Boehringer Ingelheim has also strengthened rabies surveillance programmes. These are designed to better track the vaccination rates of animals and ensure that efforts to control and eliminate rabies are data-driven and targeted.

"Even though there has been an overall decline in the submission of rabies-suspected cases

throughout South Africa, the need for continued surveillance remains critical. These efforts not only help in tracking progress but also in identifying areas that require a more intense approach when it comes to vaccination efforts," says Dr. Michelle Enslin, Regional Product Manager Pets IMETA (India, Middle East, Turkey, and Africa) at Boehringer Ingelheim.

## PARTNERSHIP-DRIVEN

Boehringer's approach to rabies prevention is built around making breakthrough therapies available to patients and providing advanced, preventative animal healthcare. It reflects a broader, patient-centric philosophy that aims to address complex healthcare issues through collaboration and innovation.

By partnering with local communities, veterinary clinics, and global organisations like the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC), Boehringer Ingelheim puts sustainable strategies in place that are respectful of the available resources. The success of the Gqeberha vaccination campaign, supported by GARC's Surveillance app, shows what can be achieved when communities, committed organisations, and individuals come together to fight a common enemy.

# Rabies is mainly spread through dog bites.

<https://rabiesalliance.org>





**PET CONNEX**

'Helping you, help your pet.'



Hey Pet Enthusiasts and fellow Pet Guardians,

I'm Runveer Singh, the founder of **Pet ConneX**. My journey in the ever-evolving world of Pet Technology began with a vision to transform the way we care for our beloved pets through digital innovation.

“ From the startling realisation that less than 10% of our pets in South Africa have a valid identity, I was driven to establish the nation's first digital ID solution for pets. This dream turned into reality with Pet ConneX, catalysed by a late-night epiphany in 2021 and later validated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2022. With support from Microsoft and various industry participants, we're not just introducing a product—we're advocating for a movement toward a secure, connected community for pets and their guardians. ”



After resigning from my job 11 months ago, supported by an incredible team, I've poured my heart and vision into Pet Connex. Inspired by my lifelong connection with animals and fueled by my passion for technology, Pet ConneX is more than a platform; it's a commitment to improving the lives of pets and providing peace of mind to their guardians.



You might wonder, why does your pet need a digital identity? Here are three compelling reasons:

- **Personalised Care:** A ConneX ID enables tailored products and services for your pet's unique needs, enhancing their well-being.
- **Safety and Security:** In a world where pets are increasingly family, digital IDs help keep them more safe and secure.
- **Rescue Support:** With thousands of pets facing euthanasia in overcrowded shelters, a digital ID can speed up adoption processes, finding homes faster.

**If you're moved by our mission, join us in pioneering a brighter future where every pet is recognised, respected, and cherished. Together, we can create a network of care and support that redefines and humanises pet guardianship.**

**PET CONNEX - A RUNWITHIT COMPANY**



**JOIN US**

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## DAILY CHECKLIST



*Tick off each day as you care for your pet.*

Things to do ...		M	T	W	T	F	S	S
<b>Fresh water</b>	Your pet's bowl must always have fresh, clean water. 							
<b>Fresh food</b>	Pets need <b>2</b> meals every day. 							
<b>Love</b>	Love and play with your pets every day. 							
<b>Exercise</b>	Dogs need a walk every day. Let them sniff and meet other dogs. 							
<b>Clean up poo</b>	Your pet's living space needs to be clean. 							
<b>Collar</b>	Make sure it's not too tight and has its identity tag. 							
<b>Grooming</b>	Brush you pet's fur and remove fleas and ticks. 							
<b>Health</b>	Tell an adult if your pet looks sick. 							

### Did you know?

- ★ Dogs need a bath when they are dirty, but cats clean themselves by licking.
- ★ Pets' bowls should be washed with dishwashing liquid to kill germs.
- ★ Pets need to visit the vet once a year for their vaccines and worm pills.



### HEALTH CHECK

✓	<b>Eyes</b>	Clear with no redness or gunk around them
✓	<b>Nose</b>	Smooth and clean
✓	<b>Ears</b>	Clean with no redness or bad smell
✓	<b>Mouth</b>	White teeth, pink gums and no bad teeth or breath
✓	<b>Skin</b>	Shiny even hair with no flaky skin and no lumps
✓	<b>Paws</b>	No sores

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