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Conference explores new frontiers in fertility control

Proceedings now available online for Alliance for Contraception in Cats & Dogs
5th International Symposium on Non-Surgical Contraceptive Methods of Pet Population Control

Portland, Oregon, U.S., August 1, 2013 — Over 150 attendees from 16 countries convened in Portland, OR, on June 20-22 to focus on advancing tools to humanely manage populations of both pet and free-roaming cats and dogs. Experts presented the newest research and discussed perspectives. Veterinary leaders joined animal welfare professionals, wildlife and zoo animal scientists, foundation representatives, and public health officials and these diverse stakeholders discussed where we are, what is possible, and what is needed to advance non-surgical methods for controlling cat and dog reproduction around the world.

ACC&D's mission is to expedite the successful introduction of methods to non-surgically sterilize dogs and cats and to support the distribution and promotion of these products to humanely control cat and dog populations worldwide. It provides free resources—such as a [reference guide](#) to non-surgical methods available to date—and unbiased expert information on the variety of products that could benefit animals for whom surgery is currently the only option.

The symposium included general sessions focused on evaluating current technologies, defining what is important for different dog and cat populations, and discussing ethical questions. Two focused tracks were also offered as part of a holistic view of the field: the Sterilant/Contraceptive Discovery Track concentrated on the science and development of new tools, and the Field Implementation Track explored considerations to put existing tools to use, especially for free-roaming animal populations—for example, how to visually mark and identify animals who have been non-surgically sterilized or contracepted.

Visit <http://www.acc-d.org/5thSymposium> to access the summary report, post-meeting survey results, speaker list, presentation abstracts/recordings, scientific posters, and related reference materials, all available free of charge.

Researchers work to develop new options for dogs and cats, while advocates focus on what's possible with technologies commercialized and in field studies

The Michelson Prize & Grants in Reproductive Biology (MP&G) is inspiring researchers to identify new non-surgical approaches to control reproduction. Since 2009, 23 researchers have been funded from the \$50 million available from this program. Linda Rhodes, VMD, PhD, member of the ACC&D Board and MP&G Scientific Advisory Board, and a professional in animal health pharmaceutical development, offered a perspective. "The number of new approaches and technologies being looked into is so inspiring. New targets like kisspeptin were discovered recently. We will have new options ahead, although much of the work is still in its beginning stages." Roughly half of the studies presented were funded by this initiative.

Field Reports from Nepal to Northern Canada

New field research strives to advance knowledge while improving canine welfare. Projects presented extend from Nepal to Northern Canada, from Kenya to Oklahoma, and from Chile to Mexico focusing on contraception lasting a

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year or more for female dogs and permanent sterilants for males. Attendees expressed hope that similar progress for cats is not far behind while we await research to advance our options for permanent sterilants for females.

Dr. Judith Samson-French, winner of the 2013 Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Humane Award, shared results of a study administering deslorelin implants to free-roaming female dogs on Canadian First Nations reserves. Dr. Samson-French detailed the benefits to the dogs and discussed considerations of conducting work among animals in underserved communities. Dr. Linda Rhodes presented on the design and implementation of field trials; Dr. Julie Levy followed with a talk on ethical and welfare considerations, particularly trials evaluating technologies and simultaneously striving to help underprivileged populations. Discussion expanded on a talk on ethical frameworks by veterinarian and Philosophy PhD candidate Dr. Monica List.

A session highlighted Zeuterin™ (known as EsterilSol™ outside the U.S.) as the first product with FDA approval for chemical sterilization of male dogs, and with a late 2013 U.S. introduction anticipated by Ark Sciences, LLC. Four early adopters of the product, from the U.S. and Kenya, shared their experiences with Zeuterin/EsterilSol representing very different situation of use and populations. Ark Sciences held the largest training to date the day following ACC&D's symposium, certifying 20 veterinarians in the procedure and sterilizing nearly 60 dogs.

Cross-disciplinary collaborations spur advances in discovery and implementation of new non-surgical methods of dog and cat fertility control

Min Wang, an MD whose career began in human contraceptive research, received ACC&D's achievement award as the first scientist to see a non-surgical sterilant (Zeuterin) through regulatory approval and commercialization for dogs. Elaine Lissner of the Parsemus Foundation reviewed progress in testing a calcium chloride intra-testicular injection for cats and dogs, which she discovered while seeking alternatives to vasectomy for men.

Dr. Charles Rupprecht, Director of Research for the Global Alliance for Rabies Control, was one of several public health-focused speakers who addressed the value of combining initiatives to control the spread of rabies by vaccination and concomitant treatment to suppress fertility.

Researchers in humane wildlife population management were involved. One shared novel contraceptive work in coyotes (as a possible model for dogs). Dr. Phil Miller of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (SSC/IUCN) presented feline population modeling work facilitated by ACC&D. Wildlife biologist Dr. John Boone shared practical population control guidelines generated from that modeling work. John Eisemann of USDA's National Wildlife Research Center, and Dr. Giovanna Massei of the UK's National Wildlife Management Centre, presented results from a field test of a long-acting GnRH vaccine in dogs, for which the USDA is seeking a sponsor to license.

Special thanks

ACC&D's 5th International Symposium was possible thanks to the following sponsors and ongoing supporters: Alley Cat Allies, Aratana Therapeutics, Ark Sciences, Inc., ASPCA, Best Friends Animal Society, Coalition for Pets and Public Safety, Heal House Call Veterinarian, The HSUS, IFAW, IVIS, Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust, Michelson Prize & Grants, Morris Animal Foundation, Oregon Humane Society, Parsemus Foundation, PETCO Foundation, PetSmart Charities, Regina B. Frankenberg Foundation, Spay Colorado, Tarshis Foundation, and WSPA.

For a selection of quotes from symposium attendees, please see the following page.



Selected Attendee Quotes and Feedback

*[The] ACC&D conferences have become a unique and invaluable interface among the animal welfare, scientific, and bioethics communities. They are the only public events I am aware of at which animal advocates and animal researchers comfortably break bread & drink beer together, building trust & mutual recognition of concerns which I believe is having some very positive effects in either direction. The group of people was large enough to allow for great varieties in presentations and experiences, but small enough to make networking and meeting new people natural. Excellent conference! (Merritt Clifton, Editor, **Animal People**)*

*The meeting provided a comprehensive overview of research into ways of bring about non-surgical sterilization; it also provided an introduction to the many people working with their boots on the ground, often using their own funds, to tackle overpopulation using currently available tools. This was very inspiring to see. (Dr. Bruce Hay, Professor, **California Institute of Technology**)*

*Inspirational. I met people from all over the world with a common goal; everyone was on the same page. Everyone was willing to share information and experiences, great combination of science with real life practical lessons. (Dr. Sheilah Robertson, Assistant Director, **Animal Welfare Division, AVMA**)*

*The diversity of perspectives and representation from different disciplines and backgrounds was especially interesting and informative, something not to be found at other conferences. (Dr. Cheryl Asa, **AZA Wildlife Contraception Center at the Saint Louis Zoo**)*

*The symposium was a good place to get an update on the state of the science and the current regulatory status of products under development. It was also inspirational to hear about the work being done to reduce the number of euthanasias in US animal shelters. (Dr. Douglass Oeller, **Douglass Oeller Consulting, Inc.**)*

*I was beyond impressed with the symposium overall. The variety of professionals present led to extremely thought-provoking discussions, and truly allowed the issues at hand to be approached from every angle. It was humbling to be surrounded by so many selfless and open-minded people who all shared the same goals of reducing over-population of cats and dogs, as well as promoting animal welfare. The speakers were excellent; all presentations were very informative and relevant. This symposium highlighted the amazing progress that has been made in the field of non-surgical sterilization, as well as demonstrating projects and ideas that are planned for the future. (Kendall Foley, **Veterinary Student, Auburn University**)*

*Very eye-opening as to the level of research and clinical studies being conducted worldwide. Great level of compassion amongst attendees, and respect of cultures and ethics. (Dr. Mary Blankevoort, Associate Veterinarian, **St. Johns Veterinary Clinic; Volunteer and current Board Chair, Portland Animal Welfare Team**)*

*With such high quality scientists working on finding a non surgical solution to sterilization it is simply a matter of time before we have real success in this field. (Rick DuCharme, Executive Director, **First Coast No More Homeless Pets**)*

*I was incredibly impressed by the openness of debate, the quality of speakers and the range of issues addressed. ACC&D should be commended for the many aspects of work it is doing to promote the best application and coming together of ideas for nonsurgical sterilants and, ultimately, better animal welfare. (Kate Atema, Director, **Companion Animals Program, International Fund for Animal Welfare**)*