

THE
CONSOLIDATION
CONUNDRUM

46

COOL CARRIERS
AND CRATES

60

WHAT'S
COOKING
FOR BIRDS?

65

JUNE 2008

A BACKER PUBLICATION

pet age

PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR THE BUSY PET RETAILER OF TODAY ... AND TOMORROW

When a company makes a commitment to a good cause, that commitment can influence consumers' purchasing decisions. The key is letting your customers know about those charitable ties. ➤ 42

charitable ties
that bind

Emerging Pet Therapy

Physical rehabilitation for pets is an emerging field in veterinary medicine, marked by the opening of a 2,600-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility in Santa Monica, Calif.

Founded by veterinarians certified in canine rehabilitation, and equipped with an underwater treadmill, therapeutic laser, ultrasound and electrical stimulation equipment, California Animal Rehabilitation targets pets with chronic, debilitating conditions as well as pets recovering from surgery or needing sports conditioning.



“Until now, pet owners were left to their own devices to manage a pet’s chronic or post-operative pain,” said Dr. Jessica Waldman. “We have seen proper rehabilitation programs result in pets having fully functional

and pain-free lives. At CARE, we combine an East-West medical philosophy targeting the whole pet, not just one issue. By weighing their medical history, lameness, exercise and nutrition into the rehabilitation process, we have seen a drastic impact on overall healing.”

Studies show that rehabilitation can positively impact arthritis, hip and elbow dysplasia, ruptured disks, post-operative recovery, rear limb weakness and neurological disorders including paralysis.

“Rehabilitation means helping a pet regain function, whether it be mitigating pain, increasing range of motion or enhancing limb use,” said Dr. Amy Kramer. “Normal function prevents compensatory movements, which can lead to other lameness. Combining veterinarian care with a physical therapist’s understanding of exercise biomechanics, joint and soft tissue mobilizations, and proper use of modality equipment has shown positive outcomes.” pa



Reef clams imported from Vietnam for a student research project at the University of Florida brought with them a deadly pathogen.

Disease-Carrying Clams

A pathogen found in aquacultured clams from Vietnam has the potential to impact the reef clam industry as well as international trade.

Tridacnids, vividly colored giant clams, decorate many upscale aquariums. But their exterior beauty masks an ugly truth: their potential for carrying foreign diseases.

One such disease stems from *Perkinsus olseni*, an internationally reportable foreign pathogen found recently in aquacultured clams imported from Vietnam for a student research project.

“I had 30 clams in my lab as part of a student research project,” said Dr. Barbara Sheppard, a clinical associate professor of pathology at the University of Florida’s College of Veterinary Medicine (Gainesville). “Then they started looking sickly and within four months, all of them were dead.”

Upon investigation, Sheppard found the *Perkinsus olseni* pathogen along with a new species of *Perkinsus* that has yet to be characterized. Sheppard is collaborating with the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (Gloucester Point, Va.), the Maryland Department of Agriculture (Annapolis) and Dr.

Anita Wright, a *Perkinsus* researcher and associate professor at the University of Florida, to further characterize the new species.

“This is not a zoonotic disease transmissible to people,” Sheppard said. “No one is going to get sick from this, as far as we know. The problem here is economic and international trade. We know that *Perkinsus* is a pathogen of aquatic shellfish, and the reason it is so important is that it makes animals very vulnerable to dying when the weather gets hot or when they get stressed in some other way.”

Although the infected clams were found in Florida, tridacnids are imported and distributed to hobbyists throughout the United States. Sheppard’s findings suggest clams infected with *Perkinsus olseni* and the new *Perkinsus* species have made their way into consumer aquariums throughout the country.

Right now, the pathogen poses no health risks to humans or other aquarium species. However, Sheppard’s discovery concerns scientists and