



# Technic UPDATE: VACCINATION PROTOCOLS

Your customers rely on you to keep their pets healthy. It is your job to make medical decisions based on sound research and professional judgment. One medical decision you make each day is to determine a pet's vaccination protocol.

The purpose of this technical bulletin is to provide you with current data for your review on vaccination protocols and state the

## OUR POSITION

Fort Dodge Animal Health is a leader in the animal health industry in providing safe and effective vaccines that enhance the length and quality of life for our animal companions. Each vaccine we manufacture specifically benefits certain populations of animals by preventing serious and life-threatening diseases. Our position is based on the following:

### **Risk Assessment**

We strongly encourage veterinarians to evaluate each pet on an individual basis. Following a thorough risk assessment an appropriate protocol should be developed and complete documentation should be made in the permanent records.

### **Communication**

The veterinarian must communicate with the owner that vaccinations are not inert substances and that on rare occasions adverse events can occur. Vaccinations are still the foundation for a complete pet health program and veterinarians and pet owners should never lose sight of this vital fact. If a patient declines vaccination, a properly executed consent form should be signed and kept in the permanent records of the patient.

### **Scientific Proof**

We continue our diligent evaluation of internal and external scientific data addressing the vaccination protocols for each animal population. We are concerned that very limited scientific information is being used to establish vaccine guidelines for dogs and cats. Until more conclusive scientific evidence exists supporting a shift in vaccination protocol, Fort Dodge Animal Health believes only those veterinarians who have a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship can determine the best vaccine protocol for each patient.

The following are some points to consider when evaluating your vaccination protocol:

### **Preventative Medicine**

- Vaccines are one of the most important tools we have in veterinary medicine to increase the quality of a pet's life by decreasing patient suffering and death through the prevention of disease. The health risk to non-vaccinated animals is significant.<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>
- Each pet should be evaluated on its risk factors and have a vaccination protocol tailored to its specific needs.<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>
- The goal of a vaccination program is to prevent disease and therefore to promote optimal patient, herd and public health.<sup>4</sup>
- Vaccines should be administered on the basis of a strong veterinary-owner-pet relationship.<sup>2, 3, 4</sup>
- Common diseases for which pets are routinely vaccinated have not been eradicated.<sup>1, 2</sup>

### **Vaccination Intervals**

- No single vaccination protocol exists to address the need of every patient that a veterinarian sees. Neither the annual nor the three-year protocol can address every patient's needs.<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>
- As the vaccination interval lengthens, there is a decrease in the percentage of animals that are protected.<sup>1</sup>
- The protective response developed by each individual within a group vaccinated at the same time with the same vaccine is variable and will not last for the same length of time.<sup>1, 3, 4</sup>

### **Immunity**

- The more unprotected individuals there are in a population the more likely it is for disease outbreaks in that population to occur.<sup>1, 3</sup>
- Immunity fades with time and varies widely from animal to animal.<sup>1, 3</sup>
- No vaccine is 100% effective. Even under ideal conditions, not every vaccinated animal will develop a protective response when vaccinated.<sup>1, 4</sup>

## **Vaccination Risks**

- Vaccination is a potent medical procedure with both benefits and risks. Adverse events are a rare, but recognized complication of any vaccination.<sup>4</sup>
- Veterinarians must communicate with their clients about the risk and benefit of every vaccination they administer.<sup>1, 2, 4</sup>
- What are the true risks of vaccinating annually? No one knows for sure.<sup>1, 2</sup>
- What are the true risks of vaccinating less frequently? No one knows for sure.<sup>1, 2</sup>
- The role of genetic predisposition to adverse events must be considered.<sup>4</sup>

## **Antibody Titers**

- In general, antibody titer is not directly correlated with protection but for most diseases should be considered a qualitative indicator of immunologic memory.<sup>2, 3, 4</sup>
- Variations within and between laboratories generally render cross-laboratory comparisons of their serology testing results unreliable.<sup>2, 4</sup>

## **Vaccine Development**

- Vaccines are not “all alike” which is in contrast to popular belief.<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>
- The USDA does not mandate the strain or isolate of organism to be used to develop an animal vaccine or the manufacturing specifications and materials to be used for vaccine licensure and production. Veterinary biologics manufacturers develop vaccines by any scientifically sound means possible and practical. Manufacturers must demonstrate a consistent manufacturing process that results in consistent purity, potency, efficacy and safety. The experience, innovation, underlying commitment to quality, and reputability of the manufacturer of the vaccine is the best assurance of vaccine quality.<sup>4</sup>

### **References:**

1. Tizard, Ian: Feline Immunization, Science vs, surmise in decisions on vaccination frequency. Vet Forum, January 2002, pp.39-41.
2. Feline Vaccine Liability and Management, Part II of the 2000 Report of the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) and Academy of Feline Medicine (AFM) Advisory Panel on Feline Vaccinations, Compendium, Vol. 23, No. 2, 116-126, 165, 2001
3. Coyne, M.J., et al: Duration of immunity in dogs after vaccination or naturally acquired infection, Veterinary Record, October 27, 2001, pp. 509-515.
4. Principles of Vaccination, [www.avma.org/policies/vaccination.htm](http://www.avma.org/policies/vaccination.htm)