

HOLISTIC VALLEY FEVER SUPPORT STUDY: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Study Conducted by Randall Thomason
By Jane Laulis

In the June 2008 issue of the GSP Chronicle we first published information about a pilot study that had started in February 2008 using an all natural and holistic formula in the treatment of coccidioidomycosis or valley fever (VF) conducted by Randall Thomason and Rogue Research. The study was called:

A pharmacognosy approach to conventional drug therapy for reducing serologic titers in canine subjects diagnosed with the fungal disease, coccidioidomycosis.

The focus of the study was to work with medium to large breeds diagnosed with *Coccidioides immitis* in different circumstances and on varying diets to test the effectiveness of the VF formula. In 2007 when both of Thomason's own dogs were diagnosed with valley fever, he designed a supplemental combination of amino acids, green foods, enzymes, and assorted micronutrients for treatment and did not use drugs. His scientific belief is that there is some crucial link in the immune system in all compromised dogs and the goal was to provide an anti-fungal capacity while boosting the immune system. The difficulty in 2007 was that most of the supplements were in pill form and not combined synergistically or by delicate ratios that the biochemist is such an expert in. In addition, it was time consuming and would take a half an hour to get everything out and dispensed. So, for the study, he combined the 35 plus natural components into a simple and easy to use, palatable powder where the dogs would get a teaspoon twice daily mixed in their food.

The nutritional formula was designed to raise the metabolism, support the thyroid, complement commercial diets or any diet and provide the building blocks to the immune system for building antibodies and defending against VF as well as a variety of diseases and conditions.

Prior to starting the study Thomason had researched valley fever extensively. He also attended the scientific Cocci Study Group in San Diego and visited the Valley Fever Center for Excellence in Tucson (VFCE).



Randall Thomason with his Golden Retriever, Maya. Maya has also tested positive for Valley Fever

He discussed the disease with different experts and found varying opinions.

During the study, he has learned a lot but mostly that there is still a great deal of confusion about diagnosing VF, when and how to medicate and options for people or animals that are symptomatic.

The stats report that 60-70% of the dogs that contract this disease get over it on their own so medicating an asymptomatic dog with low titers can be tricky business particularly when the drugs have some pretty potent side-effects. Yet, the disease is insidious beyond belief, and a low titer can still be present with an animal that is incredibly sick. It also seems to create low thyroid function in many dogs. The vets call this euthyroid because it is not true hypothyroidism but after months and years of this suppression the results can be the same.

The goals of the study were:

- 1) if the dog needed meds then use the formula to amplify their effect and get them quickly off the meds
- 2) provide support for the animal so that the cocci would not rebound
- 3) provide a formula to support animals prior to travelling to endemic areas

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This is Skipper - a rescued Basset mix. His titer bottomed out at 1:8 and stayed there for years. His titer has already dropped to 1:4 and he is now off the meds and is holding steady.

- 4) provide a formula that could be used in lieu of drugs for low titers and asymptomatic dogs
- 5) provide something that impacts the endocrine system and prevents the drain that the cocci causes
- 6) help accelerate the rehabilitation for debilitated and rescue animals
- 7) provide a reasonably priced OTC item for people to purchase.

The standards were strict and dogs were required to get a full Comprehensive Coccidioides panel through Idexx or Desert Diseases Profile through Antech every 3 months and be examined by the vet (note Antech titers start at 1:4 vs. 1:2 for Idexx). This panel includes a CBC, Chem 27, T4 and Coccid- immunodiffusion titer. Participants were enrolled for either 3 months or 6 months. Diets were left the same but other drugs, heartworm, flea & tick and supplementation were stopped. The selection was for breeds that had the highest risk levels.

The original study was classed as Group 1 and began in February of 2008. Of the 10 dogs included in the study, 8 were rescued pets. Five of the 8 were newly rescued and seemingly suffering from numerous issues coupled with the VF.

We went on to offer a Group 2 so that additional dogs could be enrolled. There are now almost 30 dogs included in Group 2 representing a much broader spectrum including several German Short-haired pointers.

Thomason finds that in working with intact performance animals the potentially devastating impact of the cocci organism can be seen. Field dogs like any performance athlete are under a terrific amount of strain and exposure in the course of doing their job. The metabolism is far more complex than your standard pet as is the taxation on the musculoskeletal system. Inflammation, immune suppression, compromised white blood cell lines, reduced blood proteins, serum and tissue pH alterations, reduced thyroid hormone availability and irregular or missing heat cycles are the primary and typically consistent stress inducers that many canine athletes are faced with.

The presence of the cocci organism, even at a low exposure, can be enough to slow the dog's reaction time, stamina, and immune protection which may leave the door open for opportunistic bacterial, viral, parasitic and other pathogenic invaders including cancer. Thus, no matter how high or low a Coccidioides titer (lower normally being the preferred) the fact remains that the immune system has been further compromised by the VF presence and the need for bolstering the body's defense cannot be overemphasized.

Thus, although the titer is one measure of the disease the metabolic and immune parameters are equally crucial. These were critically assessed each time a study blood panel came in. Occasionally there were ups and downs but in the end every dog had overall improvement and some much more dramatically than others. All titers improved except for dogs that had re-occurring infections as indicated by a positive IgM/IgG and these did not increase but stayed the same except for the collie who improved dramatically.

What he also discovered is that the formula also acts as a natural anti-parasitic, anti-viral and anti-tick and

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Before picture of boxer that was extremely emaciated and could barely walk. She gained 10 lbs in 3 months and is really using that leg now. Titer 1:256 dropped to 1:64 in 3 months.

flea formula. No dog to date has had a reoccurrence of fleas or ticks. In every dog the appetite and energy improved. Several dogs were extremely atrophied - particularly a boxer girl who gained 10 lbs in 3 months and was also cleared of Ehrlichia without the use of meds and is regaining the use of a leg at somewhat remarkable speed.

VF and the normal drugs typically create a loss of appetite and lethargy. He was able to use the formula to boost the animals so that the drug was more effective. The dog with a robust appetite and desire to exercise flourishes.

Animals need oxygen gained through exercise. They need the nutrients and whole proteins to build the immune system as the animal can become extremely depleted robbing its bone marrow to deal with the constant antigen production of the organism. This is most likely what happens with asymptomatic dogs that collapse, something else occurs where the taxation to the immune system simply overloads the host.

Based on the excellent results of the study the OTC product should be available for sale by the end of November/December 2008 under the name "Desert Defense™ for Dogs" We will also continue to work privately with dogs that have VF or for any needs. For more information please go to our website at www.roguerresearch.com and check for updates, where to purchase, and view the full detail of the

case studies that will be posted as they conclude and the full article that defines the study. Here are the final results to date:

Golden Retriever (2 months)

1: 4 to negative titer
never on drugs [intact]

Golden Retriever (6 months)

Titer dropped from 1: 8 to 1:2— 3 months on 3 months off drugs
[former rescue/pet]

Golden Retriever (6 months)

Titer remained the same 1: 32 to 1:32 —3 months on 3 months off drugs
[former rescue/pet]
Re-exposure/active infection: positive IgG /IgM

Weimaraner (3 months)

Titer dropped from 1:8 to 1:2 — on drugs
[new rescue]

Weimaraner (3 months)

Had Cancer—did not return during study
[new rescue]

Weimaraner (6 months)

Titer dropped from 1:256 to 1:64 titer— on drugs 6 months
[new rescue]

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Aspen, is a rescued golden retriever. Her titer was 1:8 at the start of the study and dropped to a weak-positive 1:2 and has stayed there for 3 months off of the drugs. She had ticks, flakey coat, poor appetite and a heart murmur. All of this has cleared.

Weimaraner (6 months)

Titer remained the same—1:32 to 1:32 titer—on drugs

[new rescue]

Re-exposure/active infection: positive IgG/IgM

Boxer (3 months)

Titer dropped from 1:256 to 1:64 — on drugs

Ehrlichia 1:25 to negative - no drugs

[new rescue]

Basset Mix (5 months)

Titer dropped from 1:8 to 1:4 titer— 3 months on drugs and 2 months off

(several years at 1:8)

[former rescue/pet]

Collie (4 months)

1:256 to 1:16 titer— on drugs

[show/breed/intact]

We are absolutely incredibly grateful to the dedication of all the people that worked with us during the study and tremendous support in helping us conduct this research.

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