

Veterinary Report MSPCA July 2023

All of us at Milan Veterinary Practice are happy and proud to continue providing veterinary services to the society. I started working at Milan Veterinary Practice in September 2020, and have always enjoyed being involved with MSPCA patients at the clinic. Recently, since June, I have been taking over the weekly visits to Ard Jerkyl as veterinary advisor.

As always during these visits we perform health checks on new animals, carry out microchipping and vaccinations, and treat patients in need of medical care. Surgeries are performed at our Douglas or Castletown clinics.

Over the past year, from 01/04/22 to 31/03/23 we have completed the following procedures:

Cat castrate: 66 (71)

Cat spay: 73 (82)

Dog castrate: 10 (5)

Bitch spay: 2 (8)

Rabbit castrate: 8 (2)

Rabbit spay: 2 (9)

Dental: 19 (22)

Surgery other: 11

Visit: 39

Bloods sample: 67

Consultation: 32

Hospitalization: 3

Boarding: 13

X-ray: 3 (7)

Dog euthanasia: 0

Cat euthanasia: 12

The numbers in brackets refer to data of last year for comparison. You may notice a decrease in certain numbers, as we have agreed for the society to also utilize another veterinary provider for routine surgeries. This year has been particularly challenging for us at Milan because of severe veterinary staff shortage issues. Working in the veterinary field can be hard. From the first person the client meets at the front desk all the way to the nurses in the prep rooms who are often barely seen, all of us can sometimes feel overwhelmed by a mentally, physically, and most importantly emotionally exhausting job. It is a job we do, but most of us have entered this industry because of a vocation and a need for a higher meaning to our everyday source of income. I think I can generalize saying we love what we do, but sometimes it affects our wellbeing so much that we decide to leave. This is a UK wide problem, and one of the reasons why the UK faces such a shortage of Veterinarians.

Among all the animals that cross our paths at the MSPCA, some stand out and their stories can be particularly heart-warming and unforgettable. Between these, I would definitely name Eveve and Cooper, that have required important surgeries this year.

Cooper is a 4 year old Dogue de Bordeaux, a gentle giant who was a resident at Ard Jerkyl while awaiting to find his new family. One Saturday morning, while out enjoying the good weather, he started being anxious, retching, trying to vomit to no avail. His breathing deteriorated and he was in visible discomfort, and the brilliant MSPCA staff brought him in to be examined straight away. These are classic signs of an extremely serious condition that mostly large, deep chested dogs are prone to, called Gastric Dilation Volvulus (GDV). It is one of the most severe medical emergencies in dogs, as the stomach dilates with gas and twists, rapidly leading to death, and even with medical attention and surgery, the prognosis remains very guarded. Cooper's luck laid in the fact that his diagnosis was extremely prompt, as his symptoms were noticed straight away by the experienced kennels staff, and no time was wasted. This allowed us to intervene surgically before his twisted stomach could experience any serious damage. He recuperated beautifully from this ordeal and soon after found a new home. GDV has many causes and is not entirely preventable, but what we can recommend to all large breed dog owners is to avoid feeding, or allowing dogs to drink excessive amounts of water, before and after exercise, and feed at least 2 meals a day rather than one.

The story of Eveve, which I find particularly memorable, was a longer one. Eveve was brought to us at Milan by a member of the public, who found her by the road in Douglas, after multiple sightings were reported on social media that described a lame tortoiseshell cat struggling along a busy road. She was extremely shy but friendly, and had a clipped ear, which told us that although she was only a young adult she had been a true feral at some point in her life, and had been spayed through the MSPCA catch and release program. She was a bit overweight so either was an exceptional hunter or she had found people that would regularly top up her diet. This little Manx cat had been evidently hit by a car and was particularly unfortunate: her tarsal joint (ankle) on the one limb was completely ruptured and dislocated with bone exposure, which granted amputation of that limb. Sadly, her pelvis, on the other side, had an acetabular fracture. Uncomplicated pelvic fractures can often heal with cage rest, although this always proves harder when a joint is involved. She had no urinary or faecal incontinence issues, although her x-rays did reveal she had some extremely oddly fused vertebrae that she was probably born with and had not given her any issues.

We faced a dilemma: we could not proceed with the amputation that day, as this would have placed too much weight on the fractured hip joint on the other side. We needed to either euthanize her there and then, or give time for the pelvis to heal, before removing the limb with exposed bone. We discussed this between us vets at Milan and with the cattery team, and eventually decided to give her a chance. Six weeks later, her x-rays revealed her pelvis had not yet healed, despite her appearing very comfortable on it in her cage, so we postponed the surgery further. After another 6 weeks, we finally could proceed with the amputation. Her surgery was a success, and she has now found her loving home and happiness on her three Manx limbs. The reason why I find her such a special case that I enjoy sharing is that her resilience reminds us that even though our everyday decisions are based on science and probabilities, we cannot forget that each animal we meet is an individual, that may well have an admirable determination to fight all odds.

Fiammetta Lenarduzzi DVM MRCVS

July 2023