



EDITORIAL

September brought a new event in the DOP world: the GRC (Canine Rehabilitation Group) organized their first dog walk event or as they called it in Portuguese: Cãominhada! It was a very enjoyable and relaxing 2 hours walk through Monsanto park in Lisbon with over 100 paws amongst humans and canines. Congratulations GRC for the amazing event and a big thank you to all of those who joined us!



As for this month's newsletter, we regret to inform this will be the last edition of DOP's newsletter as we know it. It is time to change and make the newsletter a bit more interactive. So be aware for upcoming news on this matter!

And in this last edition we dedicate the newsletter exclusively to Canine Dirofilariasis, also known as Heartworm disease. Cantinho da Milu's shelter is located in a high-risk area for Heartworm disease. Protecting the over 500 dogs at the shelter is very important, but very expensive. We use an annual injection called *Guardian* for this. Unfortunately we also have regularly new dogs that test positive to Heartworm disease. We treat those with *Immiticide*. Consider helping a dog of your choice. Only like this can we provide for their treatment and protection!



DOP PHARMACY | CANINE HEARTWORM DISEASE

The Heartworm disease (or *Dirofilariasis*) is a parasitic disease that can incapacitate or even lead to death. It can affect several different animals, but it is more common in dogs. The responsible is the parasite *Dirofilaria immitis* and its infection in the dog occurs through the sting of a mosquito, the *Culex pipiens*, which can carry and transmit the microfilariae (infective larvae of the parasite). The presence of this mosquito is most common in the Mediterranean, making this the most affected area by the disease. In Portugal, the Alentejo, Algarve and Madeira are the regions with the highest incidence with respectively 16.5%, 12% and 30% of infected dogs.



The development of the disease is as follows: after the sting of the mosquito, the larvae penetrate the animal's body and then migrate through the skin and muscles until they reach the bloodstream and end up housing on a heart level, and therefore commonly called "Heartworm".

Once installed, the larvae grow up to an adult stage measuring between 15 and 35 cm in length! This process takes about six months and may also invade the pulmonary arteries or inferior vena cava. The main symptoms are chronic cough, exercise intolerance and weight loss. With the progress of the infection appears shortness of breath (dyspnea), fever and sometimes accumulation of fluid in the abdominal cavity (ascites). Prevention, like in all diseases, is the best thing to do. Collars or spot-ons should be given to dogs that live in areas of higher incidence and initiated before the annual season of activity of the disease-carrying mosquitoes. This can be done using an annual injection (*Guardian*) or a monthly chewable tablet (*Heartguard*) which act eliminating the *Dirofilaria* worms immediately after infection, preventing their development to adulthood. External deworming should not be overlooked as a first barrier. Prevention is indeed crucial to protect your dogs!

Dogs that were not submitted to any preventive treatment may become infected by *dirofilaria*. The clinical signs of the disease and the injuries caused by the parasite appear several months after the bite, at a time when the worms are already in an adult stage and internal injuries are irreversible. If discovered at a stage when the larvae have reached the adult size, there's a risk of thrombosis in various organs of the animal. So, the earlier the disease is discovered, the easier the treatment and higher are the probabilities of a full recovery of the dog. During the treatment the dog needs to stay in a calm place and to be regularly monitored by a vet.

protect your dog against diseases, resort to exams and blood tests in case of suspicion.

If your dog has any of the symptoms listed in this article, go immediately to your veterinarian and make your concerns known.



WE ARE ALWAYS IN NEED OF...

- Deworming tablets
- *Actidox* and *Becozyme* for treatment of tick fever and *Conofite* and *Oridermyl* for treatment of ear infections
- Medication with *Allopurinol* as an active ingredient

We're in urgent need of *Guardian* and *Immiticide* to protect and treat dogs at Cantinho da Milu's shelter against Heart-worm disease.

LAST MONTH ADOPTIONS

In September 2014 a total of 19 animals were adopted!

The lucky ones were: Bandit, Bianca, Bolacha, Brian (now Albin), Brianna and Brent (now MJ), Charlie, Elfie, Esther (now Meisha), Godiva (now Iva), Jumbo, Lia, Liliana, Linda (now Senna), Mário, Marilyn (now Mia), Puma (now Verusca), Spider and Tintin (now Bilbo).

If you have adopted a dog or a cat from us, give us news!



GANDHI | ADOPT A DOG THAT NEEDS YOU



"It has been a year since we took Gandhi home. She slept all the way through that first journey and still does every time we drive somewhere. She entered the house and felt it was hers, she laid by our feet and we felt her peace and relaxation.

Our almost 50kg big canine daughter is very lazy by nature but in those first few days her inertia and lack of energy were obvious. She had had a *Dirofilaria* worm infection that was treated at the shelter but the advanced state of the illness was too complex for the organization's resources and when we visited our vet the news weren't good. Echocardiograms, analysis, strict exercise restriction, a cocktail of pills twice a day, talks of clots in the heart and strokes, and a huge scare. The cortisone increased her appetite and made her gain weight, the vet bills tightened our finances, the exercise limitations got in the way of the hiking plans and adventures we had organized. But the six month treatment went by, and to see Gandhi glow, more and more each day, made all the hardship worth it.

It wasn't the disease alone but also a sad past that didn't let her smile. Our baby learned the contort of the sofa, to play with a tug and then a toy, not to close her eyes with every inadvertently high tone of voice or a raised hand... While the heartworms died, Gandhi learned to trust, to be happy and to be healthy. It was half a year after her adoption that the tests told the cardiologist our dog was cured. For the first time in a 5 years long life, Gandhi's health was 100% perfect.



This gift that we were able to give her, that of joyfulness and health, makes us incredibly fulfilled. She deserves all our dedication and love, and it breaks my heart to think of her sick and alone at the shelter, when she still didn't have a mom to care for her and contort her.

This is my dream for all the un-perfect dogs, a family that accepts their illnesses and disabilities, their age or bad temper, the uncertainty of their future. And that still want's to give them this great gift that after all cost so little. Health and happiness.

Be brave, adopt a dog that needs you.

Rita Jacobetty

NOTE: Gandhi was taken from a neglectful situation and once examined presented several health problems both physical and psychological. At the shelter, it became clear that her depression was preventing the progress of the treatments. We decided to adopt a sick dog because we knew it would benefit her recovery, it was an informed and conscious decision, and we had DOP's full support throughout the entire process."

