



FEATURE STORY

CANCER TREATMENT: JOHNNY-ON-THE-SPOT

Don't feel sad for Johnny—cancer and chemotherapy barely ruffled his fur. Besides, he is currently in remission thanks to quick action at the Pipestone Vet Clinic.

Sure, Johnny has a few bare spots evident on his forelegs, but Dr. Nicole Weber explains that those areas were shaved to accommodate intravenous injections. Johnny still has his hair, appetite, and best of all, the constant companionship of loving owners.

Twice those owners stepped in to save Johnny—once when the year-old golden retriever was adopted through the Brookings Regional Humane Society in 2006 and more recently when his enlarged lymph nodes gave Dr. Weber an ominous signal. She took a needle biopsy and ordered a series of lab tests that ultimately revealed lymphoma.

Cancer treatments for pets aren't cheap, Dr. Weber cautions, but Johnny's family wanted him to have more time for car rides, boat rides, and romps in the backyard. The average life expectancy of an untreated dog in his condition would be two months.

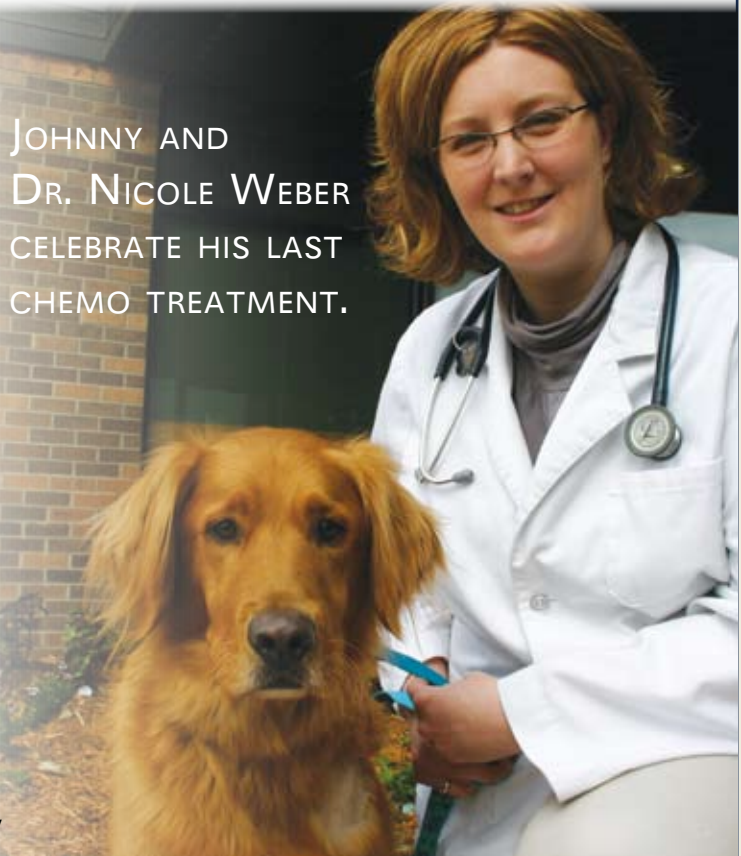
Many pet owners don't realize their furry friends can develop cancer, Dr. Weber explains, so the pets go untreated. Some cancer warning signs in animals are red flags we all know to watch for—unusual lumps, for one thing. "We can remove cancerous lumps and even remove a spleen—splenic tumors are common in pets," Dr. Weber says. "A steroid treatment could also be used to shrink a tumor."

When chemotherapy is indicated, expect help close by: Johnny's drugs were prepared at the Pipestone County

Medical Center (a fume-hood at the hospital makes the mixing process safer) to be administered by Dr. Weber at the Clinic—sometimes in Johnny's leg muscles, sometimes in his food.

Johnny clearly doesn't feel entitled to sympathy (though he may occasionally put his head under his owner's hand as an invitation to pet him) because his chemo went very well. Dogs experience fewer and milder side effects than humans, says Dr. Weber, and a couple of lost whiskers and some bare spots don't seem to worry Johnny. ■

JOHNNY AND
DR. NICOLE WEBER
CELEBRATE HIS LAST
CHEMO TREATMENT.



G. F. Kennedy, D.V.M.
G. D. Spronk, D.V.M.
J. D. Bobb, D.V.M.
B. R. Kerkaert, D.V.M.

J. L. Goelz, D.V.M.
L. W. Minion, D.V.M.
C. S. Schmitt, D.V.M.
S. R. Wayne, D.V.M.

C. W. Vlietstra, D.V.M.
N. L. Weber, D.V.M.
J. L. Nerem, D.V.M.

D. F. Peterschmidt, D.V.M.
B. B. Myers, D.V.M.

THIS THERAPY MAKES HORSE SENSE

Riding a horse offers a complete sensory experience combining coordinated movement, companionship, new sights, and sounds. Occupational therapist Lori Dump wanted to offer disabled children and adults that life-changing ride. All she needed were a few good horses—plus a stable of willing volunteers.

This spring, Lori and her volunteer horse handlers are set to gallop into year two of a successful hippotherapy

program offered through Pipestone County Medical Center and Family Clinic Avera.

Hippo means horse in Greek and Lori's new program translates a horse's movement patterns to a rhythmic experience that helps patients organize their sensory system. "A horse's pelvis moves most like a human's. The rider experiences continuous sensory input that simulates walking," Lori says.

Assuming, of course, horse and rider mesh. Clients using this therapy include autistic and Down syndrome children and adults, along with those receiving therapy for orthopedic conditions. Who knows what might worry these inexperienced equestrians?

Predicting behavior

You could call hippotherapy Lori's pet project. As a trained occupational therapist who also owns horses, she came to Pipestone schooled in client

TOP HONORS FOR FOUR LOCAL TEAMS

In the past six months, Pipestone-area young people with an interest in agriculture have proven to be impressive ambassadors. A 4-H livestock judging team, an FFA meats judging team, a 4-H consumer education team, and a 4-H middle school livestock quiz bowl team all earned tournament berths and bragging rights.

The livestock judging team placed 10th at Nationals in Denver in January. The meats team was the second-place team in overall standings in Denver. Reasoning skills put the consumer education team in third place at Nationals.

At the State Middle School 4-H Livestock Quiz Bowl tournament, local kids placed 1st and 2nd in an all-Pipestone final round. Members of the championship team were Travis Pierson, Josh Stangeland, Taylor Homann, and Tia Muller. The reserve champions were: Hayden Kerkaert, Andrew Berg, Jaden Carlson, and Coby Ploeger. ■

Brandi Raatz describes scrimmages that livestock team coaches arranged to several state universities where meat products are readily available. That tactic helped hone team members' skills in recognizing cuts of meat by animal, by part of the animal, and by the name used to market that cut in stores. She says they used flash cards, in the style of the Letterman Show, to practice identifying yield grade and quality. Left to right: Brandi Raatz, Peyton Petersen, Carlton Johnson, Clayton Johnson, and Andrew Schaap.



Heather Evans says the meats team practiced all summer to place third at the state competition. To be good at this, she explains, you have to know about animal structure but you also have to be able to defend your decisions. While in Denver she says the team members especially enjoyed interacting with competitors from other states. Front left to right: Samantha Berg and Kayla Quincey. Back left to right: Heather Evans, Bailey Wolters, and coach Phillip Berg.

Consumer Education teams are a new component of 4-H competition. Brianna Slinger says the hardest part was working out so many criteria for each consumer choice scenario. What should Beth drink after school—water, a sports drink, an energy drink, or soda? The consumer education team worked with a set of case studies leading to specific consumer choices and was judged on presenting that information. Left to right: Beth Petersen, Brianna Slinger, Marissa Moeller, and Megan Viland.



therapy needs and equine personalities. “People will tell you they have a calm, friendly horse. But Lori knows how to determine which horses really are bomb-proof,” says Dr. Larry Goelz of the Pipestone Veterinary Clinic.

When Lori auditions a new hippo-therapy horse, the gloves come off and the hula hoops come out! If a horse withstands her plastic rings and beach ball bombardment she tries the one thing horses are genetically programmed to despise: she mounts the horse from above. Big cats attack

from above, Lori says, so horses instinctively take evasive action.

No such behavior can be allowed with precious cargo aboard. Even after Lori de-sensitizes an animal, each rider is protected by a helmet, a safety belt, and two of what she calls “side-walkers”—volunteers or paid staff on the ground ready to remove the rider from danger.

“Once rider and horse get to know each other, though, it’s amazing to watch the changes. A client who is disruptive will be calmer; muscle tone

and attention improve,” Lori explains. She says most of these clients have been treated indoors all their lives and really benefit from experiences outdoors.

The hippotherapy program has room this year for additional volunteers—side-walkers especially. “Just be sure you’re physically ready to walk for two to four hours!” cautions Dr. Goelz who recommends first observing a session to witness the amazing effect horses have on the kids. ■

BUILDING A WIN-WIN CALF OPERATION

Fifteen months into his new venture, Steve VanDyke of Ward, SD already knows people skills will go a long way toward making his calf-raising operation a success. “In my previous work in AI (artificial insemination), I learned about win-win relationships. I’ve applied that to the way I manage employees and the way I work with Curt (Dr. Curt Vlietstra) and the Vet Clinic,” Steve says.

He supplies this example: “When they help me limit calf death-loss, I pay a performance bonus to my workers at the end of the month. I’m glad they care about this operation—and they have extra cash to take their wives out for supper!”

Surround yourself with good people, that’s Steve’s motto. He welcomes Dr. Vlietstra in his role as consultant. On a recent afternoon, the consulting veterinarian spots something not-quite-right about one of the calves and the two

men agree on a walk-through visit the next day. “Curt brings a fresh pair of eyes. Which is good, because with 700 calves we’re bound to not see everything,” Steve explains.

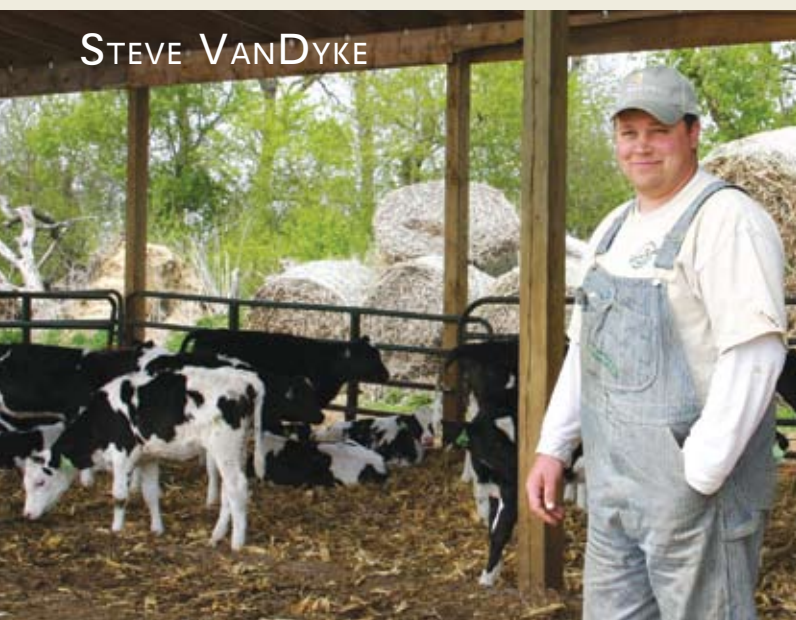
Dr. Vlietstra replies, “Steve’s operation is consistently well below the industry standards for target death-loss and sick calves treated. Steve is a good calf man. His people pay attention and don’t need their hands held.”

Another component of Steve’s win-win philosophy is offering full-time employment. “I pay three full-time employees because I need to be ready to match the ups and downs of calf-production flow from Prairie Gold Dairy,” Steve points out.

This particular day it’s all ups. His employees were up feeding milk to the residents of little calf huts at 7 a.m., then over to the dairy between 8:30 and 9:30 to pick up newborns. At Prairie Gold, Steve loads excess milk that will feed the Holstein babies. VanDyke Cattle Company has its own pasteurizer and cooler to ensure the quality of milk delivered to rows of individual calf hutches.

Once new calves arrive, they are placed in clean hutches in numerical order. Then there are hutches to clean and new bedding, grain, and water to deliver. Calves stay at VanDyke Cattle Company four months, so there are also older calves to care for. But Steve and his team can’t ignore all those hungry mouths that must be fed again at 11:45 and 3:30. “Sounds glamorous, doesn’t it?” Steve jokes. Sounds like a win-win situation. ■

STEVE VANDYKE



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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

SHE TALKS TO ANIMALS, LISTENS TO PEOPLE

When describing her interests, Vet Clinic Customer Service Specialist Teri Petersen lists her children, horses, dogs, cats, and pet bird, then quips, "Don't you think I'm in exactly the right job for an animal lover and a people person?"

Teri enjoys talking with callers from all over the nation. "I'm perfectly comfortable with customers who want to tell me all about their day before they place a product order. That's what makes our service different. We'll take time to listen."

When she's not enjoying phone conversations with customers, Teri is available to assist the veterinarians as needed. Every day's workload is a little different and she appreciates the variety. After 14 years, Teri still loves her job. "Either I like working here...or I'm a very slow learner," she jokes.

Teri's husband, Robert, works for the city of Pipestone. Their daughters are Peyton, 16, and Paige, 14. This year when Peyton competed in the state basketball tournament Teri didn't miss a play. "The Clinic makes it easy for us to follow our kids' activities—that's a huge benefit!" ■

