



2017 Blue Buffalo Presentation Highlights

Advances in the Immunotherapy of Cancer

Dr. London provided information and insights to help veterinarians stay up-to-date with veterinary oncology advancements as they learn how immunotherapy approaches are transforming human cancer treatment. Her presentation also examined the current opportunities for immunotherapy in veterinary patients along with the respective challenges.

Her talk on new frontiers in cancer immunotherapy included an overview of how stimulating an adaptable immune system learns and “remembers” things it has seen in the past, and why this fundamental process of immunologic memory is what makes anti-tumor immune responses so powerful. Immune cells can seek out and destroy tumor cells throughout the body, then continue patrolling over time to effectively deal with any relapse.

Dr. London summarized the concept of local immunosuppression by describing cancer cells that exist in a symbiotic relationship with their local micro-environment. This micro-environment is complex, and like tumor cells, it evolves in response to environmental pressures. Dr. London stated that the failure of anti-cancer therapies to eradicate tumor cells, especially in the setting of metastatic disease, is likely in part due to the presence of immunosuppression in the tumor environment.

QUOTES from Dr. London

“Because mice models in cancer research are fairly homogenous, it is difficult to duplicate how cancers and thus cancer treatments work on an individual basis. Our research with canine oncology has found that cancer research in dogs is more useful when adapting cancer treatments to humans. Just like in humans, even the same type of cancer in dogs looks different from one individual to the next, so man’s best friend makes an excellent model to develop cancer therapies.”

About Dr. Cheryl London

Cheryl London, DVM, PhD, DACVIM (Oncology), completed her residency in Medical Oncology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her PhD in Immunology at Harvard University. Today she is a Research Professor at Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, an Associated Faculty Professor at the Ohio State College of Veterinary Medicine, and a member of the BLUE Veterinary Advisory Board. She is the Director of the Blue Buffalo Veterinary Clinical Trials Office at Ohio State and Director of Translational Therapeutics at the Center of Clinical and Translational Sciences at OSU.





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Pet Cancer Update: What is on the Horizon for Veterinary Oncology?

Dr. Post provided a brief history of human immune-oncology with a timeline of significant milestones in the development of active immunotherapy. He defined immune-oncology as using the body's immune system to fight cancer through dendritic cell therapy, antibody therapy, cytokine therapy, checkpoint inhibitors and CAR-T therapy. Dr. Post shared his perspective on innovation in cancer research, prevention and therapy including an overview of cancer vaccines – autologous, whole tumor, lysate, DNA, peptide, dendritic cell and bacteria-based vaccines. He also talked about tanovea, the first new chemotherapy approved for lymphoma.

Regarding client communications, Dr. Post has created educational materials for clients and veterinary professionals including 10 Warning Signs of Pet Cancer. This material is used to increase awareness of the early warning signs of cancer in dogs and cats, and to encourage clients to discuss the clinical signs with their veterinarian. Based on more than 30 years of clinical experience and participation in clinical oncology research worldwide, Dr. Post presented his optimistic view of comparative oncology that can be used to more effectively diagnose and treat many cancers in animals and humans.

QUOTES from Dr. Post

“Having been in the veterinary oncology field for 30 years, including a long history working with Blue Buffalo on pet nutrition and cancer research, I believe the future looks brighter than ever before. There are advances being made in molecular diagnostics, genomics and proteomics that give me incredible hope that we will be able to treat and eventually cure the majority of cancers that we see.”

“When I talk to clients about chemotherapy or radiation therapy, I make the point that it's not something we do to the pet, it's something we do for them. That's a big difference. Most therapies we use are designed to improve the pet's quality of life as well as treat the disease.”

“It was fun for me to talk about advances in veterinary oncology. I received a lot of positive feedback from the audience about things they had never heard before and treatments that are potentially useful in their practice, especially new chemotherapies and use of other chemotherapies and immuno-oncology therapies.”

About Dr. Gerald Post

Gerald Post, DVM, MEM, DACVIM (Oncology), is principal and practice owner of The Veterinary Cancer Center in Norwalk, CT. He is co-founder of Innogenics, a specialty reference laboratory that supports veterinary oncologists, veterinary clinicians and pet owners dealing with canine cancer. Dr. Post graduated with distinction from Cornell University and received his DVM degree from the University of Minnesota. He is a board-certified veterinary oncologist, member of the Blue Buffalo Veterinary Advisory Board, and founder of the Animal Cancer Foundation.





2017 Blue Buffalo Presentation Highlights

What Foods These Morsels Be: Nutrition in Practice

Dr. Bartges and Dr. Raditic shared nutrition insights with a presentation that helped practitioners navigate through the ever-changing pet nutrition landscape. Through real-life case discussions, questions and evidence-based lecture, the session provided veterinarians with information to assess pet nutrition options to make confident and practical nutritional recommendations to their clients.

It has been reported that more than half of the US pet population is overweight. Prescribing veterinary-exclusive diets with known kcal/kg density along with exact feeding plans help prevent excess weight gain in at-risk pets.

We also use veterinary-exclusive diets – especially those formulated for GI disease, orthopedic disease, and adverse food reactions -- for patients who are “at risk” for chronic disease states. For instance, we have used veterinary-exclusive diets in breeds of dogs at risk for developmental orthopedic disease, obesity, and immunologic adverse food reactions. We use veterinary-exclusive diets in cats at risk for obesity and urinary tract disease because of neutering and environmental conditions.

As veterinary-exclusive diets have become more complete and known nutrient profiles, along with company support, we encourage practitioners to recommend these diets for adult maintenance and growth. In our opinion, better quality control, fatty acid balance, and reported higher digestibility of veterinary-exclusive diets make these foods better nutrition for pets.

QUOTES from Dr. Raditic and Dr. Bartges

“It’s important for veterinarians to learn about innovation and new options in OTC and therapeutic nutrition, and to get comfortable describing the benefits of these diets to their clients.” –Dr. Raditic

“We have seen the benefits of feeding veterinary-exclusive diets for treating and preventing disease, and there are several effective alternatives that are available for veterinarians to use with their clients and patients. Many veterinarians are not comfortable recommending therapeutic diets for prevention. They will prescribe these foods for disease states, but our research shows that it’s time to start thinking ahead, to start using these veterinary diets before health problems start.” –Dr. Bartges

“Many clients want their veterinarians to be more proactive with nutrition recommendations, and veterinarians who grasp that concept are helping their clients and patients.” –Dr. Raditic

About Dr. Raditic and Dr. Bartges

Joe Bartges, DVM, PhD, DACVN, DACVIM, is Professor of Medicine and Nutrition at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine, and a member of the BLUE Veterinary Advisory Board. He is board certified in the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and the American College of Veterinary Nutrition. He is internationally known for his research and publications in veterinary nephrology, urology, and nutrition. Dr. Bartges is on the editorial board of five journals including serving as Associate Editor of the Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine.

Donna Raditic, DVM, DACVN, is a graduate of the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine. She began her career as an associate veterinary in a 24/7 AAHA veterinary practice. Dr. Raditic is a boarded nutritionist consultant on nutrition and integrative veterinary medicine. She is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Nutrition and was a professor for both Nutrition and Integrative Medicine services at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. She is author and co-author of textbooks and research in nutrition and integrative therapies.





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Client Communications – Using the Team to Add Value to the Client Relationship

Dr. Vande Linde talked about starting with the clinic's WHY and the building blocks of clinic communications: the reason the clinic was created and is that WHY captured in the Core Values, Vision & Mission, to create Points of Differentiation, Build Trust based on consistency, predictability, integrity, respect for confidentiality, and commitment to shared purpose and goals.

With a team-based approach to client education, strive to define clear job roles and responsibilities for all team members using team values. Why? To create a client experience that will result in pets getting the care they need with the education they deserve. For this to happen, client engagement using open questions and active listening needs to occur before clients are given recommendations they aren't prepared to accept. Follow a systematic team approach to builds trusting relationship.

When the whole team focuses on enhancing client communications, the clinic will improve client engagement and trust which leads to greater client loyalty and client compliance with treatment recommendations. Develop highly visible scoreboards, e-bulletin boards, or announcements of progress toward team goals and priorities. Establish an internal "best practices and good tries" communication system can reinforce the team values and behaviors.

QUOTES from Dr. Vande Linde

"To serve clients, you need to know what gets you talked about and what makes you different. When you know what makes your practice special, then you can engage your team, move forward and grow. Communication is the foundation of your practice. Through communication, you relay the core values and processes of the hospital to your team, clients and the community."

"A free flow of timely information with active communication is the lifeblood of a learning organization and the lynchpin of the success of veterinary practices. The Blue Buffalo Veterinary Advisory Board and the company's veterinary team are committed to educating veterinarians and advancing the profession."



About Dr. Mary Ann Vande Linde

Mary Ann Vande Linde, DVM, is a graduate of the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. In addition to private practice experience, her background includes teaching at veterinary colleges, technician schools, veterinary conferences, consulting on practice management issues and coaching veterinary clinic teams on communications and professional success. As a nationally recognized veterinary consultant and educator with VMC Inc., Dr. Vande Linde has worked with management teams at IDEXX Laboratories, Pet Health Network, Novartis Animal Health, Elanco Animal Health, Merial Animal Health, Zoetis and Virbac. She currently serves on the Animal Parasite Council (CAPC) board. She is also a member of the BLUE Veterinary Advisory Board.



2017 Blue Buffalo Presentation Highlights

Sharpen Your Soft Skills to Stand Out in the Crowd, Boost Compliance, and Increase Practice Satisfaction

Dr. Wooten presented content to help veterinarians understand the difference between perspective-taking and empathy, how to recognize and defuse client reactivity in difficult client scenarios, and how to best communicate with your client to get compliance and adherence without pulling out their hair.

Her interactive approach provided veterinarians with opportunities to share their experiences and point of view. Dr. Wooten included tools for personal development and staff training. She emphasized the importance of keeping it simple in exam room discussions with clients, starting with basic explanations.

Dr. Wooten's tips on sharpening soft skills in veterinary medicine focus on using clear, simple language and a slow pace to allow clients the time to absorb information. She provided examples from her practice that demonstrate how medical terminology can present a barrier to some clients. Dr. Wooten's solution in many cases is to use lay speak and, when in doubt, simplify.

QUOTES from Dr. Wooten

"In 15 years of private practice, I have found that there is a cavernous divide between what pet owners think is appropriate health care for their pet, and what veterinarians think. This communication gap leaves more pets living in pain and suffering from disease that is treatable or preventable, it makes veterinarians miserable, and it erodes the trust between vet and pet parent."

"To help pet owners think differently about veterinary care, we need to first understand and respect their perspective, their core values, because here is the deal—when veterinarians get this right, everything shifts. When it comes to vet-client communication, I believe it's time for a new way of thinking and a new way of life."



About Dr. Sarah Wooten

Dr. Wooten graduated from the University of California (UC) Davis School of Veterinary Medicine in 2002. She is a member of the American Society of Veterinary Journalists. Dr. Wooten divides her professional time between private veterinary practice at AAHA certified West Ridge Animal Hospital in Greeley, Colorado and public speaking on associate issues, leadership, client communication, and writing articles for pet and animal-related media outlets. She is the co-creator of the wildly popular Vets Against Insanity card game, a mom, owns a tea tavern, has a Golden Doodle, plus she enjoys camping, skiing, SCUBA and triathlons. She is also a member of the BLUE Veterinary Advisory Board.