

Humane Society of Elmore County News – 21 Apr '14

Rea Cord

Director

Ready to start voting again? We are eligible to win in the Shelter Challenge that starts TODAY and with your help need to leap out in first place and stay there. Help us win another \$1000 for our pets by going to www.shelterchallenge.com where you can vote each day from work, home, school, smart phone, etc. Once there the easiest way to find us is to type in our zip of 36092 or Wetumpka, AL to find us. Some web browsers do not work with this site, so if you have problems, please first try a different browser to access the site. Thanks everyone for taking literally just a minute of your time every day to help us win big for our animals!

The money we won from the previous Shelter Challenge couldn't have come at a better time as we are currently working with area veterinarians to treat ten dogs for heartworms and have another three candidates if we cannot find rescues to help with them. We have seen a huge increase in the number of heartworm positive dogs in our shelter and can only surmise more owners have stopped (or never started) giving their dogs much needed monthly heartworm prevention. This is truly a disease where prevention is not only easy; it is exponentially cheaper than the treatment. Left untreated, heartworms can cause numerous physical complications and premature death.

So what is heartworm disease? According to the American Heartworm Society (www.heartwormsociety.org): "Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal condition caused by parasitic worms living in the arteries of the lungs and occasionally in the right side of the heart of dogs, cats and other species of mammals, including wolves, foxes, ferrets, sea lions and (in rare instances) humans."

Heartworm disease has been reported in all 50 states and because it is transmitted by mosquitoes is especially bad here in the south. The ONLY way to know if your dog (or cat) has heartworms is for your veterinarian to do some blood work. This is not a complicated procedure and is commonly done at your pet's annual vet visit. Your veterinarian will not prescribe heartworm prevention medicine until they have done this blood work for your pet's safety. If your pet is negative for heartworms then your veterinarian will prescribe a monthly 'medicine' that can be given orally or topically. Giving this to your pet at the same time each month is important as it will prevent any infective larvae that a mosquito transmits from turning into an adult heartworm. And PLEASE, get your heartworm prevention directly from your veterinarian as you will then know the product was shipped & maintained correctly, and is the right product for your particular pet. The manufacturer will also back-up their product when purchased from your veterinarian, something they are highly unlikely to do when purchased elsewhere.

Preventing heartworm disease is cheap and easy when compared to what can be the quite expensive & risky treatment of dogs with heartworms. And besides preventing this awful disease, many of the monthly preventives also take care of intestinal parasites, and/or external parasites like fleas, ticks and mites – that is a lot of bang for the buck!

So please, please, please, take heartworms seriously. Talk to your veterinarian about heartworm prevention – you, and your dog or cat, will be glad you did.