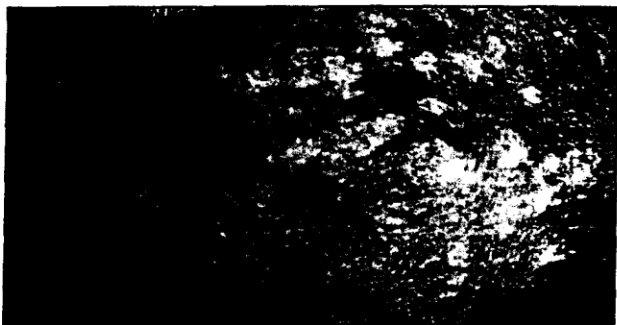


# aloe vera & seasonal diseases

by David Urch BSc MA VetMB MRCVS

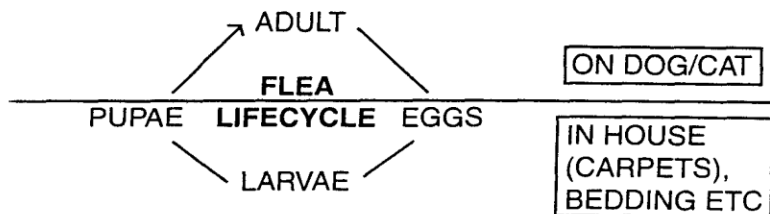
At this time of year, as vets we see a seasonal increase in a number of diseases. Each species starts to develop their own particular problems.

In dogs/cats, flea allergy eczema becomes more common. The dogs start to scratch more frequently and nibble and lick at their coats. The digestive enzymes in their saliva starts to digest the superficial layers of their skin, resulting in moist eczema. This irritates the dog resulting in more scratching and licking, so a cycle is set up.



**Canine flea-bite hypersensitivity reaction**

To break this cycle one needs to know a little about the life cycle of the flea as shown below.



Only the adult lives on the dog, the intermediate stages comprising eggs, larvae and pupae are found around the house. The adult flea has to have a blood meal before jumping off to lay its eggs. They tend to lay their eggs anywhere the dog lies, for instance carpets, dog beds and in your bed if you let them get in. The life cycle can be completed within 3 weeks in the summer. The pupae hatch and the young adults jump back onto a host, stimulated by vibration as animals or people walk by.

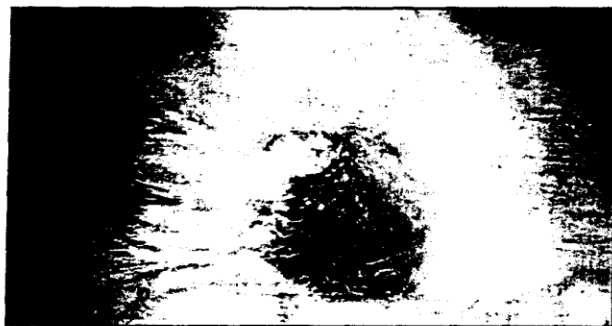
When back on the dog, the flea bites and injects saliva which contains an anticoagulant to stop the blood from clotting. Dogs are often allergic to this

protein, resulting in increased inflammation of the skin. This irritates the dog, so it licks and rubs at the area even more and the cycle starts again.

To control this problem it is important to first break this cycle. To achieve this you must get rid of the fleas. There are a number of very good veterinary preparations available which will achieve this, because unfortunately Aloe is not very good at killing fleas.

Next we have to heal the superficial dermatitis (eczema). I have found that if the areas are first washed with dilute **Aloe Liquid Soap**, this will remove a lot of the serum discharge, dead cells and scales from the area. This is followed with a light spray of **Veterinary Formula** and then **Aloe Vera Gelly**. It is important not to over wash these areas, so only do it when there is debris and discharge to remove, and always dry well afterwards. The **Veterinary Formula** and **Gelly** should be applied at least twice daily, but in severe cases this may need to be done 6 times daily.

It can also prove beneficial if **Aloe Vera Gel** is added to the diet to act as a general 'pick me up', but also to improve the natural immunological response of the animal. For dogs, I add 60mls to their diet daily, and cats 20mls. This can be reduced to a maintenance dose of 15mls and 5mls respectively, once the dermatitis has cleared.



**Cat bite abscess. Focal alopecia with devitalised skin**

This time of year, cats seem to become more territorial and we see an increased incidence of bite and scratch wounds. It is best to first wash these off with dilute **Aloe Liquid Soap**, remove any matted hair with scissors so the skin is exposed, and then spray with **Veterinary Formula** followed by **Gelly**. The