

## **AHS Reflections on New Studies on Heartworm Preventive Efficacy**

Dr. Byron Blagburn presented a comparative study<sup>a</sup> on January 19, 2011 as part of the Bayer Cutting Edge Symposium at the North American Veterinary Conference (NAVC) evaluating, in dogs, the single-dose efficacy of four monthly heartworm preventives currently marketed in the United States against a laboratory strain of *Dirofilaria immitis*. This study followed an earlier study by Snyder and colleagues,<sup>b</sup> who, using a different design, examined the single-dose efficacy of two heartworm preventives against the same laboratory strain of heartworms. Even though there were differences in the efficacy of the macrocyclic lactones, correlations between the behavior of the study strain and other field strains cannot be extrapolated. Additional research is needed to allow for full understanding and interpretation of the findings in these two studies.

The American Heartworm Society urges practitioners to be aware of and critically assess all information on heartworm disease when establishing prevention protocols in their hospitals. The American Heartworm Society recommends that practitioners continue to prescribe FDA-approved preventive products and to encourage all clients to follow label directions. It is imperative that all dogs and cats be given appropriate year-round prevention orally or topically every 30 days or the injectable every 180 days. The American Heartworm Society consensus is that all dogs need annual heartworm testing and that heartworm-positive dogs should receive adulticidal treatment.

Unpublished and ongoing expanded studies in other laboratories are expected to offer additional useful information on this subject.

<sup>a</sup> Blagburn BL, Dillon AR, Arther RG, Butler JM, Newton JC. Comparative efficacy of four commercially available heartworm preventive products against the MP3 laboratory strain of *Dirofilaria immitis*. *VetParasitol*. Accepted for publication. Available online at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.vetpar.2010.12.049>

<sup>b</sup> Snyder DE, Wiseman S, Cruthers LR, Slone RS. Ivermectin and milbemycin oxime in experimental adult heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*) infection of dogs. *J Vet Intern Med*. 2011;25(1): 61-64. Available online at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1939-1676.2010.0657.x/pdf>