Transcript:

Dr. Jean Dodds interview (part 2 of 2)

Dr. Becker: Is this a test that you would be able to do preventively, like if you had a young puppy that you were interested in just finding out? Or does the animal have to be exposed to the allergen to be able to test positive?

Dr. Dodds: Your questions are perfect. Actually, most food sensitivities do not show up until the animals are close to two years of age, so it's frequent and ongoing exposures. Testing puppies doesn't make much sense. But I think we should start testing a little after a year of age to a year and a half. And certainly, maybe once a year we need to do it preventively because we now know from human studies that three to five months before your gastrointestinal tract is affected, the antibodies appear in your saliva. So basically, it's part of a whole wellness package to do that, and it's easy to do on your saliva.

Dr. Becker: So it's something you would do as adult preventive maintenance, but not something you would do for younger animals. For adult dogs that are already exhibiting symptoms and you do testing, then that really doesn't provide you a list of foods that you would avoid to help reduce irritation, inflammation, or secondary immune stimulation in the GI tract?

Dr. Dodds: Correct. Remember, Karen, that 15 to 20 percent of these pets have lesions on their skin. They have itching or skin disease, and the real culprit is in the gastrointestinal tract. And yes, you would that, and you would do that preventively. That would be the idea; it's part of a wellness package.

For those that are already sick, one thing came up recently. People have been put on food elimination diets or novel protein diets, and they think that they can't test at that point. They still can't, because the antibodies in the saliva last for many months beyond the time that they were first reactive. Our clinical trial database is just completed, and we have animals that have been more than a year and a half on special food diets still showing the antibodies to the original problem they had before they started these foods.

Dr. Becker: Interesting. So really, this is going to give a much better picture of what the animal could have been exposed to for several years prior that helped developed part of that hypersensitivity. You'll be able to eliminate things that you never assumed would be a problem

and probably are contributing not only to the dermatologic changes, but the gastrointestinal symptoms as well.

Dr. Dodds: Correct. Now one of the things people must understand is it's not like serum food reactive assays that test for 30 or 40 things. The primary food antigens are the first six that we're currently doing, which are beef, corn, wheat, soy, eggs, and milk. By the end of the year, we hope to introduce another 14 secondary food antigens to the testing program. And we're eventually going to be doing cats and horses.

Dr. Becker: How exciting. Now, just playing devil's advocate: talk to me a little bit about saliva testing. When I have attempted to suggest to my non-holistic or integrative colleagues, anything pertaining dogs and saliva testing, there's instant skepticism. Talk to me about why this saliva testing is potentially more sensitive than IgE testing.

Dr. Dodds: IgE testing – immunoglobulin E – is looking for food allergy. That's again a different situation. And we do not have food allergy; we have a huge number of animals that have huge food sensitivities and intolerance. Intolerance is not an immunological problem necessarily. This means that the food interacts somehow with the gastrointestinal tract, and you can't tolerate it. It's a slightly different situation, but it means you shouldn't have that food.

Salivary testing has been documented to be the key in human medicine. The tests that we do, interestingly enough, are not available in North America yet. But they are available in Europe. In fact, the leading European company is the group that we're collaborating with in Eastern Germany, and it's called DST – Diagnostics in a Drop. They introduced their handheld iPod-shaped device just this month in May. It will be used throughout Europe initially and eventually will be brought in to North America. But, of course, we have to get permits and regulatory approval, etc.

We will have a handheld device eventually, Karen, for animals, where the pet owner or the veterinary clinic can get the device, collect the saliva, put it into the device, and in about 18 to 19 minutes, you get the reaction. Then you have a reader – you put the device into the reader, which quantitates the amount of antibodies against the specific offending food antigens.

Dr. Becker: How interesting and exciting, and really across the board will help people. Of course, we're all interested in providing the very best nutrition we can provide to our pets. But just because it's excellent nutrition doesn't mean it's really biologically appropriate for your individual animals. So that's really exciting.

Dr. Dodds: This is individual, functional nutrition for the individual person or animal.

Dr. Becker: Customized?

Dr. Dodds: Yes.

Lab Tests on Your Pet's Immunity

Dr. Becker: That's really exciting. Along with that, talk to me a little bit about some of the immune testing. Is that something you would do, let's say, at the same time as checking IgA, IgM, and IgG levels? How would that correlate with checking the patient's immune status?

Dr. Dodds: That's a slightly different thing. In that case, we took the serum from the animal, and we checked the amount of globulins generically present, not just against foods, but anything. And so animals that are deficient in one or more of these – for example, IgA deficiency, which is a heritable trait and is associated with all kinds of defects of secretory immunity. In other words, you can't fight off foreign invasions – you have chronic infections and chronic pneumonia as people do. That's a different thing, because you're looking at the total body's inability to make IgA. Obviously, they won't work very well for the food intolerance testing because they can't make antibodies. You'll have the clinical science, and probably serious clinical science, because your immune system was born genetically defective.

Dr. Becker: That's one of the tests that I also submit to Hemopet, and I really appreciate the interpretative comments because there are a lot of animals that are genetically predisposed to having healthy, balanced immune systems. It can be frustrating as a pet owner to be working and doing everything that you feel you possibly can and still have a pet that's unwell. That's a test that Hemopet also offers that I think can be really valuable to help uncover some of the root genetic predispositions that can be happening in animals.

Dr. Dodds: That's correct.

Dr. Becker: Well, you have a lot happening over there at Hemopet. Very exciting!

Dr. Dodds: Thank you.

Dr. Becker: It's wonderful. Thank you so much, Dr. Dodds, for joining me today. It's exciting. We're going to continue to offer information pertaining to what's new and exciting happening at your laboratory. This is a great way for those of you that have learned about Dr. Dodds to know what's happening when it comes to her NutraScan testing, as well as those of you that haven't heard of her in terms of a really functional, full-spectrum, green diagnostic lab that does really excellent metabolic testing. Thank you, Dr. Dodds, for joining us.

Dr. Dodds: Thank you, Karen.