

First Time Use of Contraceptive Implants in Female Dogs

Judith Samson-French: Banded Peak Veterinary Hospital, Bragg Creek, Alberta, Canada

There is an over-abundance of feral and semi-feral dogs on First Nations Reserves across North America. In addition to many living miserable lives, it is not unusual for packs to form, with ensuing aggression problems toward humans, other dogs, and livestock.

In the summer of 2009, deslorelin (Suprelorin) contraceptive implants were given to 15 female dogs in order to suppress estrus cycles and prevent the birth of more “dogs with no names.” Each implant was obtained on an Emergency Drug Release (EDR) and only inserted in intact females that could be tracked over a three-year period. A further implant for each surviving bitch is planned to be given in 16-18 months’ time. The implant, together with a microchip for long-term tracking, takes less than a minute to insert subcutaneously into the neck area. Deworming tablets and a rabies injection are given at the same time.

Ten months after the initial implants, all but one of the dogs have not produced litters. The individual exception was most probably implanted within two days of being bred. Deslorelin did not produce an abortion in that dog. Starting in March 2010, 50 more intact females will be implanted to further consolidate the data. The ideal dog for implant is a 4- to 5-month-old female, at least three weeks away from estrus. Although 3 females already with a litter were implanted, it is still unknown whether deslorelin will end lactation, as the puppies of those females were removed for adoption. We contend, with the results thus far obtained, that deslorelin is a contraception method worth employing, especially in females with low survival rates, such as those living on a reserve or some populations of street dogs.