

# FERRET HEALTH SYMPOSIUM



International Ferret  
Congress Australia

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**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> & Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2008**



**Coolaroo Hotel**

Cnr Barry Rd & Maffra St, Coolaroo VIC 3048

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 4

APRIL 2008

We're proud to be able to present such an informative event with some of the most acclaimed ferret-knowledgeable speakers from around the world. Some of our keynote speakers are also renowned for giving presentations that are not only informative, but also very entertaining. (Speaker details and the program are on the following pages.)

We're also delighted to announce that Bill (BIG) Gruber, the Moderator of the Ferret Mailing list is coming from New York to be our M.C.

The Vet's Panel Question and Answer session is the finale of the Symposium where attendees may pose questions, relating to the subjects covered, to the Panel as a whole, or to one particular speaker. This can be a hugely rewarding session for everybody in attendance!

IFCA is a non-profit organisation and our hope is that this Symposium will be attended by vet professionals, students and ferret owners and will lead to improved health care for all of our ferrets.

Similar events usually cost hundreds of dollars to attend, but through the generosity of our speakers with their time and travel arrangements, plus the help of the Coolaroo Hotel, we have been able to keep costs to a minimum and pass the savings on to you.

For those who may not know whether or not they will be able to attend by the cut-off date, perhaps because of the possibility of other commitments, please contact us to see if we can organise a late registration for you. A Late fee may apply. If you find you can only attend one day of the Symposium, again, contact us to find out the details.

As the cut-off date draws near, we wish to remind you that entry to the Symposium is only achievable by pre-registering. (There can be no ticket sales at the door.)

As this will probably be the last newsletter until after the Symposium, all we have left to say is "See you there!"

## BOB CHURCH

One of our presenters, Bob Church from the US, is currently travelling around the world on his never-ending quest for ferret knowledge. During his Australian tour he will be travelling to most of the states and is very happy to be able to give a talk at any of the ferret club meetings during his stay.

More importantly, he needs to collect DNA samples from as many ferrets as possible. This is a painless procedure that involves a mouth swab and removal of a few hairs from each ferret. As Bob says, "There is a lot of debate about environment, epigenetics, genetics, and other aspects of ferret health. The problem is that no one has the time, money, or desire to work on the problem. Not so anymore! I will be working very closely with Dr. Michelle Hawkins (UC Davis) to collect DNA from 1000+ ferrets from all over the world. She will use the DNA to look for disease markers in ferrets, among other things. This is one of the most important studies of ferrets that has ever been undertaken."

It would be very helpful to this worldwide study if each ferret club could arrange a place and time for members to bring as many of their ferrets as they can for sampling.

Bob's itinerary is as follows:

Melbourne: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> May (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> at the Symposium)

Hobart: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May

Melbourne: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> May

Ayers Rock: 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May

Sydney: 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May

Canberra: 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May

Brisbane: 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May

Perth: 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May

For many years, Bob has also been studying ferret and polecat skeletons from around the world. The study is vital to linking how various aspects of ferret husbandry impact on their skeletons. He very respectfully requests that if anybody has ferrets that pass away, and would feel comfortable with donating the bodies to science, that you bring the frozen remains to him. After study, the remains will ultimately end up in the Smithsonian Institute in the US.

Bob is travelling with two assistants, all of whom are on a tight budget. If you can offer accommodation, lifts to and from airports (Bob also travels with a mountain of scientific equipment), any offers of assistance would be gratefully received,

# SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

Saturday 3 May 2008

8:40 - 9am: Registration

9 - 9:30am: Welcome, IFCA & Why we're all here (with Jaikoi, Thumbtack, Clint & Tofu)

9:30 - 10:30am: History of Domestication, Bob Church

10:30 - 11am: Morning Tea

11am - 12pm: Blockages, Dr David Neck

12 - 1pm: Natural Diet & Periodontal Disease, Dr Tom Lonsdale

1 - 2pm: LUNCH

2 - 3pm: Enrichment, Bob Church

3 - 3:30pm: Ferret-proofing inside and out, Shirley Hewett

3:30 - 4pm: Afternoon Tea

4 - 5:15pm: Adrenal Disease, Dr Jerry Murray

5pm: Raffle Draw, Auction, Close.

## Sunday 4 May 2008

9 - 10am: Teeth & Diet, Bob Church

10 - 10:30am: Sarcoptic Mange, Dr Lynda Bonning

10:30 - 11am: Morning Tea

11am - 12pm: Insulinoma, Dr Jerry Murray

12 - 12:30pm: Diet Logistics, Shirley Hewett

12:30 - 1:30pm: LUNCH

1:30 - 2:30pm: Cardiomyopathy, Dr David Neck

2:30pm - 3pm: Heartworm, Dr Lynda Bonning

3 - 3:30pm: Afternoon Tea

3:30 - 4:30pm: Vet Panel Q&A

4:30pm: Raffle Draw, Auction, Close.

## **THE SPEAKERS**

### **Dr David Neck BSc BVMS MACVSc (Surgery, Radiology, Anaesthesia & Critical Care)**

Dr Neck graduated from Murdoch University in 1992 and has worked in a veritable plethora of practices since then. He has been at Cottesloe Animal Hospital since 1996 (and now owns the practice), and has completed membership examinations in Small Animal Surgery, Radiology, and Anaesthesia and Critical Care. David is currently President of the WA Division of the Australian Veterinary Association and the AVA Nominee to the Veterinary Surgeon's Board of WA. He is also involved with the AVA New Graduate Mentor Program, and sits on the Schools Animal Ethics Committee and the Murdoch Veterinary Trust.

### **Dr Tom Lonsdale BVM**

Dr Lonsdale established several small animal veterinary clinics in the outer suburbs of Sydney during the 80s and 90s. In the late 80s he, along with a group of other vets, re-discovered the benefits of feeding pet carnivores — dogs, cats and ferrets — their natural diet. Tom worked hard to communicate the exceptional health, economic and environmental benefits to vets and pet owners, but met fierce opposition from an alliance of pet food companies, vets and fake animal welfare groups. Thus began an immense struggle that continues unabated to this day.

Dr Lonsdale lectures world-wide, appears on TV and radio and maintains the website [www.rawmeatybones.com](http://www.rawmeatybones.com). He is the author of the highly acclaimed Raw Meaty Bones and Work Wonders.

### **Dr Jerry Murray DVM**

Dr Murray practices at the Animal Clinic of Farmers Branch in Dallas, Texas, USA. He is a frequent contributor to Ferrets magazine, Ferrets USA magazine, and the online Ferret Health List. He has also written ferret related articles for several veterinary magazines. As a pioneer in the treatment of endocrine issues in ferrets, he has lots of experience dealing with adrenal gland disease and insulinomas.

In 2005, Dr Murray was presented with a Special Achievements Award for his outstanding contribution to the ferret community. He is a former ferret breeder and has been working with pet ferrets for the past 17 years. He currently has 3 pet ferrets. His hobbies include traveling, wildlife photography, and working with the endangered black-footed ferrets.

## **Bob Church**

Bob Church is a ferret owner and zooarchaeologist from the USA. A former photojournalist, he now has double degrees in Anthropology (archaeology) and Biology (zoology) and travels the world researching and sharing his knowledge of his favourite critters: ferrets.

His current research is geared towards understanding ferret domestication, feral ferret issues, and improving ferret husbandry. Bob is well known in the international ferret community for his passion - not only for ferrets but also for Hawaiian shirts!

## **Dr Lynda Bonning BVSc (Hons)**

Dr Bonning and her husband, Jim Greenwood, have shared ownership of the Canterbury Veterinary Clinic in Surrey Hills, Vic since 1987. Over the years Dr Bonning has seen an increase in the number of ferret patients, which has led to a love and increased knowledge of these fascinating little animals.

## **Dr John Lewington BVM**

Although Dr Lewington is not giving a presentation at this Symposium, he will be joining the vet panel for the Questions and Answers session.

Dr Lewington emigrated to Perth in 1971 and worked as a vet in the northern suburbs during their development and started an interest in ferrets in 1974. Keeping and breeding ferrets lead to contact with 'ferret' vets in the USA. He began writing about his way with ferrets in the Sydney University 'Control & Therapy' series resulting in a booklet 'Ferrets: A Compendium' in 1988. In the early 80's he was one of the founder members of the WAFFS, meeting for some time monthly at AVA House, Perth, and produced a type written bimonthly newsletter. He joined the American Ferret Association and the World Ferret Union. The production of 'Ferret Husbandry, Medicine and Surgery' (FHMS) in 2000 was followed by his retirement from practice but he still continued his interest in ferrets. He wrote a few articles to ferret newsletters and in 2007 the second edition of FHMS, with more overseas contributions than in the first edition, was published.

He lives with his wife Margaret, Botanist and essential FHMS manuscript editor, in Wanneroo, W A.



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**Please send forms to**

✉ IFCA Registration  
29 Connaught St  
Forrestfield WA 6058

### Registration Form

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you (or anyone else you are booking for) have any special needs you would like us to be aware of?

\_\_\_\_\_

Could you please tell us your interest in ferrets?  
Eg. ferret owner, vet, vet student, vet nurse, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_

The Symposium fee is \$129 for the 2 days and includes entry to all presentations, morning and afternoon tea and lunch. There is an optional dinner on Saturday night costing \$40.

Symposium entry	\$129 pp	x	= \$	Names:
Saturday dinner	\$40 pp	x	= \$	Names:
Double room	\$85 per night	x	= \$	Names:
<b>Total due by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008</b>			<b>= \$</b>	

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cheque or Money Order</b> Please make payable to "International Ferret Congress Australia" (in Australian dollars)  & send with this registration form to the address listed at the top of form.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Direct Debit</b> BSB: 633-000 (Bendigo Bank) Account # 130405814 Account name: International Ferret Congress Aust  Please use "Symposium" and <u>your surname</u> as the reference	<b>Credit Card?</b>  If you would like to pay with credit card (via Paypal) this option is only available when registering via our web site: <a href="http://www.ferretcongress.org.au">www.ferretcongress.org.au</a>
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Registration forms will be processed only when the money has been received. A confirmation/receipt will be sent to you.  
Cancellation Policy: Cancellations before the 1st April 2008 will incur a fee of 20% of the total to cover administration costs. Cancellations after 1st April 2008 will not be refunded. Cancellations caused by IFCA or the hotel (eg program changes, no more bookings available, lack of accommodation) will be refunded in full.

