sample was also fixed with 10 per cent formalin for electronic cell counting.

Small E. coli and Staphylococcus colonies on blood agar plates incubated aerobically and small pin-point colonies on the chocolate blood agar incubated in an atmosphere of 10 per cent carbon dioxide were observed after 24 hours growth. These colonies increased in size to produce larger yellow pigmented colonies after 48 hours. Subculture improved the growth of the isolate on the chocolate blood agar after 24 hours, but not on the blood agar. The organism was a pleomorphic Gram-negative coccoid rod, was catalase negative, oxidase positive, it reduced nitrates and was positive for hippurate hydrolysis. On testing by the 

\[ \text{ETEC-like bacteria.} \]

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LVI fees

From Mr P. J. Clark

SIR, — The Mid-West Veterinary Association expresses its concern over the Ministry of Agriculture’s delay in offering a satisfactory rate for LVI fees.

At least one practice in the division is considering reducing in size by one vet, stopping all LVI work, with a result to first reduce incidence profitability. There must be other practices looking at this option, especially as assistants are becoming harder to find, and more expensive.

As the ministry does not have the staff to carry out LVI duties, and in some parts of this division there is active tuberculosis, implications are serious.

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Behavioural consultants

From Mr K. Cheetham

SIR, — I would like to comment on Mr Dowie’s letter (VR, August 12, p 162) and subsequent correspondence from others regarding the appointment of Mr Peter Neville as consultant in feline behaviour at Bristol veterinary school.

I, like Mr Neville and Dr Mugford, have no paper qualification in behaviour therapy (none exists). However, I do have a particular interest in the subject, having been in charge of police dog and handler training for some years, taken part in working trials and trained dogs for many purposes.

Animal behaviour is largely related to the environment in which it is observed and there is no similarity between the real life behaviour of a pet with its owners in the home and that of experimental animals observed within the artificial confines of the laboratory. At the present time there are behaviour therapists who claim superiority based upon academic achievement. This is absolute rubbish.

Peter Neville is one of a small group of professional behaviourists who are trying to add a little science to what is essentially an art. This is being done through the newly formed Association of Pet Behaviour Consultants, of which I am honorary veterinary adviser. The five members all have proven practical ability in the field and four of those members have won various working trials awards. One of the main aims of the association is to set, maintain and, where possible, improve knowledge and standards of therapy. Membership is restricted to professional behaviourists with proven ability, working regularly on referral from veterinarians.

I, and the members of the association, would be pleased to be involved in a formal, practically orientated qualification in behaviour therapy. However, until such training is available, a behaviour therapist is as knowledgeable and as capable as he or she proves, both to his or her clients and to the referring veterinarian. What is needed as a follow-up is a university willing to give scientific research facilities to a person who has first proved his mastery of the art of behaviour modification.

Progress will not be made by trying to do it the other way round, as is currently the practice.

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Letters may be shortened for publication

Postscript

Unsaturated bliss

In the battle between the haves and have-nots, and the dog and don’ts, the tide of advantage swings first one way and then the other.

Eat less butter and switch to polyunsaturated fats, as contained in margarine, and your cholesterol concentrations will fall, and correspondingly the risk of heart disease. Now, according to new evidence, it is claimed that polyunsaturated fats are more likely to generate free oxygen radical molecules which, in turn, affect cholesterol-rich substances posing potential risks of damage to arteries. Cigarette smoking is said to have the same effect, whereas adequate supplies of anti-oxidative vitamins, such as E and C, diminish free radical production, as do fresh fruit and vegetables which should be consumed along with mono-unsaturated fats such as olive oil.

Of course the manufacturers of margarine are somewhat miffed about all this. For example, one report has it that ‘polyunsaturated fats of the kind usually found in low fat spreads, used to replace butter, have a molecular structure which includes double bonds and their metabolism potentially generates many free oxygen radicals, thereby causing greater oxidation of low density lipoproteins.’

This and probably all information concerning the advantages and disadvantages of various dietary contents is mainly of use to food manufacturers and to the advertising media. As far as the individual consumer is concerned it is probably safer to ignore all advice and go one’s own way. There is no individual control by which one can determine the real effect of any dietary intake and this is compounded by the long period over which a diet can have any effect; a period during which numerous other variables may introduce themselves.

The subject is somewhat reminiscent of the rhyme:

Man is very generally a fool,
When it’s hot he wants it cool,
When it’s cool he want it hot.
Always wanting what is not,
Never liking what he’s got.

‘TOTALISER’