



Shelter Surveys: Results

Thank YOU to all the shelters who took the time to respond! Your input is sincerely appreciated! Shelters already do remarkable work on behalf of ferrets. But I am convinced that together we can leverage those efforts by pooling the knowledge we have gained individually.

Forum Survey

I will not comment on the contents other than to say we touched a hot button. Shelters are clearly interested in getting together to share experiences, network and learn from each other. The Ferret Association of Connecticut's Executive Director, Vanessa Gruden, has connected with one grant organization who has expressed initial interest in the plan. She will be applying before their October 31 deadline. Your responses will be crucial to framing that application.

As some pointed out, it is going to be impossible to have a national "face to face" forum given everyone's shelter responsibilities and budgets. But with some creativity vis a vis transcribing and/or filming the initial forum, we may be able to build something that other shelters across the country can utilize and perhaps even add to over time. At the very least it will be a first step and we'll see where we can take it.

What we develop needs to reflect that dynamic.

We believe there are some very unique characteristics to what we are proposing that will make this appealing to grant organizations. Or at least that is the way we will be positioning the grant application. Fingers crossed!

And for those who replied that they thought they knew of potential grantors? Please contact me directly so we can get that underway. Most have long advance time lines so let's get things in the works! And thank you to ALL those who volunteered to help!!

Vaccination Survey

As this one is of such topical importance to so many of us, I did some [arm-chair analysis and commentary which is posted separately](#) so as not to completely overload this newsletter: But some broad observations are in order.

This is not a scientific survey! But I think we can be confident that as I've seen who replied that we have comments from the biggest shelters in the US.

Alternative Vaccines - In the absence of Purevax for the past year plus, shelters ARE successfully using Nobivac Puppy DPV as an alternative. Some have even been using it since the loss of Galaxy D some years ago for a variety of reasons. What is surprising is that it appears that reaction rates are LESS with Nobivac Puppy DPV than with Purevax.

Titers - Are not being used except by a couple of shelters. We did not probe why, but my guess is that it is not currently economically viable or feasible at the moment.

Efficacy – the jury is still out on that between Purevax and Nobivac Puppy DPV. But there are intriguing hints. No documented studies (to my knowledge) have been done in ferrets using Nobivac Puppy DPV, however, it has demonstrated the ability to protect ferrets from CD in the UK. Also, 1 US shelter has reported that it has provided protection in their shelter after at least 2 exposures (Texas); and it appears that its use may have reduced losses in at least another (Washington). Again, it is crucial that shelters be open and SHARE information and data as we are the only one with groups of ferrets living together. While random outbreaks of canine distemper occur in animal control facilities around the country, it is only our dedicated shelters that have concentrations of FERRETS.

Reactions – are the primary concern of all of us. However, based on this survey, they are very few. The way I am reading the numbers, no serious reactions have been reported with Nobivac Puppy DPV. Those of us who've been "around awhile" remember the horrific days of United's Fervac and the vicious reactions we saw.

KNOW CD KILLS FERRETS if unvaccinated ferrets are exposed. It can kill vaccinated ferrets if their immunity is compromised or low. For now, annual vaccinations are the best known (and CHEAP!) prevention. Yet I am constantly appalled at the number of people who are NOT bringing their ferrets to their vet out of an irrational fear of reaction.

The problem then is two-fold: The ferret is unprotected, and may not be receiving an annual exam.

Xavier – A Ferret Abroad Canine Distemper Fund

One finding for me from the survey was the number of shelters who are using vets for their CD vaccinations: About half who replied. I want to urge those shelters to contact me via the Facebook group [Xavier – A Ferret Abroad Canine Distemper Fund](#) or via our [Website](#). In addition to emergency support in the event of a CD outbreak, the fund provides grants for CD vaccinations.

Initially the group anticipated doing general vaccination clinics – but we have broadened our grants to provide outright partial reimbursement grants to shelters for shelter ferret vaccinations by veterinarians.

To date we have funded emergency situations like large group intakes and payment of a shelter's vaccines for a part of a year. PLEASE contact us (or you can contact me at via the shelter directory help@ferretshelters.org). We have been fortunate this year not to have had to fund an outbreak so funds are available to provide vaccination grants. So please contact us! That's what the group raises money to accomplish. Even if all we can provide is \$100 or \$200 – it is something to help your shelter. And remember the fund is international. Our last two grants went to shelters in the UK and AU.

Again, thank you for being part of the Ferret Shelters Directory and for all you do for ferrets!

Ann Gruden
Ferret Shelters Directory Administration
Ferret Association of Connecticut