

SEMIOCHEMICALS HELP TO CREATE WELL ADAPTED PUPPIES

Chemical communication was probably the first form of communication to evolve in animals. Use of synthetic copies of naturally occurring semiochemicals, such as appeasing pheromones can help to create a positive emotional state in puppies coming into a new home or beginning socialization classes.

Appeasing pheromones are produced by nursing females from sebaceous glands located in the intramammary sulcus. These pheromones are first secreted within 3-4 days after birth and continue to be released until several days after weaning of the young. They have a calming or soothing effect on the young. Dogs continue to be soothed by this pheromone throughout their lives.

“Synthetic canine appeasing pheromones have been shown to reduce some of the signs of distress commonly shown by recently adopted puppies, such as the night time vocalizations that occur when puppies are first isolated,” said Dr. Valarie Tynes, DVM, Dipl. ACVB, Veterinary Services Specialist at Ceva. “When puppies in puppy classes are exposed to pheromones they have been shown to demonstrate fewer signs of fear and anxiety. They also exhibit fewer signs associated with inadequate socialization.”

One of the many benefits of using pheromone therapy when working with animals in new or stressful environments is that they act quickly to change the emotional state of the animal. Canine appeasing pheromone has also been shown to reduce some of the signs of fear and anxiety associated with being in an unfamiliar environment or being asked to do unfamiliar things in training.

“A pet in a state of fear or anxiety is not in a state where it can learn, or where it is likely to make behavioral choices that are acceptable to humans. When in a relaxed, emotionally balanced state, animals are better able to be taught to perform acceptable behaviors and are more able to make choices to perform those behaviors that humans may prefer,” said Tynes.

By reducing the puppy’s level of stress, you can begin to make progress in reducing or eliminating behaviors which are undesirable to humans living and interacting with the pet.

“Challenges in socialization, training and the exhibition of problem behaviors often stem from anxiety where the behavior was simply an expression of the puppy’s uncomfortable emotional state. When the approach changes from a focus on ‘fixing the unwanted behavior’ to a focus on improving ‘the emotional state, you can often see a real difference in how the puppy learns and adapts,” said Tynes. “Puppies that have positive experiences meeting new individuals and less frightening events associated with novelty during their socialization period are more likely to grow into an emotionally stable dog who is a good companion.

Semiochemicals such as pheromones do not require absorption into the blood stream nor metabolism by the animal to have an effect. This makes them very safe for any age of animal regardless of its state of health and safe to use with any other medication that an animal may be receiving. In addition, the ease of application of the pheromone products makes them easy and convenient to use thus ensuring client compliance.

Adaptil® is a synthetic copy of the canine appeasing pheromone and is available for purchase as diffusers, collars and sprays.