

Some pet products touted as CBD don't have any

By Mary Esch
The Associated Press

Companies have unleashed hundreds of CBD pet health products accompanied by glowing customer testimonials claiming the cannabis derivative produced calmer, quieter and pain-free dogs and cats.

But some of these products are all bark and no bite.

"You'd be astounded by the analysis we've seen of products on the shelf with virtually no CBD in them," said Cornell University veterinary researcher Joseph Wakshlag, who studies therapeutic uses for the compound. "Or products with 2 milligrams per milliliter, when an effective concentration would be between 25 and 75 milligrams per milliliter. There are plenty of folks looking to make a dollar rather than produce anything that's really beneficial."

Such products can make it to the shelves because the federal government has yet to establish standards for CBD that will help people know whether it works for their pets and how much to give.

Still, there's lots of individual success stories that help fuel a \$400 million market that grew more than tenfold since last year and is expected to reach \$1.7 billion by 2023, according to the cannabis research firm Brightfield Group.

Amy Carter of St. Francis, Wisconsin, decided to go against her veterinarian's advice and try CBD oil recommended by a friend to treat Bentley, her epileptic Yorkshire terrier-Chihuahua mix. The little dog's cluster seizures had become more frequent and frightening despite expensive medications.

"It's amazing" Carter said. "Bentley was having multiple seizures a week. To have only six in the past seven months is absolutely incredible."

But some pet owners have found CBD didn't work.

Dawn Thiele, an accountant in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, said she bought a \$53 bottle of CBD oil from a local shop in hopes of calming her 2-year-old Yorkshire terrier during long car trips.

"I didn't see a change in his be-



Photo by Carrie Antfinger/The Associated Press

In this Nov. 5, 2019 photo, in St. Francis, Wisconsin, Amy Carter looks at her Yorkshire terrier-Chihuahua mix Bentley, who has epilepsy. Carter gives him CBD, which she says has reduced his seizures. The federal government has yet to establish standards for CBD that will help pet owners know whether it works and how much to give. But the lack of regulation has not stopped some from buying it, fueling a \$400 million CBD market for pets that grew more than tenfold since last year and is expected to reach \$1.7 billion by 2023, according to the cannabis research firm Brightfield Group.

havior," said Thiele, who nonetheless remains a believer.

"The product is good, it just didn't work for my dog," she said.

Short for cannabidiol, CBD is a non-intoxicating molecule found in hemp and marijuana. Both are cannabis plants, but only marijuana has enough of the compound THC to get users high. The vast majority of CBD products come from hemp, which has less than 0.3% THC.

CBD has garnered a devoted following among people who swear by it for everything from stress reduction to better sleep. Passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, which eased federal legal restrictions on hemp cultivation and transport, unleashed a stampede of companies rushing products to the market in an absence of regulations ensuring safety, quality and effectiveness.

Products for people were swiftly followed by CBD chewies, oils and sprays for pets.

"The growth is more rapid than I've seen for any product in 20 years in this business," said Bill Bookout, president of the National Animal Supplement Council, an industry group whose member companies agree to testing and data-gathering requirements.

"There's a gold rush going on now. Probably 95 percent of the industry participants are responsible, but what's dangerous is the fly-by-night operative that wants to cash in."

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is developing regulations for marketing CBD products, for pets or people. This year, it has sent warning letters to 22 companies citing violations such as making claims about therapeutic uses and treatment of disease in humans or animals or marketing CBD as a dietary supplement or food ingredient.

"It's really the Wild West out there," said S. David Moche,

founder of Applied Basic Science, a company formed to support Colorado State University's veterinary CBD research and now selling CBD online. He advises consumers to look for a certificate of analysis from a third-party testing laboratory to ensure they're getting what they pay for.

"Testing and labeling is going to be a critical part of the future of this industry," Moche said.

Wakshlag said products must be tested not only for CBD level, but also to ensure they're free of toxic contaminants such as heavy metals and pesticides and have only trace amounts of THC, which in higher levels is toxic to dogs.

Bookout said his organization has recorded very few health incidents involving CBD and no deaths.

Still, scientific documentation of CBD's safety and efficacy is nearly nonexistent.

That's starting to change, however. A small clinical trial at Colorado State University published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association in June found CBD oil reduced seizure frequency in 89 percent of the epileptic dogs that received it.

A clinical study headed by Wakshlag at Cornell, published in Frontiers in Veterinary Science in July 2018, found CBD oil helped increase comfort and activity in dogs with osteoarthritis.

Stephanie McGrath, a Colorado State University researcher, is now doing a larger clinical trial funded by the American Kennel Club's Canine Health Foundation.

"The results of our first epilepsy study were promising, but there was certainly not enough data to say CBD is the new miracle anti-convulsive drug in dogs," McGrath said.

Seizures are a natural focus for research on veterinary CBD products, since Epidiolex, the only FDA-approved drug containing cannabidiol, was approved last year for treatment of two severe forms of epilepsy in children. Veterinarians are allowed to prescribe Epidiolex for pets, but it's prohibitively expensive — upwards of \$30,000 a year for an average-size dog, McGrath said.

The Kennel Club's chief veterinary officer, Jerry Klein, said CBD is "over-hyped" but promising for treatments like pain relief. He's hopeful that the growing market will result in more money being invested in research to prove uses.

Meantime, the American Veterinary Medical Association is telling veterinarians they can share what they know about CBD with clients but shouldn't prescribe or recommend it until the FDA gives its blessing.

"There's no question there's veterinary interest in these products as therapies, but we really want to see the manufacturers demonstrate that they're effective and safe and get FDA approval so we can have confidence in the products," said Gail Golab, chief veterinary officer for the association.

Ranchers fined \$17K for burn pile that included carcasses

By Sierra Dawn McClain
Capital Press

LEBANON — The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has issued a fine of \$17,869 against a Willamette Valley ranch for a burn pile that included 40 dead animals, furniture and other garbage.

"I think that's probably the second time I can recall anything like this in our district," said John Tacy, division chief of operations for Lebanon Fire District. "It's outside the scope of agricultural burning."

The incident occurred May 13, when the Lebanon Fire Department responded to a complaint about a fire that smelled like "roasting tires." The incident was included in a year-end report from DEQ.

Fire Marshal Jason Bolen and Lt. Michael Maynard arrived seven minutes later at property owned by ranchers Mark and Bethany Wahl of Wahl Livestock LLC.

According to the district's records, Bolen asked Mark Wahl if it was OK to look at the burn pile. Wahl said yes, inviting Bolen and Maynard onto his property in a manner that was, according to the department, "cordial."

The burn heap, records indicate, was piled 6 feet tall with 35 dead cattle, five dead sheep, decomposable garbage, plastics, asphaltic materials, furniture and petroleum products. Open burning of those materials is prohibited in Oregon, according to DEQ.

According to the report, the pile was also burning unattended. Wahl disputes this, telling the Capital Press he was about 400 feet away.

Bolen told Wahl his activity was illegal, and the crew got to work. Two hours and 2,500 gallons of water later, the fire was extinguished.

But for the Wahls, the trouble was just beginning.

The fire department is required to report burning of illegal substances to DEQ, according to Tacy. DEQ officers then contacted Wahl to investigate.

"The DEQ called," said Wahl. "They wanted to look at the burn pile, but I did not give them permission to come on the premises."

Instead, Wahl sent DEQ a receipt showing that he had properly disposed of the carcasses after the fire was put out. Wahl said they are appealing the fine.

HORNETS

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clump together around the invader in tens or hundreds, creating a giant ball and suffocating their attacker.

North American honeybees, said Salp, appear not to have this instinct.

"I think there's a need for panic," said Lavine. "I've heard anecdotes of beekeepers in Asia standing around with badminton rackets, smacking the hornets to the ground and stomping them. I know that sounds totally insane, but that's what it can come to."

Hobby beekeepers, said Hiatt, should consider putting a so-called robbing screen, which hornets can't enter but bees learn to navigate through, in front of beehives.

Robbing screens, however, aren't feasible for commercial-size operations. Hiatt suggests all beekeepers restrict the entrance size of hives, making it harder for hornets to enter.

IF YOU'RE A FARMER

Farmers, Hiatt said, should watch for the hornets, which nest in the ground.

However, he warned against flushing out any



Photo by Karla Salp/WSDA

Asian giant hornets have a wingspan of 3 inches and can be up to five times the size of a honeybee. The hornet above is shown about 67% larger than it is in real life.

ground nest indiscriminately. He said some native bees nest in the ground — many of which pollinate crops, especially alfalfa.

BE ALERT

Experts say everyone should be alert — especially in port cities, where there is ongoing trade with Asia.

If you think you've found an Asian giant hornet, report it immediately to WSDA's pest program via email at pestprogram@agr.wa.gov. Send a photo if

possible.

Put safety first. In Asia, according to Salp, dozens of people die annually from

stumbling into hornet nests.

If you get stung and have an allergic reaction, call 911 and get medical help.

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