

TOOLS TRADE of the

A unique use for a pole; a superb screening tool for glaucoma; an excellent equine dentistry tool and much more are under review this month



Syringe on a pole

by Dr Bernie May, Creeklands Veterinary Surgery, Armidale, NSW

I built this tool using a 1200mm-long fibreglass electric fence pole and a 3ml syringe. It allows me to give an injection without having to get too close to the animal. I've used it on cows, deer and feral cats in cages. It's perfect for when you need to keep a bit of distance between you and the animal.

What's good about it

I was at the local pound recently and saw that they had bought a manufactured version. I don't know how much it cost but I built mine for about four dollars.

I took the plunger from a 3ml syringe and put a screw in the end of the rod that had the same dimensions as the plunger. The rubber stopper then just fitted over the head of the screw. As long as the pole, the syringe and the head of the screw are all the same diameter, it works fine. What I have created is a 3ml syringe with a 1200mm plunger.

We get a lot of feral cats brought into the practice that have been caught in possum traps. These cats are caged, aggravated and completely unused to human contact. By using the syringe on a pole to keep a distance between me and the animal, the cats tend to stay calmer and not get as stressed. It makes the whole euthanasia process easier on me and the animal.

What's not so good

The fibreglass rod usually needs to be filed down to ensure the barrel of the syringe slides up and down smoothly. You also need to be careful when injecting an aggravated animal as it's very easy to break the needle off the syringe.

Where did you get it

I made it myself. ➤

Tonovet Tonometer

by Dr Alison Booth, Semaphore Veterinary Surgery, Semaphore, SA

This is a rebound tonometer used to measure intraocular pressure. It shoots out a little probe that bounces against the eye about six times.

The results from those six measurements are averaged out and a reading is displayed. It's a great screening tool for glaucoma.



What's good about it

This is different to the pen-style tonometer that uses applanation. Those units need to be calibrated after each case and a local anaesthetic used in the eye.

Tonovet is much easier to operate. No local anaesthetic is required and the machine doesn't need to be calibrated. The only requirement is that the probe should be kept parallel to the ground in order to get an accurate reading. It causes very little distress and most dogs and cats tolerate it quite well. I've actually tried it on myself and you don't even notice the probe hitting the cornea.

A message on the screen informs you if the six measurements are within a standard deviation or if they are widely differing from each other. If it's a bad read, it only takes about 20 seconds to repeat the process.

I am now more confident when a dog comes in with a red eye or a discharge. In the past, I probably referred more cases than was necessary because I was worried about the possibility of glaucoma. Now, the Tonovet allows me to quickly rule out that condition.

What's not so good

It's quite expensive and it only measures one thing. I had wanted one for a while but the price put us off. You have to work out whether the number of dogs with glaucoma coming into the practice will allow you to recoup the cost.

Where did you get it

Sound Veterinary Equipment
(www.soundveterinary.com.au). ➤

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PowerFloat

by Dr Justin Daniel, Pambula Vet Clinic, Pambula, NSW

The PowerFloat consists of a three-centimetre carbide/tungsten rotating disc attached to a long shaft powered by a Dewalt battery drill. It's used in equine dentistry to shape the teeth and grind down the sharp enamel points.

What's good about it

A horse's circular chewing pattern invariably results in sharp points on the outer edges of the maxillary cheek teeth and inner edges of the mandibular cheek teeth that can cut, ulcerate or lacerate the cheeks or tongue. If a horse has an unbalanced chewing pattern—often initiated by dental pain or abnormal dental conformation—they may develop waves in the dental arcade, hooks, ramps or 'tall' teeth. Using hand rasps and tools to correct such abnormalities is difficult bordering on impossible. In addition, it's a real challenge physically.

The PowerFloat allows you to place the disc on the abnormal part of the tooth and grind it down to the appropriate size and shape with a squeeze of the drill trigger. It has made a difficult job much, much easier.

Most horses need dentistry once or twice a year to reshape the teeth and correct dental imbalances, allowing them to chew and grind food comfortably and completely. This maximises the energy uptake from what they are eating.

What's not so good

It's important to have training from a specialised veterinary dentist before using this tool. In inexperienced hands, grinding off too much of the tooth can expose the nerve and the root canal which can lead to tooth death. There is also some heat generated during the grinding process, so overuse in one area for an extended period can cause thermal trauma to a tooth.

Where did you get it

Equine Veterinary & Dental Services (www.evds.net.au). ➤



NAOMI Multi CCD Imaging Sensor digital radiography

by Dr Ross Polst, Hinterland Veterinary Surgery, Nerang, QLD

From the day we purchased this system five years ago, taking radiographs was transformed from a chore to being simple, easy and quick. The NAOMI-1002 sensor and CCD image processing technology creates high-quality digital images of bone and soft tissue. We use the ATOMSCOPE HF200A X-ray machine, but most X-ray machines are compatible.

What's good about it

It's easy to set up and store. Our old dark room has been converted into a shelved area for the storage of the digital equipment.

The time from X-ray exposure to a digital image coming up on the screen is six seconds. This means the anaesthetic time for the animal is greatly reduced, making the process safer. When animals don't require an anaesthetic, the radiographs can be taken as part of the consult. Due to the ease of use, we are taking radiographs much more frequently and can do many more per day.

NAOMI technology uses no films and no chemicals to produce the radiographs. This means that there are no waste products that are hazardous to the environment or the veterinary staff.

All images are digital and save automatically to the computer. We can easily produce copies for the owner and most clients appreciate this.

The images can be magnified and the contrast and brightness altered. This allows for much better evaluation.

What's not so good

The NAOMI DICOM Imaging Software has the positioning in human terms—AP [anterior-posterior] rather than VD [ventro-dorsal]. Staff also need to be aware there's a sequence to turning things on. For example, if the AC adaptor is not turned on before the program is logged on then it will not read the digital sensor.

Where did you get it

RF System Lab (www.rfsystemlab.com). ➤