

TOOLS TRADE of the

The animal equivalent to a human dentist's chair; an exceptional portable monocular microscope; and much more are under review this month



Fuji FDR D-EVO digital radiography

by Dr Sam Snelling, Advanced Vetcare, Kensington, VIC

When we opened our practice, we used a CR reader but, about three years ago, we upgraded to a Fuji DR version. Swapping from CR [computed radiography] to DR [digital radiography] has been as much of an advance as swapping from normal films to the CR.

What's good about it

It is very fast—the image appears on the computer monitor within a couple of seconds. We only have one machine but can rapidly move cases through the radiology suite. The digital image can then be shown to the client or emailed to the referring vet. That just wasn't possible with the old film based system.

We do a lot of hip replacements in our practice and also use the system for trauma cases, checking for tumours in bones, contrast studies of the urinary tract, and checking lung pathology and heart size. Even though it's not as advanced as CT, ultrasound and MRI scans, radiographs

still have a central role in diagnostics.

This system has allowed us to integrate our practice management software with our radiographs. When we charge a radiograph that is attached to the patient file, it sends a unique identification number to the X-ray machine. It populates the X-ray machine with the client and patient details and arranges for a study to be undertaken. We then take the radiograph and export the digital image to our central server. The unique number created at the start of the process means that those images are forever tagged to that patient. It has massively streamlined our radiographic process.

What's not so good

There is a fairly large capital outlay when purchasing this machine but if you look at the decrease in staff time in developing radiographs, the lack of any chemical or film costs, and the throughput benefits, it pays itself off very quickly.

Where did you get it

Fuji (www.fujifilm.com.au). ➤

IM3 Elite

by Dr Storm Gifford,
Girraween Veterinary
Hospital, Howard
Springs, NT

I've been using IM3 units for dental work on dogs and cats for the past three years. My old clinic had an earlier model and we purchased this one in February this year.



What's good about it

You can use the Elite to do everything from a general scale and polish to an extraction—it's the animal equivalent to a human dentist's chair. It's completely self-contained with the compressor, air, water, dental tools and everything needed to run the equipment all in the one unit.

The whole thing is on wheels so it can be moved out of the way or to another room. We keep it in our dirty surgery/wet prep area but it can be easily moved to where it is needed.

I've only ever used it on dogs and cats but it can be used for dental work on other animals like rabbits, guinea pigs and exotic pets. The practice would simply need to purchase some animal-specific tools attached.

IM3 is a very accessible company. You can call them anytime and they will talk you through any problems you're having. A rep came out and gave us training on how to operate the machine when we first purchased it. So far, we haven't had any problems.

TOOLS of the TRADE

continued from page 39

What's not so good

There's only one thing and it's more of an annoyance than a real problem. Every instrument has a cord attached to it and if you're messy like me, the cords can sometimes get in the way. If everything could be made wireless and rechargeable, that would be awesome.

Where did you get it

IM3 (www.im3vet.com.au). ➤

Premiere Portable Rechargeable Monocular Microscope

by Dr Richmond Loh, The Fish Vet, Perth, WA

This is a microscope that I sell in my online store. Over the years, I have tried many different types of microscopes and spent thousands of dollars on them. Working full time as a veterinary pathologist, I know a good scope when I see one. I truly believe this is an exceptional microscope—that's why I wanted to sell them.

What's good about it

This is perfect for the mobile veterinarian. As a fish vet, I am completely mobile, visiting fish farms and people's homes to check out their tanks. I take this microscope everywhere I go, even if I fly interstate. In a fish practice, you're always looking for parasites. The main diagnostic features are their shape and the way they move. It's best to test within one or two minutes of preparing the sample which means, in most cases, it's impossible to take a sample back to the lab or clinic.

The microscope can be plugged straight into a power point, or run off a rechargeable battery that lasts for up to 20 hours. Even though it's completely portable, it has all the features of a larger, heavier model. At 3.6kg, it's light enough to be portable, and is stable enough on the bench. It has four, 10, 40 and 100X objectives, great optics, a mechanised stage that holds two slides, and coarse and fine focus.



What's not so good

As it's monocular, it's not really suitable for looking at slides for hours on end. It's more of a quick tool to use for diagnosis.

Where did you get it

The microscope is made in China and can be purchased from my online store (www.thefishvet.com.au). ➤



Tono-pen XL

by Dr Kimberley Godwin, Canberra Vet Hospital, Canberra, ACT

This is a small digital tool that we use to measure the intraocular pressure [IOP] in the eye of cats and dogs. It's very useful when checking for uveitis or glaucoma. I use it for every consult where the animal is suffering from an eye problem.

What's good about it

It has a very small reader on the tip that's held against the cornea after instilling some local anaesthetic drops. There is also a small plastic disposable cover for each animal in order to maintain sterility and hygiene. The tip is gently tapped against the cornea five times to take one reading. I usually repeat the readings a minimum of three times and then take the average of those results. The pressure is displayed on a small digital screen that also shows a five, 10, 20 or >20 per cent error margin. However, if the animal is well behaved and tolerates the readings, there is normally only a five or 10 per cent error margin. I try and only take five per cent error readings.

It's important not to restrain the animal too tightly around the neck because that can increase the intraocular pressure. I generally use gentle restraint and a muzzle if they are prone to bite. It can be helpful if you hold the Tono-pen like a pen with your palm touching the side of their face the whole time to keep stability.

What's not so good

The Tono-pen needs to be calibrated each time it is used. To calibrate properly, I turn on the Tono-pen and wait approximately 15 seconds holding it with the tip pointed down. Then you flip it 180 degrees so the tip is pointing straight up. Sometimes you need to do this multiple times to get a good calibration before starting to measure the IOP. That can be a bit frustrating if you're in a consult with a client watching.

Where did you get it

BOC Instruments (www.bocinstruments.com.au). ➤