Nutrition of Companion Animals

Student's Notes

Content
This unit will help you to understand what types of foodstuff are suitable for companion animals.

To get the most out of this session you could read the 'questions to answer' section, that goes with the film clip you are about to watch. Then use the film clip to help you get the answers. Before moving on to the next clip, complete the 'Tasks to do'.

The Aim of this session is . . .

To demonstrate the requirements of companion animal nutrition.

Objectives – By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Identify suitable foodstuff for companion animals.
- Discuss the requirements of predators and prey animals.
- Establish which food groups each foodstuff provides.
- Establish which foodstuffs are palatable.
- Recognise the importance of quantity.
- Discuss methods of presentation.

Nutrition

Film Clip	Questions to answer (whilst watching)	Tasks to do (after watching)
Watch film clip: Palatable foodstuff	What foodstuff can be fed to companion animals? What are the main differences between predators and prey? ***Consider:*** Prey animals are usually herbivores, and 'dry food' is available containing grains and seeds that provide a balance of carbohydrates, protein and lipid. They can also be fed fresh vegetables, which are a good source of carbohydrates and vitamins, but care must be taken, as some vegetation is poisonous. ***Consider:*** Predators in wild animals such as ferrets will hunt, kill and eat animals such as rabbits, mice, and chickens. They will also steal eggs from bird's nests. Meat and eggs must therefore be provided for such companion animals, as this is an excellent source of protein, lipid and vitamins. Both predators and prey must always be provided with plenty of fresh Water, as it is essential to maintain hydration.	What is a carnivore? What is an herbivore? What is an omnivore? What is carbohydrate used for in the animal's body? What is protein used for in the animal's body? What is lipid or fat used for in the animal's body? What % of an animal's body is water? How is this water lost by animals?

An Interactive task is included in this package – You can identify plants that can be safely fed to companion animals Complete the interactive task via the link provided.		
Watch film clip: Quantities	What quantity is required? What factors govern the quantity given? How is the feed quantified & measured? Why is there a great danger of over feeding? Consider: In the wild these animals would have to hunt or forage to find their food, and this would use up energy.	Consider the following questions: Identify suitable quantities of food for a range of species. Decide how age, sex, reproductive status & productivity may affect quantity fed. What are the perils of overfeeding.

Watch film clip: Presentation	Why is it important to try and present the food in a way that encourages the animal to carry out this hunting or foraging behaviour? How does this effect physical and psychological health? Remember: In the UK it is illegal to feed live vertebrates (or animals with a backbone) to predatory species. This is not the case in all countries. In the UK live invertebrates such as insects can be fed to predators.	Identify ways of using presentation of food to create enrichment. Design some forms of enrichment that would encourage given species to hunt or forage. Decide on the advantages, disadvantages and suitability of various feeding and watering vessels. Design and produce an enrichment activity using food – implement it and observe the effect on the animal's behaviour. Decide whether you think it's acceptable to feed live animals to predators. Should this apply to vertebrates and invertebrates or not?