

Intro: If you want a wildly healthy, naturally disease resistant pet who turns heads and starts conversations with awestruck onlookers. You're right where you belong. This is the Vital Animal Podcast with your host homeopathic veterinarian Dr. Will Falconer.

[00:00:24] Will Falconer, DVM: This is Dr. Will Falconer. Welcome to another episode of the Vital Animal Podcast. I am blessed to have a very special guest with me from a long time ago. This is Stephanie Boone of the company you may have heard of called Wondercide. She and her company are all over my website, VitalAnimal.com, especially in the Nontoxic Flea Control page.

[00:00:45] Welcome Stephanie.

[00:00:46] Stephanie Boone: Hi, Dr. Falconer. Thank you so much for having me. It's a great pleasure to talk with you today.

[00:00:53] Will Falconer, DVM: So good to have you too. We go way back. So I'm remembering that we met in my little clinic in Austin years and years ago when you were just bootstrapping Wondercide at least a decade ago.

[00:01:07] Stephanie Boone: So I've been at it for about 12 years? Yeah.

[00:01:10] Will Falconer, DVM: Okay. Okay, cool. So take us back to those early days, Stephanie, and let our listeners know what moved you to create this company and kind of what was the impetus behind it all.

[00:01:21] Stephanie Boone: Sure. Yeah, I'm grateful to have the opportunity to talk about it. So Luna is my, the reason that Wondercide exists today and really is what gave me my passion and purpose in life.

[00:01:35] And she, she and I found each other when I was 21 and I introduced her parents. And they had a litter of puppies and they let me pick and she was in she's an Akita Husky mix. And all the puppies in the litter were black and white and she was golden black. And I just, I knew that she was special.

[00:01:56] I was living in Tahoe at the time. I knew she was special and we had this special bond and moved all over the country together, figuring out like, who am I going to be? And what am I going to do with my life? And fast forward. Yeah. And so fast forward 10 years I had just purchased my first home and in the Gulf coast region of Texas and was doing all the responsible first-time homeowner things and pest control for the lawn and taking care of the pets and all of that.

[00:02:26] And then Luna became very sick and she had, and that sort of surfaced with skin issues and really bad hotspots that turned into like bleeding, pussie sores and then evolved into seizures like mini, mini seizures. And took her to the, our local vet at the time and did a bunch of testing and found out that she also was having liver and kidney issues and started looking for what's the cause?

[00:02:55] How did this happen? And the vet wasn't entirely sure but suggested she's 10 years old. She's lived a good life. She's a large breed dog and it's probably just her time. And that was just not an answer. That was not an answer that I could accept. And I started researching it and I started just becoming really obsessed with it and started doing a ton of research.

[00:03:18] And it's: what is she eating? And what is she like, what are we putting on her? And at the time, I realized one of the things that we were doing is what traditional veterinarians refer to as flea and tick meds or like medication. And this is medication to protect them. And when I thought I was protecting her, what I learned through my research

is that I was poisoning her and I didn't understand how that could be, how that could be at all.

[00:03:51] Like how can we be doing what we think is best for our pets to protect them? Because of course there needs to be protection from fleas and ticks and mosquitoes, but by putting systemic neurotoxins into their bloodstream just blew my mind.

[00:04:07] It's would we, would I do that for myself? Or would I do that for my kids? Of course not. Like I said, I began to research and I learned more than anyone might ever want to know about the EPA and how these products are made and how they go to market. But the thing that surprised me the most is that it's the common way that pet parents protect their pack, right?

[00:04:33] This is how we protect our dogs and cats. So when I started doing the research of the products that she was on Fipronil was the active ingredient. And I started reading about that and learned that there are known side effects, which included many of the things that she was experiencing, skin issues, seizures, liver and kidney failure, cancer, and the list goes on and on.

[00:04:58] Again, I just, I couldn't believe it. And so not only did I not accept putting her down, I became this, this tiger mom, which we now refer to as fierce love. And I learned that from her, especially with her breed personality, like she was really just like quiet and sweet, but really protective.

[00:05:17] And it's she's always looking out for me and my job is to protect her. And so I started doing what a lot of people did a decade ago, like organic food was on the rise and organic, or just learning about the products that we're putting in our bodies and on our bodies. But we weren't, as a consumer population, we weren't thinking about what was going in our bodies or that is around us, in our environment.

[00:05:41] And so I started looking under what's under the kitchen sink? And what's in this? And what's in that? And. It was very overwhelming to see all of the products. And again, like learning about the EPA and, it's referred, it's known as the environmental protection agency and I'm like, who are we protecting?

[00:05:59] So I just, you just keep asking questions and to some degree it's follow the dollar. How is this working and how has this the common way that we protect? But, I learned that the product that the pest control company was spraying in the lawn for like mosquitoes and fleas and ticks and roaches and all those things on the Gulf coast, those were also systemic neurotoxins. And so it's was it the product in the lawn and the product that I was putting on Luna, like the monthly preventative, was it the combination of those things? And it's hard to say, but what I do know is that they don't promote wellness.

[00:06:34] Will Falconer, DVM: No, the longer you're on pesticides...

[00:06:36] Stephanie Boone: That's the thing, and we're calling it medicine and like pet meds, but it's not a medicine, it's a pesticide. And so I got pretty furious and like everything, I just wanted to educate people. And so the first thing that I did was to get rid of all the stuff all over my house, in my lawn and fire the pest control company, like there has to be a better way, and I don't know what it is and I am not qualified.

[00:07:01] I am not a chemist. I'm not a biologist, I'm not a veterinarian, but I am a mom and I care deeply about what's happening and we have to shift. And so I think actually one of the first things that I did is I started learning about feeding raw. And that has evolved and gone a lot of different directions over the last decade.

[00:07:21] But I really turned my house and our life inside out to learn everything that I could. And just start from like the basics, like what are the healthiest ways that I can promote wellness and not illness in her and my family? And so did that, eliminated the cleaners and the pesticides and all of those things and just started nursing her back to health.

[00:07:44] And so after that, I really wanted to share my experience, but I was also doing a lot of research on okay if this isn't the answer, then what is? And so I tried all of the, what I could find on natural, like on blogs about at that time blogs, what are people doing? And it was garlic tablets and brewers yeast... diatomaceous earth and steeped lemon water. And I tried all of those things believing like, yes, this is going to be it! And all of those things helped. They certainly did supplement the effort, but there was nothing like in a Gulf coast region that is hot and rainy, like there are just bugs all the time and it just wasn't enough.

[00:08:30] It wasn't strong enough. And, but what I did was I started my own blog and just shared my experience. And again I didn't have a background in that. I didn't know what I was doing, but I was just chatting my experience and would post like little videos and stuff. And this huge community of people reached out to me and would say, "That's happened to me too," or "Here's a video, do you think my dog is going through that?" And started sending me YouTube was getting bigger at the time and people were posting videos. And then I started researching and like trying to figure out keywords what are people, how are people talking about this? And, I just, I realized that there wasn't really a platform for that.

[00:09:13] Like there, there were I guess I would say a community, but there, there were a lot of us alone in our experiences thinking that not sure what it was and not like suspicious maybe of certain things, but unsure. Yeah. And then when so many people were reaching out to me and saying "That's happened to me too but what do I do, but what do I do?" And I, and then again, I went back to my research and started looking at the EPA and I realized for human pharmaceuticals, there are required reporting of incidents and deaths associated with the use of pharmaceuticals, but in 2008, 2009, that did not exist for pet health, especially under the EPA.

[00:10:00] And so I worked with a group to lobby to change that. So in 2009, the law changed. The reporting requirements of these large pharmaceutical companies that had a pet, an animal health division were required to report. And now veterinarians were required to report adverse reactions. And I started tracking that over the years and every year that number was doubling.

[00:10:24] It was increasing year after year. So one, I was grateful that we were able to create change in that we weren't unfortunately, we were not alone in our experience, but we were able to come together to say, "Hey, this is happening" so that we can start tracking what is happening. It's really it's awareness.

[00:10:48] And then not accepting status quo and saying there has to be a better way. How do we. How do we do this? And so that was really how I got started into all of this. And probably, I don't know, six to nine months in, nursing Luna back to health. And she was doing better and her hair was regrowing and she wasn't on any of those products anymore.

[00:11:13] I, right after that, sometime within that window, my grandmother passed away and left me, her cedar chest. And so I was sitting on hers on the cedar chest that she left me with Luna at my feet, sitting in my office, having a seizure. And I had this aha moment that

Cedar has been used for centuries to protect things of value to us.

[00:11:38] Whether it's blankets or even going all the way back to the mumification process, papaya leaves soaked in cedar were like a part of that process. And I later learned that, but I knew that like the cedar chest and the cedar closet and cedar blocks and repelling and things of that nature were just natural to the wood.

[00:11:59] And I also knew that I had horrible cedar allergies and it's it'd be great if there was less cedar pollen flying around. And so I just, I realized I'm like, this is, I think there's something and I didn't know what it was, but I just went down this, it was like a hunch, like I said, this aha moment.

[00:12:15] And I went down the path of exploring that and living in Texas where it's this like pervasive species but it's it's everywhere and it's naturally occurring. It's a renewable resource and it's spreading across the U S and it actually is health issues for people. Like what if there was a way to use that in a different form other than a cedar closet or a box or something like that.

[00:12:38] And so I started looking into cedar and what you could do with it. And I found out like, This was before, like now everyone's very into essential oils, right? Again, this was like 12 years ago, like over a decade ago, before essential oils were all the craze. And so I realized oh, you can extract oil.

[00:13:00] Like when they clear lands and they cut the tree down and then they grind it down to cedar shavings and that's used for animal bedding okay, that makes sense. And they grind it down further and then they steam distill it. So there's no, there's never a chemical process that occurs. So this is an organic material that's just growing on land that is removed because it's taking up a lot of groundwater and causing allergies for landowners.

[00:13:30] It's ground down to this fine powder. It's steamed distilled, and then out comes oil. And so I'm like, okay what can we do with that? So just started exploring again, I referred back to, I know enough about the world that we live in, that there is an element of compliance. Of course. Yeah. And so if I was going to start, if I was going to try to create something, I would want it to be something that was... I didn't even know the word marketable at the time, but I knew that it needed to be something that like was safe and people could use. And so I realized that under the federal law, there are registered products under the EPA, and then there are exempt products and so exempt products, there's this very short list of active and inert ingredients. And if you can formulate something that you can prove effective from the active ingredients and the inert ingredients, then you can sell it without it being a registered pesticide. So for me, that was the unlock. That was the gold mine of information, because it was a pretty short list, which also has made it very challenging to develop something that works because we, most of us know, even our, my non chemist self knows that like oil and water don't mix. And so how do you take this concentrated oil and dilute it down to a safe formulation that can be used to protect pets or your home or your lawn. And so that's really where the work for me began.

[00:15:14] And I cleared out my garage and I was like, this is there's something to this. And I don't know. But I left my job, which really I had developed into a career. I was tax consulting. So this world of like accounting and finance, not chemistry or biology or animal health or e-commerce or manufacturing or anything that I do today, but really just a labor of love.

[00:15:38] It's there's a better way I have to figure it out. And I just felt called and Luna

needed me and other families needed me. And I could not like, not hear the call.

[00:15:48]Will Falconer, DVM: People were calling you, right? Commenting on your blog and saying, "Hey, that happened to me too. You're not alone."

[00:15:54]Stephanie Boone: And I just, I felt responsible and I felt responsible for Luna. And if there was a way that we could help other families not have to go through the devastation that we went through and fortunately, Luna survived and she was with me another six years. So through all of this, yes, and was like healthy and running like a puppy again.

[00:16:19] And certainly after I consulted with you about like, how do I shift some of these things in our lives for her? And just became more educated, as a pet parent, but I cleared out the garage, I put up shelves and everything that was on that short list of ingredients I went online and I started ordering and some of them were powders and solids and liquids.

[00:16:40] And I, again, I didn't know what I was doing, but I figured it out and I just kept tinkering with it until I had something that I felt like worked and smelled pretty good and felt pretty good on your skin. And then I just made a bunch of vials of it and I gave it to everyone I knew. And I just tried. I was like, try it.

[00:17:02] Tell me what you think. Like we live on the Gulf coast. There's bugs everywhere. There's flies. There's gnats. There's no seeums. There's fleas. There's roaches like bugs everywhere. Yeah. Mosquitoes, the size of birds all the time. And the tiger mosquito had come out at that time where it doesn't even take water to survive or reproduce. They just, they're just everywhere. They're the little black ones with the white stripes. Wow. And I got enough feedback like, "Oh, I think this one works the best" or "This one works the best and smells the best" or whatever. And there was three of them that I then sent off during that time, I've found out like, oh, there's labs that actually do this. I'm doing my own, like very grassroots mix things in a bottle and share it with friends and family and neighbors. And, oh, this is actually like an industry. People actually like make formulas and they send them off to testing labs to determine efficacy.

[00:17:59] And if they work to kill or repel. And so that's what I did. And I, I think at the time I did all of this on a credit card where I had like an \$8,000 limit and I didn't pay myself for the first three and a half years. I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't know. My mom was like, when are you going to get a job?

[00:18:18]Like I have a job. I don't get paid for it, but I have a job and I'm figuring some things out. And I'm in my thirties at this time when everyone's "What are you doing?"

[00:18:29] Will Falconer, DVM: The entrepreneurial question mark, what are you doing?

[00:18:32] Stephanie Boone: What are you doing? And I didn't even know that I was doing the entrepreneurial endeavor at the time. I'm still like, oh yeah, I guess that's what I did. I guess that's what I am. But again, it was really like just Luna and this whole awakening or this whole knowing, the awareness that gave me that purpose and the drive to just keep figuring it out.

[00:18:51] I don't know and I'm not getting paid and I don't know how I'm going to put gas in my car, but I'm just going to keep going. And so maxed out the credit card, paid the efficacy lab, and then the one that worked the best is what we, what I went to market with. And then, so then I just started learning about how do I get the word out and how do I sell it?

[00:19:12] So I was doing farmer's markets and really selling online wasn't even, it was just beginning. Like there were, there was like WordPress for blogs and that kind of stuff, but having it right there was a shop. There was no online stores. It was very like, if you didn't

know how to code, which I certainly did not, then you didn't, you were selling things online but yeah, that's how that's the origin of how we got there, and once we, once I proved that it worked and started selling it, then. I think for a lot of people, the light bulb started going off. And so after, I guess I was in the Gulf coast for a couple of years and then had the opportunity to move back to Austin. And it was like night and day because I certainly loved the Gulf coast and I'm a water sign and I was like by the ocean and by the lake, but Austin is home and I had the opportunity to come back.

[00:20:05] And so it was like, talking to my people. People in Austin were already very like eco-conscious and, I wasn't having to persuade them or, they were already asking. And so do you know, I just got involved with the community here and the entrepreneurial community, and it's like, how, what can I do with this thing?

[00:20:24] And there were a couple of people that really believed in me and helped me figure out where to go from there.

[00:20:31] Will Falconer, DVM: That's a whole nother world getting a business off the ground. You want people around you that know the tricks and how to do it.

[00:20:38] Stephanie Boone: Yeah. And I moved from my garage to a converted bathroom in a pet store, where it was like 150 square feet.

[00:20:48] And I don't know if we can cuss on this podcast, but I YouTube'd how to remove a toilet and capped it off. Like I literally capped it off and put a carpet in this square and put like a folding table and chair with my computer. And so I kind of joke, like my first office was literally like the shitter.

[00:21:09] Like it was the bathroom behind this pet store. That was a hundred square feet. But when I moved to Austin, I was like if I'm going to make this stuff, I have to figure out how to scale that. And I went from making tiny vials of it to five gallon pitchers of it and figuring out how to put like nozzles or like filling things on that.

[00:21:34] And then I went to 55 gallon drums and figuring out okay how do I batch make it and quality control and all of those things. My first lease was a thousand square feet. And I was like, whoa. And I looked around and I'm like, how are we ever going to fill this? And within six months we like blew out of the space.

[00:21:56] And then I moved into 5,000 square feet and was very fortunate. There's this area in Austin where, you know, anyway, there's a lot of manufacturing buildings, and I was fortunate to move into one that had like contiguous space. And so I was in 5,000 square feet. And again, I moved in and I was like, wow, how are we going to fill this?

[00:22:20] And my dad helped me build all the tables and all the shelves, shipping tables. Then at that time we were learning like, how do you build an e-commerce site? And how do you get the word out? How do you do that? So I was learning about e-commerce and manufacturing and how essential oils totally like melt rubber and plastic.

[00:22:42] They don't melt them, but they dissolve it and they're off gassing. And so you have to find like compliant containers and it's I would love for this to be in glass. I don't want to just put plastic into the world. But then shipping glass bottles.

[00:22:56] So there's just been so much to learn. Yeah. And all of those things. And then we went from 5,000 square feet and we were able to punch a hole in the wall and move into 10,000 square feet. And then a couple of years later, we expanded into 15,000 square feet. And then this year in January, we tripled again.

[00:23:18] And so we went from that 15,000 square feet that we had been in for the last

four years into 45,000 square feet. Wow. And we're in a new facility now, we have over 50 employees.

[00:23:33] Will Falconer, DVM: You must be shipping all over the world. Are you?

[00:23:35] Stephanie Boone: We're not all over the world, but all over the country, all over the world part is challenging again, because of compliance.

[00:23:42] So most countries are, especially Europe, they're much more regulated even than the EPA or like Canada. We have a lot of thousands and thousands of inquiries in Canada. Like how can we get the product? And we have people that will drive across the border. And so the Northern United States, just to buy Wondercide, because we can't ship it into Canada because Canada doesn't have, they only have a registered system. They don't have the exempt product system, the way that the U S does. We certainly, there, there are some countries that we shipped to that I wouldn't be able to tell you, cause I don't know off the top of my head but yeah, definitely nationwide. We're in, I don't know, like 3000 pet stores and through our website and through Amazon .

[00:24:33] So it's been, it has been amazing. It's been a wild ride and I think one of the things too, that was pivotal in helping us was the opportunity to go onto Shark Tank, the TV show and the very bizarre way that happened. I think a lot of companies apply to that show and that wasn't something that, that we had done, but every , we live in central Texas and the blue bonnets.

[00:25:01] I know you're a flower guy. You love flowers. And I love bluebonnets. And one of the things that I did with Luna and Mercy every year was take bluebonnet pictures. And the day that Luna passed, it was March 24th. And we went that morning to take bluebonnet pictures at the JJ Pickle U.T. Research facility, because it was closest to where we were.

[00:25:27] She was 16 and a half at the time and wasn't walking great. I had a ramp for her to get out of the car, but she was still loving life. And that morning we went and took bluebonnet pictures. And that afternoon we were sitting in the backyard and she passed in my arms. And all of these, this isn't something I've talked about a lot, but these dragonflies swarmed like it was just, it was like a spiritual experience. And so still today, dragonflies and birds are like, I feel like they're my spirit animal, like this connection to Luna. And they show up such interesting times for me, but she passed and there was this just swarm of dragonflies and a couple of hours later, I was just sitting there and obviously grieving and my phone rang.

[00:26:20] And normally I don't answer phone calls that I don't know the number, but for whatever reason it was, I picked up the phone and it was a producer from Shark Tank and said, "We've heard about your company and we would like you to come on the show. And we only tape two times a year," and this was March 24th.

[00:26:40] And "We only take two times a year and it's in May and October, we were hoping you could come in October." And I said I am, I just found out I'm two months pregnant. So I waited until I was, I was 39. So Luna and the company like Luna was my first baby. The company was the second.

[00:27:01] And I realized like internally, I was like, if I'm going to do this, I'd better, I'm 39 . I better try now. And so it was just a bizarre experience to be pregnant with my daughter. When Luna, my first baby passed and then to be offered this opportunity to go on Shark Tank, when most people get nine months to a year to prepare for that.

[00:27:23] And I said I'm due in October. So I would not be able to fly. I would not be able to

do that. And they said, let's see if we can get you in for May. And so from that point, I had six weeks to prepare to go on to this national spotlight. And I really didn't want to do it. I was grieving.

[00:27:40] It was so hard. I felt so much love and so much loss simultaneously. I feel like it took everything I had, but I knew that it was my one opportunity to share Luna's story

[00:27:52] Will Falconer, DVM: And get the world aware of it.

[00:27:54] Stephanie Boone: And yes, and shout it from the rooftops, like in a way that I. I just, it was magical and I don't even know how that happened, but just grateful that the universe conspired to help us tell her story.

[00:28:10] Will Falconer, DVM: Sweet. Yeah. Let's talk about Wondercide a little bit, Stephanie. In a few words or sentences, what kind of makes it unique among these many options that people have for controlling pests? We, like you say, we want to control them. They're nasty. We don't like ticks on our dogs, spreading Lyme and these other diseases and fleas are a bother and they cause all sorts of allergies.

[00:28:34] What is there about Wondercide that makes it unique among the choices?

[00:28:39] Stephanie Boone: Yeah. So I think, we try to take the most natural approach possible where we're protecting the pet, but annoying the heck out of the pests and so killing and repelling them and using natural ingredients to do that.

[00:28:57] So everything that we're using is naturally derived. And so it's certainly more of a hands-on routine way of taking care of them versus a collar or drops or pills that you do once a month. I guess some of them now are like nine months or 12 months. Some of these products have really long duration.

[00:29:17] And I asked the question, "How do you think that is?" Whether it persists in the body or when you're treating your lawn, it persists in the lawn it's because it doesn't break down. It's bioaccumulative and it doesn't break down like natural ingredients do.

[00:29:35] So I think that is really the biggest difference. We try to use sustainable naturally occurring ingredients to formulate it and then protect with the lowest impact to human or animal health or environmental health as possible. And I think there's a lot of things that differentiate us even within what I would now call the flea and tick category of over the counter products.

[00:30:04] A lot of those are clove based, which works well too. I think some dogs and cats, they don't love it. And there can be some other issues with that. Our products don't have clove in it. But one of the things that I learned is that pet parents, especially if you're spraying a product, they want it to smell good.

[00:30:23] So how do you make something safe for the pet and their skin and for the home? That smells good, but that also works, but that isn't too strong. And so it really has been just a refining process over the years. And so our initial or our original sort of like flagship was the cedarwood fragrance. But then I realized oh, you can actually add a very small percentage of peppermint and have a peppermint fragrance, or a very small amount of lemon grass that's properly diluted and have a lemon grass fragrance.

[00:31:01] And we also have rosemary. So I think that's one of the ways that we differentiate is that these very pure, essential oils and low amounts that are diluted properly for the animal's health, but also your olfactory pleasure. Yeah, it can kill and repel the pest without a neurological or systemic impact to the animal or the living environment and also smell good at the same time.

[00:31:28] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. And on that neurological front, I think I sent a link, but I'm going to definitely have it in the show notes. I just learned this recently, I've written about Bravecto years ago, it's one of these really scary pesticides for fleas and ticks that is put in a pill and given as a treat.

[00:31:50] And the scary thing to me that immediately caught my ear was it starts killing within, I think it's within two hours of ingestion. So here's this poison pill, it's in a treat form, so the dogs think it's good, and you give it to them and they chew on it and it's poisoning the fleas and ticks by using your dog's blood to get the chemical out to the critter.

[00:32:16] So it turns out the FDA had enough chutzpah and enough reports of adverse events that they've sent out a fact sheet for pet owners and a warning.

[00:32:29] And they said no.

[00:32:31] Stephanie Boone: And I think it was either like the New York Times or the Washington Post. It was media that surfaced all of these things that finally got the ear of the federal agencies to pay attention..

[00:32:42] Will Falconer, DVM: Huh. So there's this whole class of pesticides called isoxazoles, getting too many S

[00:32:52] Stephanie Boone: Great job trying to pronounce it, right? If you can't like, that's what we used to say. If you can't pronounce it...

[00:32:58] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah, why would you give it to your dog, right? Isoxazoles, I think that's what it is. And it's, they said the FDA is alerting pet owners and veterinarians of the potential for neurologic adverse events in dogs and cats when treated with drugs that are in this class. That includes Bravecto, for dogs and cats, Bravecto Plus, Nexgard, Simparica, Credilio, which I think is in some other countries and Revolution Plus, which was another scary one before Bravecto ever came out, it kills everything, ticks and fleas and all this stuff. So now there's at least enough awareness brought to the fore, that we've got warnings about these things. And I'm guessing your Wondercide products don't even come close to the method of action that these things do. These are neurotoxins!

[00:33:51] Stephanie Boone: Right, that's a completely different mode of action. And even with the ingredients. So we have one because these exempt products, which means they are. Human food grade ingredients that if you can mix something up and it works, then you don't have to go through the process. But the classification of that is so mild, it literally does not require a caution warning on the label though we still add that just to be good stewards, right? To say don't let kids drink this stuff or whatever, but it's human food grade.

[00:34:27] There are certain words that we can't use anymore. We can't use words non-toxic, we can't use the word natural, because it's a litigious world and people sue you for all sorts of things. They are, we can say they are safe for use around and on pets and animals or I'm sorry, pets and children of all ages.

[00:34:48] But yeah the mode of action is through octopamine receptors. And so it's a biological mode of action versus a neurological mode of action. The neurological mode of action, what we mean by that, is it affects the central nervous system. So it doesn't discriminate. It works to kill the pests that way, but it also has a neurological impact on the animal and on humans.

[00:35:13] Even the products that aren't of that class that you mentioned, the traditional ones, or the ones that are the drops and the pills and the collars, if you read the back of the

box, it warns you: danger or warning. And that's a classification system that most consumers don't know. But if it doesn't say precaution or caution, then from there increases the potential harm and side effects, right? So it will say warning or danger and it warns you: Don't get this on your skin. Don't sleep with your pet, don't touch your animal for X amount of hours. And that was the thing, a decade ago that was the, I guess the, not the trigger, but like the aha for me, that the Bible that was like, Wait a minute when I turn this box over and it says, do not, Warning, don't get this on your skin

[00:36:08] Will Falconer, DVM: Wash, like crazy if you do ...

[00:36:09] Stephanie Boone: Wait, I'm putting it on my dog's skin and that's okay? And this is how we protect the ones we love, but don't get it on you. And that's when I realized I, I wouldn't, when it in reference to food or anything else, if it is not good enough for a human, it's not good enough for my dog,

[00:36:32] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah, that was a big aha for me as well. Those labels tell you so much, but they're in the finest small print that you've ever seen.

[00:36:40] Stephanie Boone: Four points is the legal requirement, I think four point font.

[00:36:45] Yeah. So get out your magnifying glass and you can see that you shouldn't get it on you and you should wash like crazy and throw your clothes into the washer if you get it on your clothing and all that sort of thing.

[00:36:56] Yeah.

[00:36:57] And use goggles and gloves.

[00:36:59] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah.

[00:37:00] Yeah. And neurological, just so we break that word down for people. That means in your animal, First back up to what happens to the pest. The reason the pest dies is it paralyzes them so they can no longer breathe or digest.

[00:37:16] So paralyzed, they're going to die. That's the way these chemicals work. And neurological just means the nervous system is the means of changing their state. Yeah. So is it any wonder that we see animals getting tics and tremors and even seizures with this same class of compounds? It's not.

[00:37:37] Stephanie Boone: And cancer, like the increased cancer rate.

[00:37:40] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. Yeah. So not surprising at all. And don't be, if anybody listening, don't be afraid of that word neurological. Just think it through, if it paralyzes the bug, it's going to have neuro effects on your animals as well. The nervous system is, keeps us moving smoothly and keeps us walking in a straight line and all those, our balance and all those sorts of things, it's all neuro stuff.

[00:38:04] So one other thing that really caught my ear early on with you and I think it's something that people will want to know is that, I remember you revealing to me how your products don't kill the good guys in the insect world. Like we've got honeybees now there that are dying of probably these neonicotinic insecticides that are out there and how are we able to kill and repel fleas and ticks, but not harm the good guys, Stephanie?

[00:38:31] Stephanie Boone: Yeah, that's a great, that's a great question. I refer to them as like good bugs and bad bugs. So the good bugs would be butterflies and bees and pollinators and bad bugs would be the fleas and ticks and ants and roaches.

[00:38:48] And so they are driven differently. So beneficials are sight driven to food and water and reproductive mates and the bad bugs are pheromone driven. And so the way that cedar oil works, it's a pheromone interruption. So it doesn't it doesn't have a pheromone

interruption for animals or for humans or for beneficial sight driven beneficial bugs, but it does for the bad bugs.

[00:39:20] And so it it makes them feel crazy. So if they come into it, so it creates, if you're trying to repel them let's say you're spraying your yard or you're spraying your pet down and a flea or tick comes in contact with them. It will repel them, just like ammonia, the ammonia smell to a human.

[00:39:40] Oh, back away. Yeah. Like fight or flight and it's flight. Move away. Yeah. And so if they're in an environment where they can't get away, they, it scrambles their brain in a pheromone driven way, not a neurological way, makes them crazy. And they start shutting down their breathing sphericals everything shuts down. But that doesn't happen with animals or humans or beneficials. And so beneficials are sight driven. They're not driven by pheromones. So when the product is in the environment with beneficials, they aren't impacted by it. And so that was. I certainly cannot take credit for designing the product to work that way.

[00:40:24] It is nature did that. And it's something that we learned. And so when you talk about like side effects, like that's the side effect and that's a great one, right? Is that we can protect our yards and therefore our families and our packs without having an adverse effect to pollinators and beneficial insects and beautiful dragonflies and butterflies.

[00:40:52] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. Yeah. Some of your favorites. Yes. Cool. And I'm guessing, in your business with all these people using Wondercide around the country and sneaking it into Canada and all that, you've probably heard some pretty cool success stories. And maybe you've got a few of your own besides Luna.

[00:41:10] Can you share a few of those with our audience?

[00:41:13] Stephanie Boone: Sure. I probably have some of those. So here's what I could share with you. This is Jenna Kay. And she says this product is so amazing. I use it on my dogs, my horses and my family. This is the safest, most effective product I have found. Thank you so much.

[00:41:31] Will Falconer, DVM: You've got a human version of it, right? People can put a mosquito repellent on their skin or something.

[00:41:37] Stephanie Boone: So now while Luna and protecting her and pets was the ethos brain child of all of this. After that I started developing other animal health products, like joint supplements from eggshell membrane and neem bark powder to help with digestive health.

[00:41:57] And a couple of years ago, I had to make the... Well, I'll try to correct myself. I didn't have to make the decision. I got to make the decision. Where are we wanting to focus as a company and where we felt like we could have the biggest impact. And while I loved those innovative products that a lot of like now other companies have learned about those ingredients and they're starting to infuse them or make them into products.

[00:42:25] That's great. And that's all really I ever wanted, which is like better options for pets or more options for pets and pet parents. And so we had to make, I got to make the decision of like, where do we want to lean in and where do we want to focus? And I felt like still today, a decade later, the biggest unmet need, the biggest difference that we can make in the world is safe, pest protection.

[00:42:50] And so that's when we rebranded and said, we're not just products for pets, people and property. We are, and it's not pest control. That's how we're different. It is not

pest control. It's pest protection. And so we're protecting our family and protecting the ones that we love with fierce love and doing it in a safe way.

[00:43:12] And so we really just then focused on our pet care essentials. So we have a shampoo bar. We have our skin tonic spray that really helps with like dry itchy skin and hotspots and. And allergies, no matter just to help the pet skin and to call it and to provide some comfort for them, no matter what the root cause is, though, we should always be trying to figure out what the root cause is..

[00:43:36] But to answer your question, yes we now have a line of indoor pest control products, outdoor pest control products, and then insect repellent for families. So that's, that's where we realize like that's where we can make the biggest difference in the world. And the biggest impact is just pest protection for the whole pack.

[00:43:57] So we're all in this together. We're all in it together. And that's what we say. For packs of every kind everywhere. So no matter what your pack looks like, we're huge supporters of diversity and no matter what your family looks like, your pack looks like, we're here to help you protect them. So that's, yeah, that's really exciting for us, but let me see if I have a couple of other.

[00:44:25] A couple of other ones here. So here is a comment from Debbie and there's a lot of these, like we're on Facebook and Instagram. So definitely feel free to check those out. But Debbie says, "My long hair dog is a magnet for ticks. It's so bad. We were pulling off up to eight to 10 ticks a day. I decided to give this spray a try.

[00:44:46] Oh my God, it works so great. I noticed this morning, a very tiny tick on my blanket. Came to realize it was a hitchhiker, but died due to the spray on the long fur. Finally something that really works."

[00:45:00] Will Falconer, DVM: That was one of the things that really caught my attention, Stephanie, was because I knew we could do flea control in a non-toxic way.

[00:45:08] I was focused on getting the environment to stop reproduction of fleas, but ticks are a whole other world. They'd been on the planet for zillion years and they're so hard to control. They're in a class unto themselves. So when I learned Wondercide worked on them, I was like, okay, I'm in.

[00:45:28] That's really head and shoulders above the average poison that's out there and natural things just didn't, weren't doing that well on, on the tick front.

[00:45:39] Stephanie Boone: And it certainly, it's taken a while, I would say from a behavioral standpoint, when so many of us in the last 10 or 20 years that are pet owners are like, oh, how do I protect my pets?

[00:45:52] And it's oh, you just squeeze this stuff between their shoulders once a month. And you're good. And they have evolved and they're getting, the pests are getting stronger and stronger, or the collars or the pills. And so whatever application method like we've discussed tonight or today is, that, that process or that mode of action, it's do it and forget it.

[00:46:13] And while that's convenient and nice. It certainly has these side effects or the potential side effects associated with that. That you're, that you don't, that you don't have to have. And so with Wondercide, it's a spray. And so how often you need to use it depends on your environment and how active your lifestyle is.

[00:46:32] And frankly, I think it's bonding. Because you rub the coat in the opposite direction, you mist your pet down, make sure you get their legs and their tail and their, their

tummy and their chest. And then you go for your morning walk or you go for your hike and what pet doesn't love her rub down?

[00:46:49] And so I think about it in a it's a behavioral change. That I saw early on where people like, oh, how often do I have to do this? And do I have to do it every day? Or do I do it every week? Or how often do I do it? And again, it's like your environment. So if you live in a home with a yard and let's say you have an older pet, that's not that active.

[00:47:10] And maybe you only go on a couple of walks a week. Then I would say one of the most important things is to treat your environment. Preferably with Wondercide, but to treat you're controlling the environment and then you only need to spray your dog down as needed. But let's say you live in an apartment or you live in a, let's just say an apartment.

[00:47:33] And so you're going for multiple walks a day. Then you need to spray them down at least once a day. And I think about the extension of the word protection, like why do you put a leash on your pet? To protect them and to make sure that they're not running out in front of cars or running to meet people, you're keeping them safe in that way.

[00:47:53] And so I think a really handy thing to do is have the bottle by the leash. And if you're putting the leash on to go for a walk and protecting them that way, and then mist them down, rub it in, have that like loving moment and then go on your adventure. Yeah. That's another way that it's different and it's a behavioral change, but it's, it can be a positive one.

[00:48:13] It doesn't have to feel like it's high maintenance or something you have to do all the time. Again it's changing your mindset. It's something you get to do.

[00:48:22] Will Falconer, DVM: One of the things I remember early on about you and your company was how much great customer support you gave. So people can ask these questions and there's a way for them to get answers, right?

[00:48:34] Stephanie Boone: So many ways and we track, we're very data-driven, we track how successful we are at helping people. And so we have an incredible team. They're actually, instead of customer service, we call them our customer love. And they can, they respond very quickly on social media. We obviously have a Q and A on the website. We have a chat on the website. We have phone support, we have email support and we're constantly tracking how we're doing. We send out surveys and tell us the truth, because we can't do better if you don't, real be honest with us. And I think right now, our customer, our love satisfaction scores, like 97, 98%.

[00:49:19] And it's just, it's incredible because we have all been, so I'm just really grateful, for my team, like we've all been on the other end of the call. You have to like, call the telephone company or the internet company, and like you get passed around or the bank and you get passed around and no one knows, oh.

[00:49:39] Or tech support. And so we really just want to help people on the first time. And if we don't have the answer, we will get it for you and get back to you. Yeah. But yeah, the team was really incredible with product knowledge and experience share and I've heard, I've heard customers say this and.

[00:49:59] Have you considered trying that and sorry that, that fragrance, wasn't your favorite? Do you want to try a different one? How can we, I think what we call it as our happiness guarantee. So we just try to do our best to make everybody happy and protect their pet.

[00:50:16] Will Falconer, DVM: Sweet. Yeah, that was a really big plus for me, that I noticed

is people can get in touch with you easily and in many different ways.

[00:50:24] So that's super, I wanted to end Stephanie just by letting people know that before we got on, you made a special available to my listeners, which I thank you for. It's a really sweet thing. So there's going to be a code in the show notes. And I think if I remember right, it's Vital 2021, and we've got a page for you that'll be linked in the show notes. And we'll have Wondercide's coupon there for you to get a sweet discount on any number of products that you choose. And we'll explain how to get that. And Stephanie send us any links that you'd like to have in those show notes, ask the team if there's any, besides that page that you made for my readers.

[00:51:10] Stephanie Boone: Yeah. So we did make one for you. That's Wondercide.com/VITAL. Okay. And thank you again for your work, Dr. Falconer. It is so vital to our community. So thank you for that.

[00:51:23] Will Falconer, DVM: Oh, you're welcome.

[00:51:25] Stephanie Boone: And so you were right that coupon code that set up as Vital 2021 and it's for 15% off of everything. I think everything but our lawn sprays, and that's only because of COVID. There are global supply chain shortages, and so we can't get the sprayers. So if you guys have those, hang on to them and refill them with concentrate because they're not making any more right now, it's all sourced and made in the U S but it's just the materials. Yeah. And transportation it's happening across the board.

[00:52:01] But yes we're excited to offer it, offer your listeners 15% off of anything in the catalog and just really appreciate the support. We even have, if you aren't sure, we have sample packs, so you can try the different fragrances or try whatever you might like.

[00:52:18] Will Falconer, DVM: Sweet. Sweet.

[00:52:19] Yeah. Stephanie, great reconnecting with you after over a decade. And I'm so glad that Wondercide has served so many animals and helped you and helped so many people get off the pesticide world that's dragging so many animals into trouble.

[00:52:36] Stephanie Boone: Yeah. Thank you so much. It's actually, I just realized when I was preparing for this, that we had, we just crossed over the 1 million families served, March. And I was looking at the date and it was 3/24. And I like, at this moment, I'm just realizing that sort of the five-year anniversary of Luna's passing and wow. I just got chills, but yeah, a million families, it's incredible. And I didn't, to your earlier point about entrepreneurship, I did not know what I was doing. I don't know if I would have kept doing it if I did, though.

[00:53:16] Yeah. Yeah. But it's been incredible and just really honored and grateful to have been part of the solution. So thank you so much for your time and the opportunity to share Luna's story and her legacy and yeah, let's definitely keep in touch.

[00:53:33] Will Falconer, DVM: Thanks for listening everyone. This is Dr. Will Falconer for Stephanie Boone and we will see you next episode. And in the meantime, check our show notes out for a special. Bye for now. .