

Episode 34: Could you start a titer clinic?

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.

[00:00:36] Welcome to another session of the Vital Animal Podcast. I have the very special privilege of interviewing a friend and a student of mine. Lisa Rosamino, who is up here. I believe upstate New York. Is that right, Lisa?

[00:00:51] Lisa Rosamino: Yes, that's right. Saratoga. New York

[00:00:54] Will Falconer, DVM: Saratoga. Okay. So how far up the area is that from New York city?

[00:01:00] Lisa Rosamino: Oh, it's about three hours.

[00:01:02] Will Falconer, DVM: All right. And you have got a business up there helping lots of dogs and their owners. Tell us about that business. What's it called?

[00:01:10] Lisa Rosamino: It's been affectionately called Rawsome.. It really morphed into me, feeding my dog raw out of desperation many years ago, because I created a very unhealthy dog with over diligence over care.

[00:01:25] So I was interested in his story. I, our first family puppy was a black lab named Bailey and I was connected with the local breeder that was very good, but extremely. Allopathic. And I'm an, I'm a nurse with that background and I hadn't converted to the bright light side yet at that time, I hadn't seen the light.

[00:01:48] And so I really wanted this puppy to be safe and protected. And I probably allowed too many parvo vaccines and she got parvo presumably from the vaccine. And boy did she almost die and they didn't want her in the clinic. I took her home and she had IV's that were hung. And I'd go back to the hospital to get more fluids than a new IV site, but she lived, but she was never healthy.

[00:02:15] She was itchy, smelly, sweet as can be. And she died to me at the early age of 11 from bone cancer. So I feel like she was our sacrificial lamb in some respects.

[00:02:29] Will Falconer, DVM: And so she was a bit of an impetus to, to take a new direction for you.

[00:02:33] Lisa Rosamino: Totally. Because it was so heartbreaking. And actually with the people that I work with now, I see this heartbreak over and over with a lot of what they think is, sound advice from their vet.

[00:02:45] And I have to redirect them in the opposite direction if they want to well dog.

[00:02:49] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. Great. That you've got a nursing background. That's a big leap. I have a handful of nurses, I think who come over to the understanding that more is not better and vaccines are not the answer to all illness.

[00:03:03] And so I applaud you for making the leap from that very conventional path to where you are now.

[00:03:10] Lisa Rosamino: I think when you see that something doesn't serve you, we should shift and yeah, and I think for a lot of us in the medical field, there's a frustration. There's a knowing that something ain't right.

[00:03:21] Yup. And so I think when we can't unlearn what we learn, when we learn the right stuff, in my opinion, I agree. When we know about nutrition, we can't justify kibble-- you just can't go back.

[00:03:33] Will Falconer, DVM: And vaccine damage, it's hard to go back and say that was

just a one-off, I'm not going to see that again.

[00:03:39] Or my neighbors seeing that didn't have anything to do with my understanding about vaccines being dangerous, et cetera. Yeah. Good for you.

[00:03:48] Lisa Rosamino: And also I work with a population of mostly young adults with developmental disabilities I'm an employment specialist now, it was just like a job coach. I adore those on my case, but I really question how much of this has been from the job.

[00:04:05] And it's so sad.

[00:04:07] Will Falconer, DVM: It is. Yeah. Their lives have been changed for good, most of them. Yeah. They're not going to come out. So tell us about Rawsome. What do you do there?

[00:04:16] Lisa Rosamino: So basically I originally started out of need to create a little bit of a co-op because there had to be a point person to just source good quality things that we would feed a raw diet.

[00:04:29] So I started to just have a little handful of people that we I got stuff because raw feeders, we're crazy. We run around from one store to the next, looking for day old broccoli and artichokes and stuff. You know what I mean? But I just, you became that person that said, let me, I can handle this.

[00:04:44] Cause I, we have a little bit of property, a little gentlemen's farm, and I could have cars back here or a truck back here early in the morning. So I started to source some of the ingredients that go into a do it yourself raw diet, and it just grew and grew. So now. Basically a co-op and I do pretty much most of the work, so I dunno who's cooperating with me, but no, but I have a bunch of wonderful volunteers and I have a phenomenal group.

[00:05:10] We're really a little community, but I also have a ready-made product as well. That's really a great launching point for people that should have started feeding raw yesterday. They can just start and not worry about learning everything. Cause people are pretty freaked out about what they think they need to know before they can start.

[00:05:28] And I, I have a private Facebook that's just so that everybody's kind, and we were no matter where you're at in this journey, we're very supportive. We're very encouraging. There's no mudslinging. And that's where a lot of your stuff is posted. John Robb's stuff. Anything that's that I feel is informative.

[00:05:49] I, I get to share and it makes me look good, but really I can't take any credit for sharing all this good stuff.

[00:05:55] Will Falconer, DVM: Thanks for sharing that. How many people do you think you're serving through the Rawsome co-op?

[00:06:00] Lisa Rosamino: I think there's about 200 in that group and there's probably about a hundred in the ready-made product called Pack Leader.

[00:06:09] Will Falconer, DVM: So 100 of the 200 or another 100?

[00:06:12] Lisa Rosamino: Another 100.

[00:06:13] Will Falconer, DVM: Wow. So 300 people are benefiting.

[00:06:16] Lisa Rosamino: And I never advertise. I don't want anybody to tell anybody about me. I'm so burnt out.

[00:06:23] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. Yeah. I hear ya. It's a lot of work. Yeah. I'm glad you've got some volunteers. This is just how you probably heard the interview with Casey Maxwell earlier. That's how she got started in San Francisco Raw, SF Raw., and it's just grown and grown.

[00:06:36] And like you she's serving lots and lots of people in her area with raw food makings and prepared raw food. So you can come in and pick something up, but you have to be, you have to fly through the gates first. She doesn't just take anybody off the street. So very cool.

[00:06:54] One of the reasons I asked you on Lisa was it caught my ear with my last interview with Dr. John Robb, that you are one of the people doing titer clinics.

[00:07:08] So for those of you who haven't heard the word titer yet, titer is a measure of antibodies in your dog or your cat's blood or your blood, if you're going to a human physician. A titer just means how much immunity shows up as antibodies in your blood.

[00:07:24] And we can use those tools to decide, "Did my animal become immunized from past vaccines or maybe past natural exposure?" And they can help us make decisions to avoid excessive vaccinations, because if there's a titer, it says, yeah, my animal is immune. I don't need to get another vaccination. So tell us about your titer clinics.

[00:07:49] How did that evolve? And you being a nurse must be an ace in the hole for getting that going.

[00:07:55] Lisa Rosamino: Well again, I try to rise to the calling of the need and there I really was pretty put off by a local situation with somebody that really needed a rabies titer, because she was in trouble with the town for, in the Gestapo go door to wonder if your dog is vaccinated.

[00:08:16] So she was pretty worried about going to court and being in trouble. So I suggested that she go to somebody and get a titer done. It's a no brainer that it's pretty scientific to present. It may not fly, but it certainly shows due diligence to a judge in my opinion, and this particular vet, I guess had quoted her like \$300 for it and she didn't have the money.

[00:08:39] And I was just, I felt like she knew the truth that it probably should cost about 60 bucks or maybe under a hundred through John Robb, and so that didn't sit well with me. And I just felt like, why don't we just do a grassroots thing ourselves? So actually it was last March when you-know-what hit that we had the titer clinic all planned, but it, so it didn't happen.

[00:09:03] So it's been rescheduled for, it'll probably be in a few weeks here, but like I said I have a little farm. And I've got easy access to come in and out. So I've actually asked two wonderful holistic vets locally, if they would participate. And if they wanted to have a fee I had, I have no problem with that, but neither one of them had wanted that.

[00:09:27] So they're bringing their own vet techs. There's going to be two vets, which now I realize the techs could probably stand in for that, which you make a little bit more. Yeah. So anyway, we've got a flyer, we've got an Excel sheet where we're going to schedule people. They've got to fill out paperwork prior, just simple stuff, decide what, whether they want the core and rabies or just one or the other.

[00:09:52] And so it's, hopefully it'll be smooth barring life not happening, but, so we're going to just I'm going to use my home. And get to my, on deck and ready to go and we're going to do it that way. And then, and so I think we should have a really good turnout because there's a really strong need and a strong interest.

[00:10:11] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. Yeah. And in my make sure I call out the episode. My episode recently with Dr. Robb was number 30, where we talked about the size of the dose,

but that's where this discussion also came up. You can get about vet tech to set up a clinic in your store or in your neighborhood or whatever. And in your case, two holistic vets is even better, they're willing to volunteer their time to draw blood.

[00:10:39] And as he said, all you need is somebody to draw the blood, a centrifuge to spin it down. And your dog or your cat. I think it was a, there was three things. I can't remember. The third. Basically through Dr. Robb, protect the pets.com. You can send these yourself, you take the blood that you get from a titer clinic, you can put it in a ups envelope that comes from Kansas state lab, where they run the test and send it off yourself. And Dr. Robb will help interpret that for you. He'll give you a, an immune certificate that says, yeah, there is a titer that therefore says this animal is immune. And you've got some evidence to keep in your files that, yeah, my dog is a good citizen or my cat is a good citizen and immune to rabies and immune to... you've got a choice, you can do these core vaccines as well, which Lisa mentioned, which is probably distemper, hepatitis and parvo, I'm guessing. And then a cat's probably Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (and Panleukopenia). Are you going to do cats as well or just dogs?

[00:11:47] Lisa Rosamino: I hadn't even thought of it, but that's a wonderful idea. Okay. We'll have to be all wrapped in grass.

[00:11:54] Will Falconer, DVM: First Hawk- Eagle gloves, okay. You're just on the verge of getting that rolling. And so many natural pet stores could do this across the country. It's a no brainer. The reason this discussion came up is I had a client who said, " I tried to get a titer from my vet. My vet wouldn't draw the blood for me to send off.

[00:12:13] He wanted to send it off to Dr. Robb, and the vet wouldn't draw the blood. So I asked Dr. Robb, " what's an alternative?" He said, "oh, this happens all the time. We get a vet tech in, we get a bunch of blood drawn and everybody goes home with their own little package to Kansas state where they run the test anyway."

[00:12:31] And he also pointed out that he's educating vets about this so that they don't get charged \$150 from IDEXX or one of these Antech labs. They can send it directly to Kansas state, which is where they're run anyway. And then pass on the savings to their clients.

[00:12:49] Lisa Rosamino: And, I find that if a client goes to the veterinarian and the vet tells them what the price breakdown is, it's a lot.

[00:12:56] And so I think that the vet could almost logically say, and if the titer comes back and it's not good, you're going to have to vaccinate them anyway. So I think that a lot of pet owners are saying, all right, let's just vaccinate, which is such a wrong direction. So I think ... honestly, people could do this in their community, in their garage, out of their garage.

[00:13:17] They could put a couple yoga mats down. So I think it's so wonderful to do in a facility or a business because it's wonderful for the business and it shows such integrity in my opinion, but we could dumb it down a lot more than that even. If somebody is willing to do it, I think we could go around that complication.

[00:13:38] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. Yeah. I think that, I think the value of having a, like a pet shop or a store front is that you can get many people into the same time frame and have one tech who stays busy just drawing the blood. So that's an advantage of scale, I think. That's excellent. Cool.

[00:13:54] Lisa Rosamino: I'll mention that when you said that client that you had, that her veterinarian was n't very open to drawing the blood. My first I've only done one titer for my Aussie, and it was through John Robb and it was the most wonderful experience. It was so

seamless. But I had a local mobile vet come to pull her blood, and then he could spin it in his truck because he had a centrifuge.. And I told him, after I told him after how grateful I was for him and that I could get him so much business doing this.

[00:14:24] And he didn't say much cause he was pretty dry, but his wife sent me a scathing email later that he has absolutely no interest in getting involved in this. He served you and you alone. And I was just like, I was just trying to help his business, but she was not open at all.

[00:14:39]Will Falconer, DVM: He's got six, six days a week of seeing animals that are sick and trying to figure out how they're sick and how to get them well.

[00:14:44] So yeah, I hear you.

[00:14:46] Lisa Rosamino: No, actually this vet saw clients three times a week, and then he was pulling into retirement. But it was really that he had no interest in drawing titers.

[00:14:56] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. So that triggers a thought for me, which is, you may know this from nursing, but what is the simplest procedure and the highest markup that happens in a veterinary office?

[00:15:09] It's vaccination. Yeah, no question. Do you draw in the fluid in the syringe that takes 10 seconds, you lift the skin and you squirt it in. And the cost on the dose of vaccine, last time I checked for rabies is about \$2 and 40 cents. And so you look at the bill you're paying and that's marked up way more than 10 times often, probably 20 or more times.

[00:15:36] So who wouldn't want to for economics thinking, just vaccinate instead of do a titer, you don't have to think about it. You don't have any, basically any cost involved and there's not a long history taking, there's maybe a brief exam that takes place. Let's if you want to see a vet on a yearly basis, let's just bypass that idea that has to include a vaccination. Because there's no logical reason to do that, but it is great to have a hands on exam.

[00:16:08] Your vet can know and feel things that you may miss at home. But it's gotta be in the context of I'm here for a health checkup, period. I'm not interested in getting more vaccines. Cause my animals animal's already immune. See? Here's the titer. And you can have that in your file and bring it to the vet office and any vet who knows what a titer is says.

[00:16:30] Oh yeah, sure enough. There's a parvo titer that's positive. There's a distemper titer that's positive. And there's a rabies titer. You may get some blow back on rabies because everybody and their brother, most communities and states have a law about it, but that doesn't make it impossible to avoid excess vaccination as well.

[00:16:53] Keep an ear open for, or actually visit: I'll put this in the show notes, visit my free Rabies Short Course and start your education there. We'll go into more depth in a paid course before too long to help you see that you've got options. But yeah, the other thing is mentioning this to Lisa before the show and I just want to make sure everyone's on the same page with the two of us. There are some who feel that yearly titers is a smart idea.

[00:17:23] So let's talk for a minute about what Dr. Robb uncovered in episode 4, and what I talked about in more depth with Julie Anne Lee in episode 16, which is that a titer is really a yes or a no question.

[00:17:39] Did my animal make immunity? If the titer is positive in any number: yes. Or did my animal not make immunity? There's zero showing on the titer test. It's less than it's. It's nothing. So it's either positive or negative. So once you know that, what do you do with it?

[00:17:58] We also know from the immunologists, primarily from Dr. Ron Schultz, University of Wisconsin, PhD in immunology, veterinary immunology, that immunity lasts a long time. There's this thing called duration of immunity and the odds are it's going to be years and years of immunity, if not life. That's published work out of Current Veterinary Therapy, way back when. So long lived immunity means you don't have to keep testing that immunity every year.

[00:18:31] It's going to go on for years, probably for life say the veterinary immunologists. But here's the thing, and I'll have a link to a post I've written or a page I've written in my series on vaccines called The Fallacy of Titer Tests, which is eventually a titer will run low. It's just a given it's not in Nature's best interest to keep pumping out antibodies year after year, when there's no challenge, there's no parvo blowing up their nose or distemper coming along.

[00:19:03] It's a waste to keep making a titer, making antibodies. So at a certain point, probably years down the road, the titer will fall. The mistake is if you read that as zero immunity, "Oh oh, my animal needs the gas tank filled! We got to go back and get another shot." If that happens, it absolutely happens all the time and seniors and I cringe because I hear more and more reports of seniors who start getting very ill after that unnecessary vaccine.

[00:19:36] So it's important to understand that titers only measure part of the immune response. There are hidden behind titers, memory cells that are not very measurable unless you live in a lab and you can afford thousands of dollars of testing. So these memory cells, if they need to, if they're get exposed to parvo or distemper as an adult and the titer is low, they will start making a titer again, really quickly.

[00:20:03] They'll pump out the antibodies and you'll have a titer once more. So for those people who are finding ways to avoid vaccines, do use a titer test. That'll tell you if your animal made immunity from that vaccine, but don't rely on a titer test to tell you the whole story. It does not. It just tells you part of it.

[00:20:23] Lisa Rosamino: I think that's so valuable because sometimes we have to switch our thinking. We go allopathic and then we want to be err on the side of safety for our pet, but then we've got this voice in our head. Like even the postcards that recommend you come in for a well dog check. I don't, that really means come in for their vaccines and that's, I don't consider that to have the same equal meaning like what you said, if a veterinarian palpates, the dog, does the once-over and does a real thorough physical exam that is for wellness and preventativeness, but "C'mon in cause it's cause your dog's little hourglass ran out and now you're, "Whoops, I'm not immune anymore." They say they're due for their vaccines. Yes. Yes. And that's, and I know, I think w you coined a phrase, "They're current," you said that's what we should answer.

[00:21:16] Your dog is current. Yeah. I really like that.

[00:21:19] Will Falconer, DVM: Yes. Yes. The reality is if they showed immunity on their titer test, way back when, the odds are, they are current on vaccines, and you can tell that to any groomers or apartment managers or anybody you like.

[00:21:34] So besides raw food and titer clinic. That's about to come up, it sounds like you're also fairly involved with educating folks. And I think that deserves applause as well. So I will link to your Facebook group. Can people join that even if they aren't in your area?

[00:21:51] Lisa Rosamino: Sure. Okay. We're we're only 500 now. We're but it's a group of 500 great people. Cool and very encouraging.

[00:22:00] Yeah. So I think my goal is really to create community within the dog population. Some are are really fighting pretty significant battles with their pets, that we all know the damage was done, and it's going to be hard too. Yeah, but the support that people get to try to think differently and take different approaches.

[00:22:21] I can't tell you how many people. I know that they take the new puppy to the vet and they come home with a bag full of drugs and suppressive steroids. And I cringe, but I'll tell you, you have a quick conversation with them, show them a little bit of logic and they get it quick and they take another direction.

[00:22:39] And that's really gratifying. You wish they didn't have to end up in that place to begin with. But yeah, like I said, I think if people learn stuff, it's going to be hard for them to unlearn it and buy into the propaganda again.

[00:22:55] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. Yeah. And I think a lot of people like you with your early Lab that got into such sickness, they learn from that experience hopefully, and don't have to keep repeating it.

[00:23:06] And it gives them a new direction to go well, Sure seemed like the more we went to get allopathic prevention, the sicker this dog got, we gave a monthly heartworm, or we gave a yearly vaccine or whatever. And it seemed every time we did more, things got worse. So that's a great springboard for people.

[00:23:28] And the other thing is, I think it's huge that people not feel alone in this path, right? It's a pioneering path, unfortunately. I'm looking forward to the day before I leave the planet when it's commonplace. And the exception is the people who say, oh, I got to get annual vaccines. So having a community where you can share stories and share thoughts and hear many other people giving input is an extremely valuable thing, whether you do it on Facebook or. you, join us in our Vital Animal Alpha group, where we're studying acute homeopathy for your animals. And we have a discussion group and we have a live meeting every month. And just having the chance to bounce ideas off of someone who is of a like mind, whether they live in your neighborhood or not, it doesn't matter.

[00:24:17] Lisa Rosamino: And I think that we're starting to know there's a better way. We just don't know what that better way is until somebody does a little handholding. A little come alongside me. I know that this is so typical that's happened with me for the last several years is people have really sick animals.

[00:24:32] They've gone every traditional route and the end up at a holistic vet, maybe talking about acupuncture, Chinese medicine, other modalities. But that's a real twist for them too, because that's a whole other thing that they're just not familiar with. So they're entering into that. But then one of the vets that's actually going to do volunteer for the clinic, she tells them that she can't heal them unless they change the diet. So talk about that, blowing their mind because they bought the best kibble they could ever get in.

[00:25:03] Sometimes they buy prescription kibble that has actually no value to it, generally. And so now this vet's saying, you've got to feed your dog raw and they, and then she pushes them my way sometimes and they come to me like a deer in the headlights. They're like so overwhelmed and now they've got to do this, but they're at the end of the road. They're really, they don't have too many other choices other than to start doing it. So I

talk them off the cliff. I tell them to take a deep cleansing breath.

[00:25:30] We can do this. And then we start to just dumb it down. And then I watch them exhale. But I tell them, you know what, this is the most gratifying thing you'll do for your pet. And so it takes five minutes to prepare a meal rather than 22 seconds. You're going to be glad you did. And they, and the healing is pretty, pretty darn quick in some respects.

[00:25:51] So that's the part, when I see the zombies come over, that are like, was so blown away with all that they feel they have to do right now, but that's where the handholding is good.

[00:26:02] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. Yeah, it's very valuable. And the animals are so responsive to that. Even just a diet change in the direction from a kibble to a raw diet, they'll see the dogs a lot eyes light up within a week of doing that within two weeks, they'll be shinier on the coat, that matter in the eyes will start disappearing or they'll start sparkling, the ears clear up.

[00:26:23] Yeah. It's so rewarding. Yeah, that's great. Yeah Lisa, this has been great, and it's going to inspire people to A. Get with community, B, find a source of raw food in your neighborhood, or get it shipped in if you're, if there's nobody around you and see, start thinking about titer clinics locally, all you people with pet stores, especially.

[00:26:50] Maybe co-ops that unload the truck with raw meats and stuff could just easily say we're gonna, we're going to unload that truck in a gym this week and in the gym, we're going to have a vet tech who's going to come and draw blood for you who want to get titers done. Can people contact you for organizational ideas along those lines?

[00:27:12] Okay. All right. Good. So we'll have some contact info in the show notes for that. Let me get you the right call out letters. So you'd go to the right place. This is going to be episode number 34 with Lisa Rosamino. So the shortcut to get there is Vital Animal dot com slash 34, we'll have valuable links there.

[00:27:34] So if you're listening to this on mobile Vital Animal dot com slash 34 will get you the goodies and how to hook up with Lisa, learn more, get something organized in your community. And get those animals just another advantage along moving down the natural path, whether it's getting raw feeding going in your area, you could probably write a book on that.

[00:27:57] You started from nothing. And put together, you probably got a ocean full of freezers in your barn or something.

[00:28:05] Lisa Rosamino: Every month we get a notice from the, or whoever paid the national grid. They keep saying that we're the highest in the area. And I think our house must glow, but I have three stand-up freezers in my garage, two chest freezers, a stand-up in my barn, and I have 5,000 pounds in storage. Somebody out of put me out of my misery. I'm telling you,

[00:28:30] Will Falconer, DVM: I want to put a call out to all those volunteers out there. If you liked being part of that stuff. There's nothing like a co-op. Grew up in my college years, going to co-ops for my food. And I got a discount when I helped out for several hours a month, it was fun and got to work alongside people of like mind.

[00:28:45] And so if you're in the Sarasota area and can help Lisa out do volunteer and wherever you've got a source of rough food or want to get one started, just get a band of people together. It can happen. It can be as simple. I remember a co-op where it was just a meeting place in a parking lot and a truck would come and unload all these natural foods.

[00:29:07] Lisa Rosamino: It's Saratoga, not Sarasota,.

[00:29:11] Will Falconer, DVM: I don't want to send you to Florida.

[00:29:15] Lisa Rosamino: Dr. Will, if you start to create a co-op, you're really doing the vendors in your area a favor, because the stuff that we use is a lot of times it's just discard of the food industry, chicken necks, chicken liver, turkey, necks, all that stuff, that icky stuff that we call it, but the vendor that maybe is a restaurant supplier, that's a pass through thing for them and they can make a little bit on it and it's going to good use and we buy in a lot of volume. I know that I've got a really good relationship with vendors here and they laugh because I'm always singing their praises about how much, how beautiful those chicken necks were or whatever. And they think I'm nuts, but I, but it really, we have healthy dogs because of those particular businesses, that we're using.

[00:29:58] Will Falconer, DVM: Yeah. That's a great idea. Yeah. And it's going to be a win-win. Not only did the dogs get healthier, but the people that vend the stuff have an outlet for chicken feet and things that might not be valuable to a restaurant.

[00:30:12] Lisa Rosamino: Thank goodness that bone broth's in style, because they use it for good.

[00:30:19] Will Falconer, DVM: All right, everyone. Join us next week for another episode and big, thanks to Lisa Rosamino. Again, join us in the show notes for this episode at Vital Animal dot com slash 34. We'll see you next time.