

FDA Approves Canine Obesity Drug

The medication is the first of its kind approved in the United States, maker says.

Posted: January 8, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the Pfizer Animal Health drug Slentrol for the management of canine obesity, making it the first veterinary-approved obesity drug for dogs in the United States, according to the company.

Pfizer says it developed Slentrol in response to the unmet need for a medication to help veterinarians and pet owners manage canine obesity in a comprehensive program that includes healthy diet and appropriate exercise.

"Why are 40 percent of dogs in the United States overweight or obese? The answer is simple: Too much food and too little exercise," said Claudia Kirk, DVM, Ph.D., associate professor of medicine and nutrition, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tennessee.

"In today's hectic world, it's a challenge for many dog owners to find time to ensure their pets get adequate exercise. And in our culture, we often equate food with love -- without being aware of potential adverse health consequences. For both pet owners and veterinarians trying to manage a dog's weight, these habits can be a source of genuine frustration," Kirk said.

Being overweight or obese has been associated with increased risk of serious diseases in dogs, such as arthritis, heart disease, respiratory conditions and cancer, according to Pfizer. It can also worsen the signs associated with pre-existing diseases such as osteoarthritis.

"Veterinarians will now have the additional option of using Slentrol in conjunction with diet and exercise," said S. Kristina Wahlstrom, VMD, Pfizer Animal Health. "Because many dog owners don't recognize that their pets are overweight or obese, the best thing for owners to do is talk to their veterinarians about the proper weight for their particular dog."

Slentrol, which decreases a dog's appetite, is given once daily as an oral solution. It will be available to veterinarians this spring.

Slentrol should not be used in cats, dogs receiving long-term corticosteroid therapy or dogs with liver disease. It's also not for use in humans under any circumstances, according to Pfizer.