

## Studies Show Heartworm Prevalent in U.S.

**Novartis Animal Health says studies on dogs reveal heartworm and intestinal parasites remain widespread.**

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Three studies conducted over the past year say that heartworm and intestinal parasites remain prevalent across the United States, highlighting the need for improved pet owner awareness of prevention alternatives, according to Novartis Animal Health U.S. Inc.

Novartis Animal Health says the three surveys — two conducted by the company and one by the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine — show that parasite prevalence is high and compliance with preventives is low.

Novartis Animal Health's survey of more than 1,000 veterinary clinics in 11 Western U.S. states found that heartworm is in fact an issue in that area of the country. Forty-nine percent of the responding clinics reported heartworm positive cases, totaling more than 2,300 incidents of heartworm in pets in 2005.

LSU's School of Veterinary Medicine's study on dogs rescued and housed in shelters after hurricanes in the Gulf Region found that one or more internal parasites were present in 59 percent of all dogs tested.

Novartis Animal Health's other study of more than 350 animal shelters across the country that received pets displaced by hurricanes in the Gulf Region found a majority of the rescued pets tested positive for heartworm and intestinal parasites.

Pets were relocated from the Gulf Region to shelters in 20 different states, including California, Minnesota, New York and North Carolina.

"These studies do demonstrate that heartworm and intestinal parasites are endemic throughout most of the U.S., including regions where prevalence is historically thought to be low," said Novartis Animal Health Director of Professional Relations David Stansfield, BVSc, MRCVS.

"Add to that the national average for compliance with heartworm preventives — five out of 12 months — and the magnitude of the issue is evident," Stansfield said.

Novartis Animal Health markets several canine medications, including heartworm preventives. Its parent company, Novartis AG, is the maker of several medicines for dogs, including heartworm preventives and separation anxiety drugs.