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WEDNESDAY, August 12, 1936

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Subject: "DOG DAYS DEBUNKED." Information from the Bureau of Animal Industry,
United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

August is supposed to be the month when dogs go mad and become dangerous, or at least get sick and act unlike themselves. S.R. Speelman of the Bureau of Animal Industry, United States Department of Agriculture says that, if it is properly cared for, there is no more reason for a dog having fits or developing rabies in August than in other months. Dogs go mad in almost any month in the year. The "dog days" legend is similar to the familiar tradition about a "baby's second summer being the hardest," and for much the same reasons.

Both young dogs and second-year babies are very active and inquisitive. They get into or handle anything that seems likely to be good to eat, and in warm weather foodstuffs spoil very easily. There are many chances that a toddler or a puppy will nose out foods not intended for their consumption, and then there is trouble. Most dogs are wary of food that does not smell just right, but some contaminated food does not give any detectable warning of the presence of dangerous bacteria or poisonous substances. A very hungry dog that has not been sufficiently fed is more likely to hunt up additional food for himself and thus run a chance of getting sick.

So the rule for "dog days" and all the rest of the year, too, is to feed a dog a suitable ration and enough of it; to see that it has plenty of fresh clean cool drinking water and that all feeding utensils are thoroughly clean. Any uneaten food should be removed as soon as the dog has satisfied its appetite, and the dish washed and scalded with the same care that would be given to tableware for human meals. (Do not, of course, wash the dog's dishes with the family's dishes. Perish the thought!)

Mr. Speelman knows and loves dogs. He believes that people who are not willing to learn how to take care of them properly should not plan to own dogs. On the other hand, he says that a farm is the ideal place to raise the out-door types of dogs. Most farms need dogs to help with their livestock, give warning of the presence of suspicious strangers, and for use in hunting rabbits and other game.

Because of their livestock work the members of most farm families are likely to have a natural understanding of the way to take care of animals, dogs included. They realize that large active dogs need space and exercise. They expect them to eat rather heartily, but they do not mind that, since much of the proper food for them is raised on a farm. A boy who has always had a dog as a playmate learns to protect his canine friend from other animals or human abuse or tormenting; to see that it is fed regularly, given water to quench its thirst, and kept clean. In short, his interest in his dog develops character, and makes him more considerate and responsible.

The Bureau of Animal Industry will send detailed suggestions for feeding and caring for puppies. Like human beings, they need some vegetable material to provide necessary bulk, to act as body regulators, and to supply vitamins and minerals. The vegetables commonly used for dog feeding are tomatoes, beets, carrots, cabbage, peas and beans. Tomatoes and beets are the most useful of these. All dogs do not tolerate the same vegetables, so care should be taken in trying out whatever is offered. Do not feed puppies peas or beans, and never potatoes. A good way to feed vegetables is to chop them fine and mix them with the meat.

Then you can give dry bread, or puppy or dog biscuits, for the cereal part of the ration. For very young puppies, moisten any of these dry foods with meat broth, milk or even water. Never feed moldy or mildewed bread.

The quantity of feed required by any dog depends upon its size, condition, individuality and age, the environment and climate, and the amount of exercise or work it gets. Do not give pork at all, or any extremely fat meat. Lean beef, lamb or mutton, slightly seasoned with salt, either raw or cooked, may be given. Vegetables of a non-starchy nature; meat substitutes, such as whole cow's milk, eggs, boned fish or salmon; and some cereal grains, are all good puppy foods. Eggs may be fed raw with milk.

Look out for small, splintery, sharp bones, like fish bones or broken chicken bones. They may choke the dog or ^{puncture} its intestines. Sometimes a dog may be allowed to gnaw a large bone with meat on it, but do not let the bone lie around and become spoiled or act literally as a "bone of contention" between two dogs. Dogs sometimes break their teeth on large bones.

A puppy should gain weight gradually. A mature dog may have to eat quite heartily to maintain its weight and not be too thin or too fat. Out-door dogs exercise more than those cooped up indoors, and in cold weather especially often eat more, just as humans do.

Going back to the subject of the so-called "dog days", in hot weather it's a good idea to let a dog get its exercise early in the day, or late, after sun-down. If for some reason it acts peculiarly, do not immediately conclude it is mad and get out a gun. Shut it quietly away by itself if you can, where it is cool, provide it with water, and send for a veterinarian who can diagnose the trouble.

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Refer to Mr. S. R. Speelman, BAI