



RAINING CATS AND DOGS.....?

I was recently browsing online and I came across a supposed newspaper article about Kenyan slum dwellers holding a sponsored fast to help obese pets in the UK. It was designed to shock and it certainly made me think when it mentioned a recent PDSA survey that found over a third of UK pets were overweight.

This was brought to mind recently when Stella was brought into see me. Stella had ballooned since I had last seen her having put on several stone. Her owner informed me she was having the same amount of food as she had always had. However on closer questioning it turned out that there was a youngster in the house who 'might' be feeding Stella from her high chair, and that she did not get the same walks as she used to before the baby was born. And, of course, if Stella is taking in more calories in her food than are going out when she exercises, she will put on weight. Occasionally there are other factors that make an animal more prone to put on weight (for instance an underactive thyroid gland) but in most cases it is that simple; too many calories and not enough exercise. Once an animal becomes obese it can become difficult to correct because it may not want to exercise, as it gets tired very quickly, due to carrying around its extra weight.

Being overweight can make your pet more prone to develop other problems with time. These include arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

If you think your pet is looking a little tubby it might be time to take it to your veterinary surgeon for a check up. They can ascertain whether it is overweight and, if so, whether there is a reason for it. If appropriate they will advice on the best way to help your pet lose weight.

Fortunately in Stella case she is now back to her former slim self. She was banned from the kitchen, put on a low calorie diet and had her exercise gradually increased again. And while it has been very dry recently, and we could all do with some rain for our gardens and crops, with 33% of the nations pets overweight we probably do not want it to be raining cats and dogs!!!