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BUSINESS OF THE WEEK

Armstrong Motors Sales & Service

This week's business of the week is Armstrong Motors Sales & Service, located just off Perth Road 163 north of Rannoch on Line 10, and owned by licensed mechanics Karl Armstrong and his son Kurtis.

Karl, a dealer of Husqvarna outdoor power products since 1983, said the trade began as a hobby for him, when he would work on the motorcycles he and his friends owned. When he became licensed as a mechanic in 1977 and couldn't find work at any local garages, he kept up working at his own shop. "The next thing I knew, I had quite a bit of business going on around here," he said.

More recently, Kurtis joined his father in the business after a two-year diesel technician course and a four-year apprenticeship at Hutton Transport in Lakeside. "He's got his



truck and coach license and has been part of the business for a couple of years now," Karl said. "He does air conditioning, safeties and annual inspections, using a lot of new electronic equipment to scan and analyze systems."

Karl and Kurtis inspect and maintain the trucks and heavy-duty chainsaws of a number of clients in the logging industry, so they're more than up-to-the-task when it comes to broken-down lawnmowers or chainsaws. "We do lots of engine work on saws,"

Karl said. "We port them out a bit and make some more horsepower out of them. That brings in a lot of clientele."

Armstrong Motors also offers one of the biggest sales inventories around for chainsaws, Karl said. "Everyone else does homeowner stuff or hobby stuff, but we have lots of inventory in saws," he said. "We likely have over 100 saws in our shop." That ranges from hi-tech heavy duty models such as the Husqvarna 562 XP AT to a line of Echo chainsaws and

trimmers. "They offer a five-year warranty on their equipment and they work very well," he said.

The summer may be over, but the grass is still growing, and Karl said customers are often just interested in buying lawnmowers in the fall as they are in the spring. "Now guys are finding that they are getting tired of fixing their darn mowers, or they've saved all summer and they're ready to buy new equipment," he said. "We have good inventory on tractors and zero-turns. I have lots of used stuff as well."

Homeowners might be interested in some other items Armstrong has for sale or rent, including snow-blowers and Split-fire brand log-splitters.

Armstrong Motors Sales & Service is open 8 am - 6 pm Monday through Friday and 8 am to noon Saturdays.

ASK A VET

Itchy Pets

My dog has been scratching for the last 3 weeks and now has red bumps and scratches over her belly and sides. This seems to happen every summer and fall. What could be the cause of the itchy skin?

Itchy pets have a tough time as they scratch, chew, lick and traumatize their skin, keeping you up at all hours of the night with jingling collars. There are numerous causes of itchy skin in dogs and cats; some are seasonal and some cause problems year-round. These can include environmental and food

allergies, contact irritants, flea and other insect bites, sarcoptic mange mites, and bacterial and fungal infections. Some pets have hormonal disorders which can make them more prone to skin problems.

Environmental allergies, sarcoptic mange and flea infestations are more common in the spring, summer and fall months. Food allergies, bacterial and fungal infections and contact irritation can occur year round. Often pets with a primary allergy will also be affected by bacterial and yeast skin infections

as their skin has lowered natural defenses and is traumatized from licking, chewing and scratching. Hypothyroidism and Cushings disease are two syndromes which can cause secondary infections and itchiness.

To determine the primary cause of itchy skin, the pet should be examined thoroughly by your veterinarian. Diagnostic tests may include skin scrapings, cytology (looking at cells under the microscope), bacterial or fungal culture, skin biopsies or intradermal skin testing. Blood tests may help diagnose

an allergy to certain environmental causes as well as discover if there is an imbalance of certain hormones. A food trial may be required to rule out food allergy. Often secondary issues, such as skin infections, must be resolved before the primary cause can be determined.

There are several treatments used for itchy skin depending on the cause. Therapeutic shampoos and dips can be used to soothe irritated skin, rinse off allergens and apply medication to treat infections. Food supplements,

antihistamines, anti-inflammatories and special diets can all be used to alleviate allergies. If allergy testing is done, desensitization serum injections over the course of 1-2 years may decrease symptoms. Flea and mange mite infestations can be managed using anti-parasitic medications; several newer topical medications are quite effective. Bacterial and fungal infections are generally treated with oral and topical medications. If there is a medical problem triggering the skin issue, it may need to be managed

with daily medication.

Regardless of the cause and treatment for your dog's skin problems, it is important to be patient. Many problems take some time to develop and may need weeks to months to resolve as well as multiple treatments and medications. Environmental and food allergies can usually be managed, although not cured. Talk to your veterinarian about possible solutions. Good Luck!

Dr. Kim Anderka

Dr. Christina Douthwaite

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