



Pop music's message of love from the Beatles in 1964 (left picture) to Ariana Grande at the One Love Manchester concert in June 2017 (right picture)

## MUSIC

# All you need is pop

By Ludovic Hunter-Tilney

Fifty years ago The Beatles debuted "All You Need Is Love" on television, in the same month that Israel went to war with neighbouring Arab states, China tested its first hydrogen bomb and almost 500,000 American troops were stationed in Vietnam. The foursome wore colourful outfits and played seated amid an entourage holding signs saying the song's title in different languages. Paul McCartney had a flower behind his ear. John Lennon, the song's writer, phrased his utopian lyrical message with circular logic: "All you need is love, love is all you need."

Viewed from the perspective of its 50th anniversary, Lennon's prospectus for a better world has not aged well. Arab-Israeli relations remain tempestuous, China now has about 260 nuclear warheads and American wars have persisted. Yet the song's sentiment still has the power to inspire. "Love Trumps Hate" read the placards at protests against Donald Trump's presidency last year. After the terrorist attack on her Manchester Arena show in May, Ariana Grande responded with the One Love Manchester benefit concert. "I think the kind of love and unity you're displaying is the medicine the world needs right now," she told the audience.

Love is the chief subject of pop music. But love in the sense of a power transcending borders - a medicine for the world - did not enter pop's language until 1967. That year the Council for the Summer of Love was set up in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco to co-ordinate the tens of thousands of young people flocking to the counter-cul-

tural mecca. A slang term caught on for these refuseniks from the straight world: hippies. "All You Need Is Love", which topped charts in the US and across Europe on its release, was their anthem. Lennon considered it a form of propaganda.

## Pop music has been at the vanguard of cultural one-worldism

The song has its detractors. "Well, it's certainly repetitive," George Harrison muttered when Lennon first played it to his bandmates in rehearsal. Beatles writer Ian MacDonald dismissed it as a "wilfully substandard work" in his musical biography of the band, *Revolution in the Head*. To pragmatists, Lennon's riddling verses ("There's nothing you can do that can't be done") epitomise woolly hippy thinking, the privileged nonsense typical of a wealthy rock star who, in the year he wrote them, installed a mosaic of the Eye of Knowledge in his Surrey swimming pool.

"They really wanted to give the world a message," Beatles manager Brian Epstein said of "All You Need Is Love". That message appears hopelessly naive 50 years on, a quaint Summer of Love relic. But the song's vision of an interconnected world has actually grown in relevance. In 1967 there were almost 3.5 billion people in the world. Now there are an estimated 7.5 billion. Among them are 2 billion Facebook

users and 5 billion mobile telephone subscribers. Each second there are more than 60,000 Google searches and 2.5 million emails sent. Almost 1,500 active satellites are orbiting the Earth right now, gathering and transmitting information about it.

"All You Need Is Love" marked a new chapter in the world's colonisation by telecommunications. It was commissioned by and performed on the first live international satellite television broadcast, *Our World*, a co-production between 14 countries viewed by an estimated 400 million people on June 25, 1967.

The Beatles were shown playing "All You Need Is Love" in Abbey Road Studios in London. According to the writer Barry Miles, who was present at Abbey Road for the broadcast, Lennon kept the lyrics as simple as possible for viewers who could not speak English. He and his psychedelically outfitted bandmates were joined by a group of string and horn orchestral musicians in black formalwear. In the ecumenical spirit of the project, the opposing hemispheres of rock and classical music were united. A snippet of "La Marseillaise" was played at the beginning.

Four satellites beamed *Our World* to 24 countries. Two years later, the same technology allowed live images of the Moon landing to be broadcast to households throughout the world, a mass event witnessed simultaneously by viewers of all races, creeds and nationalities. Contrary to 1960s mythologising, you did not need to drop acid to experience the mind-expanding possibilities of the era. Instead you could simply turn on the cathode tube and tune in. "Our world is circled by television," said *Our World's* Australian

presenter James Dibble on the programme, having earlier quoted Puck from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "I'll put a girdle right around the Earth in forty minutes."

The girdling of the world by telecommunications has been accompanied by conscious efforts to promote a global identity. In 1948 the United Nations published its Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a landmark document establishing a core set of shared human values. In 1959 the UN introduced World Refugee Year, the first in what has become a crowded calendar of increasingly spurious international celebrations. Among them now is International Day of Happiness (March 20), International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (April 6) and World Tuna Day (May 2), when the responsible global citizen presumably refuses as a point of principle to eat salad Niçoise.

Pop music has been at the vanguard of cultural one-worldism. The pioneering soul singer Sam Cooke laid down a template in 1960 with "(What a) Wonderful World", in which the knowledge of loving and being loved makes the world a wonderful place. Louis Armstrong expanded the outlook outwards on "What a Wonderful World" in 1967, a panegyric to nature released the same year as "All You Need Is Love".

By the 1970s the one-world anthem was in full swing. "I'd like to build the world a home/And furnish it with love", The New Seekers chorused in their 1971 hit "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing (In Perfect Harmony)", eyes gleaming and teeth beaming in unhinged amiability. "One love, one heart/Let's get together and feel alright," Bob

Marley sang with the Wailers in the 1977 song "One Love/People Get Ready". It wasn't just hippies who subscribed to the allure of the "let's all link hands and be as one" message. "One world! Welcome to it/One World! Don't abuse it," speed metal pioneers Anthrax roared on 1987's "One World".

The sentiment probably reached its peak in the mid 1980s with the release of the Band Aid song, "Do They Know It's Christmas?", a charity single released in 1984 to help alleviate famine in Ethiopia. Organiser Bob Geldof said: "I wanted to make something that could be sung all around the world, like 'All You Need Is Love'." Geldof's memory of watching *Our World* live on television as a child was an inspiration for the subsequent concert *Live Aid* in 1985, which was watched by an estimated 1.5 billion people in 100 countries.

Pop's global consciousness increased with the size of its market. When The Beatles released "All You Need Is Love", the scope of their touring was limited by logistics and geopolitics: their 1964 "world tour" took place in seven countries. It was not until 1979 that Elton John became the first western pop star to play in the USSR. Six years later Wham! did the same in China. By the time Michael Jackson embarked on his *HISTORY* world tour in 1996, he was able to play concerts in 35 countries. Among the songs in his set was "Earth Song", a dystopian take on the world-anthem genre: "Did you ever stop to notice/This crying Earth, these weeping shores?"

Conditions for horizonless pop music have never been more favourable than they are today. Digitisation means that songs can be listened to anywhere there is an internet connection: to borrow the language of *One World*, our planet is encircled by computer networks. Traditional Anglo-American ascendancy is being tempered by the rise of other music-making markets, such as Japan, Korea and Sweden. The world's third-largest music subscription business is Tencent Music Entertainment in China. According to the International Federation of



## All you need is pop (continued)

the Phonographic Industry, China's recorded music revenue rose 20 percent in 2016.

Afropop stars collaborate with their western equivalents, as on Drake's 2016 hit "One Dance", made with Nigerian singer Wizkid. Jamaican dancehall rhythms percolate through the charts: this year's most popular hit, Ed Sheeran's "Shape of You", is an example. The Puerto Rican singer Luis Fonsi's song "Despacito" recently became the most streamed ever, having been played 4.6 billion times. Yet despite the global sound of pop, songs addressing humanity in the grand manner of "All You Need Is Love" have faltered.

Sheeran invokes its spirit on his latest album, singing "Love could change the world in a moment," only to shrink from the sentiment in the song's chorus: "But what do I know?" Coldplay's 2011 song "Paradise" ticks all the right anthemic boxes yet hesitates to express a matching outlook: "When she was just a girl she expected the world/ But it flew away from her reach."

## One interpretation is that the baby-boomers preaching free love in the 1960s turned out to be hypocrites

Beyoncé's "Run the World (Girls)", also released in 2011, could be a forthright riposte to Coldplay's drippy protagonist, a bass-heavy tribute to the women who are "taking over the world". But the tone is confrontational, an assertion of rights rather than a celebration of unity. It updates the feminist sentiments of Helen Reddy's "I Am Woman", which speaks for collective womanhood in the voice of personal self-empowerment: "I am woman, hear me roar/In numbers too big to ignore."

The self-empowerment anthem has a history as long as the one-world anthem. Frank Sinatra's "My Way", released in 1969, might alternatively have been titled "All You Need Is Self-Love". Queen, ever grandiose, combined both forms of anthem in "We Are the Champions". But these days personal advancement dominates over general idealism. Justin Bieber's "Believe" ("It didn't matter how many times I got knocked on the floor/You knew one day I'd be standing tall") is pop as fitness tracker, willing its listener to perpetual self-improvement.

Before it was recorded by the New Seekers in 1971, "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing (In Perfect Harmony)" was a jingle for a Coca-Cola campaign. And while utopianism may have faded from pop, it survives

in advertising. Last year, Samsung used the same mawkish imagery to sell its flagship mobile phone, showing people in different parts of the world singing each other's anthems. "Love is all you need" reads the strapline for adverts for Amazon Echo, the Alexa-voiced robotic "home assistant".

Tech companies such as Amazon are irresistibly drawn to high-flown rhetoric about global improvement. Apple - which fought a lengthy battle with The Beatles' company, Apple Corps, over naming rights - has a self-proclaimed mission "to leave the world better than we found it". Last year its chief executive Tim Cook asked employees to vote on 20 different "community themes" for the company to support. A leaked internal document showed the list of options was headed by the aspiration to bring its products "to more people through new channels and experiences". All you need is Apple, in other words.

The ease with which "All You Need Is Love" and the wider flower power movement were co-opted by commercial interests shows how naive the hippies were. A less generous interpretation is that the baby-boomers who preached free love in the 1960s have turned out to be hypocrites. Fifty years later, as they retire to enjoy their comfortably apportioned pensions, their stint in charge of the world has left the poor planet in more need of love than ever.

The hippy utopia faded because peace and love turned out to be feeble counterforces to the brute reality of power. Three months after "All You Need Is Love" was released, the military-industrial complex came under sustained assault from thousands of long-hairs descending on the Pentagon to try to make the building levitate. It was a valiant act of political absurdism, but subsequent decades of warfare and astronomical defence spending showed who won.

Global anthems have also suffered from a demoralising lack of effectiveness. Globalisation itself has become decoupled from the liberatory rhetoric that once accompanied it, the promise of lifting the world out of poverty made at a G8 meeting in 2005 following lobbying from one-worldist rock stars such as Geldof and U2's Bono. Conflict, pestilence and hate have not been banished by the plaintive sight of wealthy pop stars warbling about how much better everything could be if we loved each other. Yet for all the shortcomings of the one-world singalong, I miss it.

Music is a powerful mobiliser of collective identity. Choruses are designed to be chanted, melodies trigger emotions, rhythms make bodies move as one. The One Love Manchester concert was about defiance in the face of murderous assault, not utopia, but it recognised a universalising impulse in music, a communal aspect that the sectarian terrorists of Isis want to destroy. In an age of advancing nationalism, global threats and multiplying communications links, the stage is set for a 21st-century "All You Need Is Love".

Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2017



HEALTH

# How to solve the obesity epidemic

By Simon Kuper

How long will we live? Just a year or two ago, it looked as if we forty-somethings would routinely reach 90, while most of our children would hit 100. Our expanding bellies hardly seemed to affect our rising lifespans. But now scary news is coming in. Life expectancy in both the EU and the US fell slightly in 2015.

The European decline (which went strangely unreported) was the first since Eurostat's data set was assembled in 2002; the US's was the first since 1993. Given that obesity usually kills with a time lag (sometimes decades), the west risks experiencing only the third sustained fall in lifespans ever recorded in modern peacetime, after the post-communist ex-Soviet Union, and parts of sub-Saharan Africa at the peak of Aids. People in obese western countries may soon start "dying younger than earlier generations", says Professor Alan Dangour, nutrition expert at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

What to do? Doctors or medical researchers cannot solve this problem. It's up to advertising creatives, finance ministers and town planners.

The necessary medical breakthroughs were made long ago. Soon after the second world war, British researchers noticed a mysterious rise in heart attacks. In 1949, a researcher named Jerry Morris looked into rates in different occupations. When the first results came in, those for London bus employees, he had a eureka moment. He told me in 2009, months before his death, aged 99: "There was a striking difference in the heart-attack rate. The drivers of these double-decker buses had substantially more, age for age, than the conductors." Morris immediately guessed the reason: drivers sat all day, while conductors climbed stairs. Soon afterwards, data from postal workers confirmed his hypothesis. Postmen who walked or cycled around delivering mail had fewer heart attacks than male clerks and telephonists who worked behind counters. Exercise protected against heart disease. Morris became possibly the first

regular jogger on Hampstead Heath. "People thought I was bananas," he reminisced.

Meanwhile, another British epidemiologist, Richard Doll, was examining the mysterious rise in lung cancer. He suspected it was due to the tarring of roads. But while checking diagnoses of lung cancer, he had his own eureka moment. He noticed that "if someone had been described as a non-smoker, the diagnosis always turned out to be wrong". In 1950, Doll and Austin Bradford Hill published a paper proving the link between smoking and lung cancer. Since then, smoking has turned out to cause many other diseases besides, while exercise has proved a magic bullet for almost everything, including lethal obesity.

## A third of American premature deaths could be prevented if people exercised more, ate healthily or didn't smoke

Doll and Morris were part of a British golden age that transformed global health. Between the early 1940s and 1953, Oxford researchers helped develop penicillin, Nye Bevan created the UK's National Health Service, and James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA. Probably no modern medical breakthrough matters as much.

We now know how to live longer. A third of American premature deaths could be prevented if people exercised more, ate healthily or didn't smoke, according to the US National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. That's about 867,000 lives a year. Saving just 10 percent of them

could significantly lengthen US lifespans.

In comparison, the country's opioid epidemic and the Republican assault on health insurance matter less. Yes, it's terrible that about 59,000 Americans died last year of drug overdoses. Yes, it's terrible that the US doesn't have universal healthcare. A study in the New England Journal of Medicine estimates that for every 300 to 800 adults who get coverage, about one life a year is saved. So if Congress manages to pass the Republican plan to strip health insurance from 22 million Americans (including 18 million adults), it would kill about 32,700 adults annually (using the mid-range estimate). That's gruesome. But boring old obesity kills far more. In England too, obesity was an officially certified cause of mortality on one in four death certificates from 1979 to 2006. The underfunding of the NHS and old age care, terrible as they are, is less deadly.

Telling people to exercise and eat healthily doesn't work. We have all heard the message - yet 44 percent of Brits don't even do moderate exercise, the British Heart Foundation said in 2015. Medics need to hand the issue over to advertising agencies and others who know how to change behaviour.

The long struggle against smoking is the model. What worked were the scary messages on cigarette packets, plus taxation. The World Health Organization backs sugar taxes. The key group to reach are the under-18s, because most life-long dietary habits are set by adolescence. Fruit bowls in classrooms would help. And town planners should build bike lanes and pools, so that people can exercise without going out of their way or possibly even noticing. Some of this would cost money, but for now countries save on fruit in order to pay for more diabetes.

Many people won't like the nanny state interfering in their lifestyles. That's a reasonable view. However, it entails the avoidable and expensive deaths of millions of people.

Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2017



# In North Korea, a generation gap grows behind the propaganda

Tim Sullivan, Pyongyang

**S**HE dances beneath 10-foot portraits of two smiling dictators, a modern young woman in a central Pyongyang plaza who twirls to music calling on North Koreans to die for their leader.

When she speaks, a torrent of reverence tumbles out for North Korea's ruling family, as if phrases had been plucked at random from a government newspaper: "The revolution of the Great Leader" [...] "Only by upholding President Kim Il Sung could the people win their struggle" [...] "Laborers trust and venerate Marshal Kim Jong Un." And as hundreds of students dance behind her in a choreographed display of loyalty, she is adamant about one thing: North Korea, she insists, has no generation gap.

"The spirit of the youth has remained the same as ever!" Ryu Hye Gyong says.

But look more closely — look beyond her words, beyond the propaganda posters on every street, and the radios playing hymns to the ruling family — and the unspoken reality is far more complicated.

A 19-year-old university student with a confident handshake and carefully styled hair, Ryu lives in a city that today feels awash in change. There are rich people now in Pyongyang, chauffeured in Mercedes and Audis even as most citizens of the police state remain mired in poverty. There's a supermarket selling imported apples and disposable diapers. On sidewalks where everyone once dressed in drab Maoist conformity, there are young women in not-quite miniskirts and teenage boys with baseball caps cocked sideways, K-pop style.

In this profoundly isolated country, a place that can still sometimes appear frozen in a Stalinist netherworld, a generational divide is quietly growing behind the relentless propaganda.

Here, where rulers have long been worshiped as all-powerful providers, young people have grown to adulthood expecting nothing from the regime. Their lives, from professional aspirations to dating habits, are increasingly shaped by a growing market economy and a quietly thriving underground trade in smuggled TV shows and music. Political fervor, genuinely felt by many in earlier generations, is being pushed aside by something else: A fierce belief in the power of money.

It's a complex divide, where some 20-year-olds remain fierce ideologues and plenty of 50-year-olds have no loyalty to the increasingly worried regime. But conver-



sations with more than two dozen North Korean refugees, along with scholars, former government officials and activists, make it clear that young people are increasingly unmoored from the powerful state ideology.

"When Kim Jong Un speaks, young people don't listen," says Han Song Yi, 24, who left the North in 2014, dreaming of pop-music stardom in the South. "They just pretend to be listening."

In her tight jeans and gold-speckled eye shadow, Han revels in Seoul's frenetic glitz and unembarrassed consumerism. She loves talking about fashion and the K-pop bands she and her friends secretly listened to back home.

But she also talks about her homeland with the thoughtfulness of someone who is constantly watching, constantly looking for explanations. Han can deconstruct the sudden emergence of short skirts in her hometown in the autumn of 2012, and how that mirrored not just the ascension of Kim Jong Un, the new leader often photographed with his glamorous, well-dressed wife, but also the political cynicism growing around her.

"North Korea in the past, and North Korea today are so different," she says.

Nobody in North Korea will talk to an outsider about this, and it's easy to see why.

Stand at nearly any Pyongyang street corner and reminders of the state's immense power are everywhere. Mounted portraits show the country's first two rulers: Kim Il Sung, who shaped the North into one of the world's most repressive states, and his son, Kim Jong Il, who created the personality cults that now dominate public life. Immense rooftop signs spell out praise for grandson Kim Jong Un, the ruling party and the military. On the radio, the song "We Will Defend Gen. Kim Jong Un With Our Lives" booms out again and again.

The message is unmistakable: "People are always careful about what they say," says Han.

For generations, propaganda about the Kim family was all that

most North Koreans knew, a mythology of powerful but tender-hearted rulers who protect their people against a hostile world. It still suffuses everything from children's stories to university literature departments, from TV shows to opera.

"When I was younger I believed all of this," says a former North Korean policeman in his mid-40s, who now lives in Seoul and who spoke on condition his name not be used, fearing retribution against relatives still in the North. He's a powerfully built man with a gravelly voice who remains conflicted about the North, critical of the dictatorship but also scornful of a younger generation that doesn't understand the emotional tug of loyalty. So his voice is dismissive when he adds: "But the younger people, many of them never believed."

Many older North Koreans feel that emotional tug.

In part that's because they remember the days of relative prosperity, when the state provided people with nearly everything: food, apartments, clothing, children's holiday gifts. North Korea's economy was larger than the South's well into the 1970s.

An economic shift began in the mid-1990s, when the end of Soviet aid and a series of devastating floods caused widespread famine. The food ration system, which had fed nearly everyone for decades, collapsed. The power of the police state weakened amid the hunger, allowing smuggling to flourish across the Chinese border.

While the state tightened its hold again when the famine ended, private enterprise grew, as the government realized it was the only way to keep the economy functioning.

To people who came of age after the famine, when it had become clear the regime was neither all-powerful nor all-providing, the propaganda is often just background noise. It isn't that they hate the regime, but simply that their focus has turned to earning a living, or buying the latest smuggled TV show.

"After a while, I stopped paying attention," says Lee Ga Yeon, who

grew up amid the mud and poverty of an isolated communal farm and began helping support her family as a teenager during the famine, pedaling her bicycle through nearby villages, selling food door to door. "I didn't even think about the regime anymore."

That lack of interest frightens the regime, whose legitimacy depends on its ability to remain at the center of North Korean life.

"They know that young people are where you get revolutions," says Hazel Smith, a North Korea scholar at SOAS, University of London and former aid worker in North Korea. "This is the cleavage that the government is worried about."

Kim Jong Un, who wasn't even 30 years old when he came to power after his father's 2011 death, now faces the challenge of his own generation, with a little over one-third of North Koreans believed to be under the age of 25.

On his gentler days, Kim has reached out to young people: "I am one of you, and we are the future," he said in one speech. There was an increase in youth-oriented mass rallies after Kim's ascension, and public pledges of youth loyalty. Earlier this year, the regime held the first national gathering in 23 years of the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth league, a mass organization for all North Koreans ages 14 to 30. There's also propaganda now clearly aimed at young people, like the all-woman Moranbong Band, which performs pop-political anthems in tight skirts and high heels.

But fear has a long history in North Korea, where at least 80,000 people are believed to be held in an archipelago of political prison camps, some for simply being related to someone suspected of disloyalty. Despite his youth and his schooling in Switzerland, Kim understands the tools that his father and grandfather used. He has purged dozens of powerful members of his inner circle, including his uncle, who "did serious harm to the youth movement in our country."

Kim also has blasted outside movies and music as "poisonous weeds" and in 2015, researchers say, his regime announced that people caught with South Korean videos could face 10 years of imprisonment at hard labor.

Most young people have grown up with at least some access to smuggled DVDs or flash drives, whether Chinese TV shows (normally OK with the government), American movies (highly suspicious, though Schwarzenegger shoot-em-ups are said to be in high demand) or a buffet of digitized South Korean entertainment

choices (by far the most popular, and by far the most dangerous.)

In the North, South Korean soap operas are far more than just weepy sagas of thwarted love. To many young Northerners they are windows onto a modern world, nurturing middle-class aspirations while helping change everything from fashion to romance.

Today, young women can be seen on the streets of Pyongyang in tight-fitting blouses and short skirts (though no shorter than 5 centimeters above the knee, Han notes, or party workers can demand you change or pay a fine). Couples can occasionally be spotted holding hands in the parks along the Taedong River. In a culture where arranged marriages were the norm until very recently, young people now date openly and choose their own spouses. Some things, though, have barely changed at all.

The power of the police state, for instance, with its web of agencies and legions of informers, remains immense.

So while the generational divide has grown, there have been no signs of youthful anger: no university protests, no political graffiti, no anonymous leaflets. Even among themselves, young people say politics is almost always avoided, with honest conversations saved only for immediate family and the closest friends.

Plus, politics is not at the heart of the generation gap.

"It's not about the regime," says Lee, the former door-to-door food saleswoman, who now studies literature at one of South Korea's top universities. "It's about money."

Officially, North Korea remains rigidly socialist, a country where private property is illegal and bureaucrats control the economy. Then there's the reality.

"Everybody wants money now," says Han, whose father ran a successful timber business. In her hometown, where squat houses and small factories line the Yalu River border with China, her family counted as wealthy. "I grew up like a princess," she says happily, ticking off the family's possessions: a TV, two laptop computers, easy access to the latest South Korean K-pop videos.

Money now courses through North Korea, shaking a world that earlier generations thought would never change. Experts believe the private sector, a web of businesses ranging from neighborhood traders to textile factories, accounts for as much as half of the North Korean economy, with most people depending on it financially, at least in part.

Young North Koreans "were all brought up in a market economy. For them, Kim Il Sung is history," says Smith. "They've got different norms, different hopes."

Major markets are off-limits to most outsiders, but refugee descriptions and satellite imagery show more than 400 across the country, warehouse-size buildings filled with traders selling everything from moonshine to Chinese car parts. AP



# Hop on! Wild rabbits surf on sheep to flee New Zealand flood



Three rabbits sit on the back of sheep as they avoid rising flood waters on a farm near Dunedin

By Nick Perry, Wellington

**I**T was a woolly ride, but three wild rabbits managed to escape rising flood-

waters in New Zealand by clambering aboard sheep and surfing to safety on their backs.

Ferg Horne, 64, says he's

been farming since he left school at age 15 and has never seen anything quite like it.

He was trudging through

pelting rain to rescue a neighbor's 40 sheep from the floodwaters on July 15 at their South Island farm near Dunedin when he spotted some dark shapes from a distance.

He was puzzled because he knew his neighbor, who was away in Russia attending a nephew's wedding, didn't have any black-faced sheep. As he got closer, he thought it might be debris from the storm, which had drenched the area and forced Horne to evacuate his home.

Then he saw the bedraggled rabbits hitching a ride — two on one sheep and a third on another sheep. "I couldn't believe it for a start," he said.

Nobody else would believe him either without proof, he thought, so he got out his phone to take a photo, an image he figured his grandchildren would enjoy. In fact, he inadvertently shot a short video.

"It's a Samsung or a smartphone or whatever you call it. I swear at it every day," he said. "I'm absolutely useless with technology."

Nevertheless, Horne managed to capture the moment.

He said the sheep were huddled together on a high spot on the farm, standing in about 8 centimeters of water.

He said the rabbits looked like they'd gotten wet but seemed quite comfortable and relaxed atop their mounts.

Rabbits are considered a pest to farmers in New Zealand, and Horne said that typically when he sees one, he shoots it.

"But they'd showed so much initiative, I thought they deserved to live, those rabbits," he said.

Horne herded the sheep to a patch of dry ground on the farm about 50 meters away. The sheep didn't like it. "As they jumped through the water, the rabbits had a jolly good try at staying on," Horne said.

He said the rabbits appeared to cling onto the wool with their paws. As they approached the higher ground, the rabbits fell off but managed to climb a hedge to safety.

Horne returned later that afternoon. The floodwaters were receding, the sheep were all safe and the rabbits were long gone. Horne said his home had also remained dry.

He then sent his video to his son, who sent images to the local newspaper and posted them on Facebook, as Horne doesn't have his own page. "From then on it's just gone crazy," he said. **AP**

## ASK THE VET

by Dr Ruan Du Toit Bester



### 5 DOG SKIN ALLERGIES THAT REQUIRE A DERMATOLOGIST

**D**OG skin allergies are usually identified by constant biting, obsessive scratching, compulsive licking, chewing, rashes, hair loss and hot spots (extremely itchy lesions on the skin caused by self-infliction) in a specific area or multiple spots. There could be several causes to your dog's skin predicament, and you should seek a veterinary dermatologist. The following are the five most common dog skin allergies that require a dermatologist.

#### Fungal and bacterial skin allergies

This allergy can be contagious, transmitted to people and other pets. Typically, these infection-caused allergies are greasy looking and odorous. This kind of allergy is usually easily diagnosed and treated by your veterinarian with topical ointment or antibiotics.

#### Skin allergy due to food

Despite the fact that some companies state that their dog foods are "complete" or "well-balanced," their food can still result in a skin allergy in your dog, due your dog being allergic to one or more ingredients and/or due to a lack of healthy, immune-system supporting ingredients. If the first ingredient listed in your dog's food is not a meat, then

it's not of good quality.

If your dog continues to experience skin allergies after switching to a high quality dog food, he's probably allergic to certain ingredients. In this case, ask your vet for suggestions on a healthy, (common) allergen-free recipe that will meet your dog's nutrient requirements.

#### Allergies from parasites

A highly common allergy is caused by the saliva and droppings of pests that occasionally make dogs their hosts. Some can be easily stopped by flea and tick preventatives. These are usually easily diagnosed and treated by your vet. Possible parasites include:

- Fleas
- Chiggers
- Scabies
- Lice
- Cheyletiella mites
- Demodex mites (Mange)
- Environmental allergies

Dogs can suffer from allergies due to things in the environment, notably dust, mold or pollen. As a result, some dogs are more susceptible to allergies depending on the season and the region.



#### Neurogenic allergy

Some canines suffer from an obsessive-compulsive disorder which manifests itself as obsessively licking, biting or chewing an easily reached spot. This is a psychological disorder not attributed to an allergy resulting from any of the above causes. There are plenty of reasons why a dog might self-mutilate. These include:

- Boredom
- Confinement
- Stress
- Separation anxiety
- Frustration

For some dogs, this can be overcome with a combination of regular exercise and exercise and a commanding "No!" when he performs the action; however, many dogs require a trip to both a dermatologist and a behavioral specialist to arrive as a solution.

#### Other possibilities

If all of the above have been ruled out, then the skin problem could be caused by an underlying, more serious illness. Examples are:

- Hypothyroidism
- Cancer
- Cushing's Syndrome
- Endocrine Abnormalities

Hope this info helps  
Till next week  
Dr Ruan Bester

#### Ask the Vet:

Royal Veterinary Centre

Tel: +853 28501099, +853 28523678

Emergency: +853 62662268

Email: royalveterinary@gmail.com