

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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Partnership with potential

🐾 Tuesday, February 12, 2013 - 12:00am



Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine and the Vizsla Club of America Welfare Foundation have joined forces to genetically map a deadly form of skin cancer in the lively and affectionate Vizsla breed.

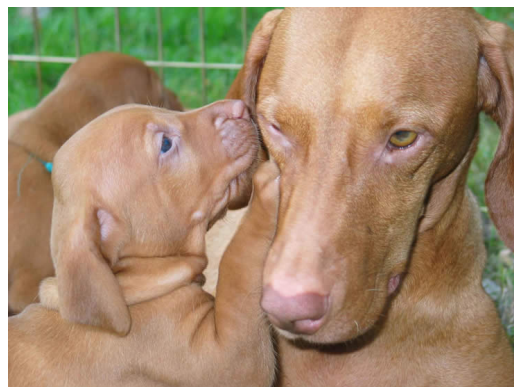
Veterinarians at the College are currently collecting DNA samples from 100 Vizslas who have been diagnosed with mast cell tumor – a form of skin cancer. Dogs in the control group must be 8 years of age or older and have had all skin masses aspirated and mapped. In addition, the masses must have been reviewed to confirm the absence of mast cells. Breeders and owners should work with their primary care veterinarians to ensure the samples are collected and

submitted appropriately and that their Vizslas fit the criteria for inclusion in this study.

“Cancer is among the most common concerns of owners presenting to a small animal practice and is consistently in the top ten concerns reported to the Canine Health Foundation by the parent clubs of each breed in the United States,” said Dr. Marta Castelhana, Research Associate with the Medical Genetics and Pediatrics Service at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals. “The late onset of the type of skin cancer we are studying - mast cell tumor - means that, most of the time, clinical detection of the cancer doesn't occur until the dog has been bred. Our ultimate goal is to develop a genetic test that will allow owners to detect the genetic susceptibility of their dog for this disease before making breeding decisions. Empowered with the knowledge a genetic test will deliver, owners and breeders can effectively reduce or eradicate this form of cancer from the breed.”

The DNA samples will be added to Cornell's Medical Genetics DNA Bank, a resource that provides clinicians and pre-clinical scientists around the world with the very foundation of genetic investigation: the DNA and medical information that accurately defines inherited diseases in patients.

“Because these samples will be deposited in the Bank, researchers will be able to use the genetic material to develop better diagnostic methods, more effective treatments and new drugs for other conditions, such as hip dysplasia, that can also affect the quality of



life for these amazing dogs,” said Castelhana. “It’s a tremendous bonus. Although this partnership is laser-focused on mast cell tumors, it has the potential to open many doors in the future – allowing us to continue to do innovative research, make life-changing discoveries, and ultimately, improve the health status of our Vizslas.”

To participate in the study, please email vetbiobank@cornell.edu. For more information on the DNA Bank, visit www.vet.cornell.edu/research/biobank/. For more information on the Vizsla Club of America Welfare Foundation, visit <http://vcaweb.org/welfare/health.shtml>.

