

Flatcoated Retriever Tumour Survey

The Flatcoated Retriever Tumour Survey is an independent enterprise administered by Trustees to aid the research into cancer in Flatcoats by the Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge, with the support of the Flatcoated Retriever Society.

In the event your Veterinary Surgeon recommends the removal of a tumour from your Flatcoat you might like to consider helping the ongoing research into cancers in the breed by asking your Vet to send the tissue for examination and analysis to Cambridge for their excellent histopathology who will report their findings directly to your Vet. All such information is completely confidential. The cost of this process (analysis & report) is paid for by the Tumour Survey which is funded by voluntary donations and fund raising events.

To participate in this scheme you will require **a form** to be completed by your Vet and sent together with the pathological submission, 5mls blood & a copy of the pedigree, if available. **This form can be obtained from Deborah Miller or Brian Jones (see below).** Forms may be e-mailed or posted – which ever is most convenient.

The Trustees thank all Flatcoat owners who support this ongoing research.

Trustees:

Deborah Miller – 01638 715173 (for forms and further information)
3 Kendall Court, Tuddenham St Mary, Bury St Edmunds IP28 6SB

Brian Jones – 01530 834318 (for forms and further information)

Mrs Shirley Johnson – 01638 718231 (to submit donations)

Mrs Mary Tanner – 01296 623707

History of the Scheme

The Tumour Survey originated in 1988 when Mrs Sheila Godbolt who had lost several Flatcoats to cancer decided to raise funds for a survey to be conducted by Cambridge University to research into the incidence of tumours in our breed. Mrs Godbolt successfully raised funds to enable this research to be instigated in 1990 and although organised privately had the full support of the F/C Society. To have any hope of success this project required the financial help and support from Flatcoat owners and breeders to send in tissue samples for investigation.

Sadly Mrs Godbolt succumbed to cancer herself in 1991 and was therefore unaware of the considerable support and research which would continue after her lifetime. The late Martyn Roe, retired vet & co-ordinator to the Cambridge Vet School & Shirley Johnson, principal fund raiser, kindly continued to assist the scheme maintain its momentum and its success.

Summary of Progress:

From 1990 to present day

- Have received over 3,000 samples from Flatcoated retrievers suspected of having tumours
- Approximately 44% of all submissions are benign tumours, and 40% malignant tumours, the rest are not neoplastic
- Canine cutaneous histiocytoma is the most common benign tumour and often affects quite young dogs, we have received 600 of these!
- Soft tissue sarcoma (mainly histiocytic sarcoma) is the most common malignant tumour, we have received nearly 500 of these.
- The average age of diagnosis for histiocytic sarcoma is 7 - 8 years, with a second peak at 11 years. The most common site is in the deep musculature of the limbs or around joints, particularly the elbow. Approximately one third of histiocytic sarcomas arise in internal organs such as the spleen, where they are often associated with anaemia. Unfortunately both forms of this tumour are very aggressive with high rates of dissemination to other organs.
- A separate Health Study followed 174 dogs from age 2 to 5 years until death and provided an insight into the longevity of the breed and causes of mortality.
- Health Study was key to a large grant from Cancer Research (UK) which funded an experienced senior scientist to work full time on the genetics of these cancers and whether there is a pattern of inheritance.
- Looked at other aspects of tumour development and classification and have published three scientific papers and given many presentations to inform the veterinary profession and other interested parties of our findings
- It has become clear that histiocytic sarcoma has a complex polygenic aetiology and we are currently collaborating with other international researchers to try and unravel the mysteries.
- Also collaborating with a group in Denmark to further study biomarkers which might aid early detection, assist in monitoring disease progression and predict prognosis.

How Flatcoated Retriever owners can support the Survey?

- By sending blood from dogs from healthy dogs over 9 years of age to the Animal Health Trust – please refer to the Storage of Blood at the AHT under Health Information
- By submitting tumour samples via your Vet, to Cambridge (together with a blood sample & a copy of the pedigree, if available)
- By making financial donations.