

Analysis of 2011 Survey of The Health of British Flatcoated Retrievers

Many thanks to the owners who took the time to complete the questionnaire and who also provided case histories or laboratory reports for clarification. This is the second study, enabling a comparison; therefore, there are references to the previous 2006 study throughout.

**The study reports on a total of 1054 dogs
(754 dogs + 300 that were lost in the preceding 5 years)
507 owners provided data.**

This is a 14% reduction in the total number of dogs and 7% in the number of owners.

Apologies for the long delay in publication but this was due to unavoidable personal circumstances. It should be noted that the study was undertaken for Spring 2011 and represents data for that time.

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Main Study Group - 878 live dogs

GENERAL:

Black	90%
Liver	9%
Yellow	0%
Not stated	<1%
Males	40%
Females	60%
Neutered	37%

AGES:

Oldest	15yrs
Youngest	9wks
Average age	5.5yrs

13% of the study group were over 10yrs old.

VACCINATION

90% of the study group were vaccinated.

Of these:

Yearly vaccination	86%
Every other year	4.5%
Primary only	6.3%
Other	3%

8 dogs also have the rabies vaccination

Only 4 dogs are given homeopathic nosodes , which is a reduction on the last study.

HIP SCORE

37% have been hip scored under the BVA/Kennel Club scheme. These gave an average score of 8.3 which is identical to the 2006 study.

EYE TESTS

45% of the study had eye tests performed under the BVA scheme. Of these:

95% of these included gonioscopy. 8 dogs were found to be affected representing 2.5% of those tested.

(This is a huge increase in the number tested in the last study, whilst a reduction in the percentage affected).

75% were examined for Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) with only 1 dog found to be affected.

72% were examined for Hereditary Cataract with 1 found to be affected.

Other anomalies seen included: colobomata, cysts, retinal lesions/scarring and injury. 1 dog developed PRA and is now nearly blind although was tested clear when younger.

BLOOD SAMPLES FOR THE ANIMAL HEALTH TRUST (AHT)

32 owners had sent samples from their dogs to the AHT = 4%.

This is a dramatic reduction from the last study (17% donated then) but this coincides with testing not occurring at the Breed Shows as they have been in the past.

COMMENTS SUPPLIED

150 respondents made comments related to health; these will be forwarded to the General and Health Sub-Committees for their consideration.

Diseases affecting Flatcoated Retrievers

	2011	2006
Benign Tumours	25%	25%
Skin and Ear disease	12%	7%
Arthritis	8%	11%
Malignant Tumours	6%	2.5%
Ocular (eye) disease	4%	4%
Food intolerance / allergy	3.4%	4%
Other Skeletal	3%	3%
Gut disease	2.5%	2%
Gastric Torsion / Bloat (GDV)	2.3%	3%
Organ disease	2.3%	-
Neurological disease	2%	2%
Luxating Patellae	1.7%	2%
Hypothyroidism	1.5%	2%
'Other' disease	3%	5%
Laryngeal paralysis	1%	-
OsteoChondrosis dessicans (OCD)	<<1%	<<1%
Glaucoma	<<1%	<<1%

14% of bitches have/had noticeable false pregnancies, 9% had irregular seasons.

2% of males had retained testicles.

Tumours

30% of the dogs had tumours, 163 dogs had benign tumours, 25 dogs had malignant tumours and 25 had both types. 2 were unspecified.

4% of those affected sent tissue or their results to the Cambridge Vet School/ FCRS Tumour Survey. This is a great reduction from 2006 but could be due in part to the significant improvement in diagnostic imaging to provide diagnosis.

BENIGN

Of the 163 dogs identified

Not stated / unknown	=	51%
Lipoma	=	18%
Cysts /tags	=	16%
Histiocytoma	=	10%
Other	=	4%

These were found to occur in all areas of the body with no site being prevalent.

MALIGNANT

Of the 25 identified

Not stated / unknown	=	56%
Sarcoma	=	16%
Mast Cell	=	12%
Other	=	8%
Squamous Cell Carcinoma	=	4%
Melanoma	=	4%

Again no trend as to site was identified.

Skin & Ear Disease

This has increased dramatically not just because the two sites have been combined as they should. Many of these are related to skin intolerance and other allergies or immune response. Causes were variable with no one area being prevalent although parasite allergy was not identified in this study as it had been in 2006.

Arthritis

8% of the dogs included in the study were affected but no one joint showed prevalence.

Ocular Disease

Other*	=	13 dogs affected (1.7% of study)
Distichiasis	=	10 dogs
Entropion	=	6 dogs
Ectropion	=	1 dog
Glaucoma	=	1 dog

*Other included juvenile ectopic cilia, ectopic cilia, cataract, uveitis, follicular conjunctivitis, cysts, blepharitis.

Food Intolerance / Allergy

26 dogs (3.5%) were affected although the majority did not include details of the allergen in their response. Wheat, gluten, beef and milk were represented.

Other Skeletal

Torn Cruciate ligament = 2%

Also seen but representing less than 1% each were Spondylosis and accident causing injury.

Digestive Tract (gut) Disease

18 dogs were affected by a range of digestive problems not separately specified. These included Irritable Bowel Disease, Absorption problems, Foreign body ingestion, Pancreatitis, Giardia, peritonitis, ulcers, generalised sensitivity and megaesophagus.

Gastric Torsion (GDV)

18 dogs had suffered with GDV aka Bloat, 1 also suffers with idiopathic bloating (bloats but with no known cause and can inflate and deflate spontaneously)

Organ Disease

18 dogs (2.3%) suffered with organ disease but from these 94% had heart disease and 1 renal disease (kidney). These were:

Heart murmur	5 dogs
Valve disease	4 dogs
Enlarged heart/ cardiomyopathy	2 dogs
Other	3 dogs

Neurological Disease

17 dogs suffered from neurological disease, 11 of these have seizures but only 4 have been diagnosed with epilepsy. 2 dogs showed other neurological deficits.

Luxating Patella(e)

13 dogs had luxating patella(e) diagnosed, some unilateral and some bilateral. The majority had surgery although age of occurrence was not always given. Those that stated were in the younger age bracket. Some had been caused or worsened by accidents.

Hypothyroidism

The figure of 1.5% is a reduction from the 2% found in the last study. No tendency towards neuter status or gender was found.

Other

Other diseases not included elsewhere, has greatly reduced due to the increase in the number of conditions considered separately. On this occasion this category included pyometra, tail amputation, dental disease and fungal infection, babesia, deafness, diabetes, aspergillosis and infective peritonitis. These all represented less than 2 dogs in the study.

The very worrying 'disease' of a bad temperament was recorded by one respondent, whilst the more amusing chronic lack of common sense was recorded by another.

Laryngeal Paralysis

This was seen in 7 dogs. This disease had not been separately recorded in the 2006 study.

OCD

Only 3 dogs were found to have OCD. Whilst 6 were scored under the BVA scheme with 0.0 scores which is very promising.

Dogs deceased over the last 5 years

300 dogs in total were reported on, of these:

The ages ranged from 17 down to 14wks. 57% were over 10 before their demise which is a 6% increase on the 2006 study.

The average age reached was 9.3 years.

<1yr	-	<1%	9	-	11%
1	-	<1%	10	-	17%
2	-	1%	11	-	13%
3	-	1%	12	-	15%
4	-	2.3%	13	-	8%
5	-	2.3%	14	-	2%
6	-	3.3%	15	-	1%
7	-	8%	16	-	0
8	-	12%	17	-	0.3%

CAUSES OF DEATH

	2011	2006
Cancer	54%	57%
Other	20%	9%
Organ failure	7%	4%
Not known	6%	9%
Heart failure	4%	5%
Accident	3%	2.8%
GDV	3%	3.5%
Foreign Body	2%	-

CANCER

This remains the highest cause of death for Flatcoated Retrievers

36% of respondents did not state the type of cancer that caused the demise of their pet. There were a wide range of types with the predominant being:

Bone tumours / osteosarcomas	5%
Histiocytic sarcoma	4%
Lymphoma	3%
Haemangiosarcoma	3%

Others seen were:

Non specified Sarcomas, Soft Tissue Sarcomas, Angiosarcoma, Lymphatic myeloma, carcinoma, Squamous Cell Sarcoma, spindle cell tumour, adenocarcinoma, melanoma and leukaemia.

The sites with highest incidence of occurrence were:

Spleen	18%
Liver	10.5%
Lungs	9%

Virtually every other site in the body was also represented.

OTHER

These were causes not separately listed with none other than 'Old Age' of significantly high numbers. Old age did constitute 5% of the total. Some of the causes may well have been due to a categorised cause i.e. neoplasia could be the cause of internal haemorrhage but without any evidence assumptions cannot be made. The causes in this category include: paralysis, internal haemorrhage, spondylitis, immune mediated disease (various represented including Immune Mediated Haemolytic Anaemia and lupus), septicaemia, seizures, cushings disease, laryngeal paralysis, cholangitis, severe behavioural/ physiological changes, rheumatoid arthritis.

ORGAN FAILURE (exc heart)

Renal disease represented 3.3% of the total deaths (11). 3 of these were under 3 years of age.

Renal (kidney)	11
Spleen	3
Liver	2
Pancreas	2
Lung	1
Multi	1

HEART

Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) represented the majority and the only specified cause in this category. Others were listed as general failure without specific diagnosis stated.

ACCIDENT

Within the last survey this included foreign body ingestion which has been listed separately on this occasion. Although tragic and representing across the range of ages there is little in the way of prevention that can be employed. The causes included road traffic accidents and falls. The saddest to see were that 2 of the deaths were caused by the actions of other dogs.

GASTRIC DILATATION VOLVULOUS / BLOAT / TORSION

As the 2006 survey age ranges or gender had little significance although there was a slight increase in the mid to older age range as seen on the last survey. Thankfully the total has dropped albeit marginally and it is hoped that this is in part due to improved education and general awareness of the condition and the importance of immediate treatment.

FOREIGN BODY INGESTION

It is very unfortunate that this is definitely a disease of flatcoated retrievers, their wish to consume all that others would deem inedible seems boundless. Early recognition of the symptoms of this may lessen those with tragic outcomes although often owners are unaware of 'additional meals' or pica.