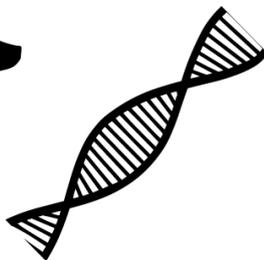
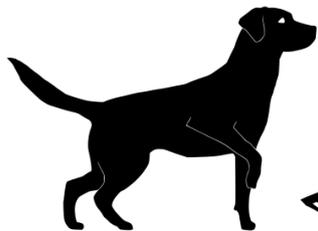


GOdogs

Investigating the
Genetics of Obesity
in Dogs



Issue 4

September 2014

Welcome to the fourth GOdogs newsletter

A big thank you to all of our owners who have taken the time to contact us, and particularly to those who have then gone on to take their dogs to the vets and have their saliva samples taken. Participants have come from Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England - truly UK-wide!

Exciting results!

We have been working hard on the genetic study and have some exciting findings: lots of our most food-motivated Labradors carry a change in a gene which is known to be important in the regulation of appetite. The change is rare in dogs whose owners say they aren't particularly bothered about food. From what is known about the gene, it is no surprise that those Labradors seem to live to eat.

We have lots to do to firm up the details and what we have found isn't the whole story - there are plenty of Labradors who don't have the change but are still fixated on food - but it is exciting and we hope to 'go public' about our findings in the next few months.



We don't think this pair have the
'greedy gene'.

Pet profile – meet Ben Littlewood from Oldham in Lancashire



Ben's owner Lisa writes:

My best friend Ben is a 6½ year old typical yellow Lab who loves playing ball, swimming, his teddy bear and cuddles with his mum but most of all he loves food. He has a particular fondness for cheese and also strangely for Branflakes!

Ben was neutered when he was three years old (after he broke my leg!) and since then he has steadily gained weight despite at least three decent walks a day – admittedly he does know exactly which of the regular dog walkers he encounters carry treats, and even the Postman can't escape without giving him a biscuit! Most evenings are spent with

him giving the 'I need to go out' look every few minutes only for me to be led straight to the treat tin, we have had numerous (one sided) conversations about The Boy – or Dog – who cried Wolf! Thankfully, despite his love of it he never steals food, although he has been found in the park before now sharing a workman's pie having done the 'puppy eyes' trick.

My previous Labrador had no weight issues at all despite being treated exactly the same as Ben; which was one of the reasons why I jumped at the chance to be involved in the study. We already had an appointment at our vets and they were happy to do the saliva sample at the same time. Elaine has kept us updated on the study and we also follow progress on Twitter.

Putting a Number on Hungriness

How greedy is your dog? Most people can tell us the answer, and give lots of examples about their dogs' eating behaviour. But, as scientists, we need to be able to 'score' a dog's interest in food. Eleanor has been working to develop a short survey which will help do just that. When we have the final version, we will be in touch with everyone whose dogs have donated DNA to the project to ask you to fill it out. It will be online and takes less than 10 minutes to fill out, so please do look out for an email showing how to get started.



THE KENNEL CLUB
Making a difference for dogs

Thank you to the Kennel Club

A huge thank you to the Kennel Club for agreeing to help us by emailing all of their UK registered Labrador and Retriever owners. The response has been amazing, we are very grateful.

Keep those samples coming...

Surprisingly, we still need more samples from Labs in the 'overweight and greedy' category. We can also still collect from dogs in the 'lean/not food motivated' groups though, so please do get in touch (if you are a dog owner) or collect a sample from a volunteer dog (if you are a vet or nurse) even if you aren't sure the dog is perfect for the initial genetic screen.

If you know of anyone who might have a suitable dog, please let them know about the project by sending them this newsletter or forwarding a link to the [website](#). Not sure? Help spread the word by 'liking' us on Facebook ([GOdogs Project](#)) or following us on Twitter ([@GodogsProject](#)). We use our Twitter feed and Facebook profiles to flag up articles or news about canine obesity and body weight regulation, with the occasional doggy video which may make you smile.

Interested in Genetics and Dog Science?

Follow the GOdogs tweets or 'like' our page on Facebook. As well as publishing information about the GOdogs project, we update with doggy science and genetics stories. Some of our recent updates are here:



'Love Hormone' Has Same Effect on Humans and Dogs <http://news.sciencemag.org/brain-behavior/2014/06/love-hormone-has-same-effect-humans-and-dogs>

Video: How Dogs Show Their Love <http://news.sciencemag.org/plants-animals/2013/08/video-how-dogs-show-their-love...>

Prejudice against fat people as bad as racism, say scientists <http://thetim.es/1qMmLoc> (PA)

Find us on Twitter [@GodogsProject](#) or on [Facebook](#)

Contact details:

Eleanor Raffan (Principal Investigator) & Elaine Withers (Administrator)
GOdogs Project
Level 4
Institute of Metabolic Science,
University of Cambridge Metabolic Research Laboratories
Addenbrooke's Hospital
CB2 0QQ
(01223) 336792
godogs@hermes.cam.ac.uk

