

2009 HEMOPET REPORT for the IWS THYROID STUDY PROJECT

W. Jean Dodds, DVM
Hemopet
11330 Markon Drive
Garden Grove, CA 92841
714-891-2022; FAX 714-891-2123
hemopet@hotmail.com

The following report summarizes our findings for the IWS Thyroid Study that began shortly after my presentation at the IWSCA 2006 National Specialty. Florence Blecher generously donated \$500 to cover the initial set-up charges for the study. Our study has gathered data in 2 ways and is ongoing.

Background

Blood samples are submitted to us using the special Hemopet IWS Test Request Form and pricing [\$55] plus the required IWS-Hemopet Thyroid Study Questionnaire. OFA Thyroid Registry testing is also offered [\$85] and requires a completed and signed OFA Thyroid Registry Form and separate \$15 check made out to OFA. At the 2007 IWSCA Specialty, the IWSCA Breeders' Committee authorized a \$20 subsidy per dog, thereby reducing lab fees to owners. All submissions and results are kept strictly confidential; findings are only provided to the owner of record and their veterinarian. Only aggregate data summaries are released and made available to the IWSCA and its committees.

Thyroid study data from MSU thyroid profiles [IDEXX/ Vita-Tech in Canada] have also been entered into our data base when accompanied with a completed IWS-Hemopet Thyroid Study Questionnaire.

IWS are also enrolled in the collaborative genetic study with Hemopet and Dr. Lorna Kennedy, Centre for Integrated Genomic Medical Research, University of Manchester in the UK to identify the genetic DNA MHC/DLA markers associated with thyroiditis in the breed. There are two published papers to date on this research [Kennedy LJ, Quarmby S, Happ GM, Barnes A et al. Association of canine hypothyroid disease with a common major histocompatibility complex DLA class II allele. Tissue Antigens 68:82-86, 2006; Kennedy LJ, Hudson HJ, Leonard J, Angles JM, et al. Association of hypothyroid disease in Doberman pinscher dogs with a rare major histocompatibility complex DLA class II haplotype. Tissue Antigens 67:53-56, 2005.] We are an author on the 2006 paper.

To participate in the UK DNA study, we need 3-6 mL of whole blood in EDTA [LTT] sent along with a signed informed consent. All submissions to the UK for this study are anonymous.

All test submission forms and questionnaire are available from the www.iwsthroidstudy.com.

Current Findings

When we began, we determined that the definitive data base needed to establish the norms and prevalence of hypothyroidism in IWS would ideally require 200-400 healthy dogs of varying ages and both sexes -- females not in estrus, coming into estrus, pregnant, or lactating. Since beginning the study in June 2006, we have enrolled 250 IWS.

Since mid-August 2006, we also have submitted 82 IWS whole blood samples to Dr. Kennedy for the UK Thyroiditis Genome Project. Congratulations to those IWS supporters for this impressive effort!

We have entered results and questionnaire responses for 226 dogs. Samples were received from the US, Canada, England, Holland, Finland, Sweden and New Zealand.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR HEMOPET IWS THYROID STUDY

# IWS	Testing Lab	THYROID STATUS * †			
		Normal	Hypothyroid	Equivocal	Autoimmune Thyroiditis†
231	Hemopet/Antech				
16	MSU				
2	Antech Other				
1	Vita -Tech				
Total 250	4	196	42	5	7

* results status not categorized by testing laboratory to maintain anonymity. † 7 dogs had elevated thyroid autoantibodies and 4 of these were hypothyroid; 2 dogs also had Addison's disease; 13 hypothyroid dogs received thyroxine therapy.

Summary of Findings for Thyroid Function Testing

These results indicate that 16.8 % (42 of 250) of the IWS tested were hypothyroid. Some of these hypothyroid dogs were subsequently retested after being placed on thyroxine therapy, but they were only counted once in the data base. Five dogs tested in the equivocal category and needs to be retested in another 4-6 months. [Note: in 2007, 8% of the IWS tested were hypothyroid. In 2008, that number increased to 13.5%.]

Seven dogs were diagnosed with autoimmune thyroiditis based upon finding elevated levels of either T3AA, T4AA or TgAA [i.e. T3 or T4 autoantibody, or thyroglobulin autoantibody]. [Note: in 2007, 3 dogs were diagnosed with autoimmune thyroiditis. In 2008, that number increased to 5 dogs.]

Two dogs had Addison's disease (autoimmune hypoadrenocorticism).

As autoimmune endocrine disorders have a heritable basis, the above thyroid testing data support the need to actively screen all IWS breeding stock, in contrast to earlier assumptions that IWS are at relatively low risk for developing hypothyroidism.

Review of the data collected so far indicates that the normal reference ranges for IWS typically fall within those limits established by us for other medium-sized breeds.

Summary of Findings for UK Thyroiditis Genome Project

Of the 82 IWS samples submitted to Dr. Kennedy to date, 47 have been genotyped (39 healthy control IWS and 8 thyroiditis/ hypothyroid cases). This includes one pair of siblings where one is affected and the other healthy. While the IWS as a breed does have several DLA class II haplotypes that carry the rare DQA1*00101 genetic marker allele associated with affected dogs of other breeds, none of the IWS cases had this haplotype. In contrast, a different haplotype was raised in the 8 IWS cases.

To confirm this finding, we need to send more blood samples to the UK from affected thyroiditis/ hypothyroid IWS to determine if this is the significant associated haplotype. If this finding is confirmed, then the thyroiditis marker in IWS has been identified.

This important research should benefit the health and longevity of all future IWS.