

“d” Labrador News™

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the Silver Labrador Retriever

Silver World

Silver Lab Forum (SLF)

Why a Silver Lab Forum? This is the question breeders are asking; but I must ask you, why not a Silver Lab Forum? We all love these beautiful animals and we need to unite to ensure their future. If you are a Silver Lab Breeder there is little doubt you have experienced some kind of health issue, or know someone who has with a Silver Labrador. Silver Labs will likely never be accepted by the LRC & AKC if we as breeders are not dedicated to improving them; breeding for the proper structure, coat, temperament, and health. Not only should we do this to prove to the LRC & AKC that our Labs are here to stay, but we should want to do this for the wellbeing of our favorite breed. The SLF is a place to come to talk with other Silver breeders about everything that you are going through, to share, to learn, to laugh, to support each other. Presently, the SLF sections include a general discussion area, a health “clinic”, a classifieds, training talk, and top dogs.

I do not know how many of you like to participate on online forums, I know I have always enjoyed them. However, after one forum I joined found out I was a Silver Lab Breeder, I have been publicly attacked several times since. That is why this forum is under a password protection. You must have a website or a referral, proving you are a Silver Lab breeder, to gain access to the SLF. These and other safeguards are in place so that the anti-silver people cannot join or even view our discussions, no more ridicule from them. Once you register, you will be activated within about 24 hours, after which you can begin to view and post on the forum. The SLF is a free, web based, forum that started in early January 2009 and it has steadily grown since. We have many wonderful members who are sharing their breeding experiences and knowledge with each other. I know that since we (Silver Springs Labradors) have joined the SLF, we have learned so much more information, a lot faster than we ever would have without it. Thanks to everyone who is making the forum a great successful tool, and we all look forward to meeting other breeders with the same passion for the Silver Labrador. If you would like to participate, you can register to join at:

www.silverlabforum.com/phpBB3



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Newsletter Devoted to the Silver Labrador

What is it?

This is the inaugural issue of the “d” Labrador News, a newsletter devoted to the “Silver” (“d” gene carrying) dilute Labrador Retrievers, and it supports those that champion this unique coloring of America’s favorite breed. In this Newsletter, you will find articles addressing an array of topics important to Silver Labrador breeders. The newsletter’s columns are typically an extension of topics and discussions that originate from the *Silver Lab Forum* (also addressed in this issue). Topics may include: the latest news in the Silver World, Labrador Genetics, Health Care, Breeding Recommendations and Advice, Training Tips, Top Dogs, Breeder Spotlights, and Silver Lab Stories. All written by, and for, Silver Labrador breeders and enthusiasts.

The Beginnings

The idea for this type of newsletter was the result of an online “conversation” that was had among several participants of the *Silver Lab Forum*. The underlying perception was that this type of a newsletter could help in bringing concerned Silver Labrador breeders together, to network, to learn, to share, and in truth...to unite. The forum’s Moderators and Administrator collaborated to publish this inaugural issue.

The Purpose

“d” Labrador News provides a centralized

source of Silver Labrador relevant information. It will work to dispel myths and inaccuracies that are perpetuated by those vocal few who are against our Labrador Retrievers (and at times, . . . by us ourselves!). The fundamental aspiration is to encourage breeders to unite and work toward a sure and secure future for the Silver Lab.

The Future

The future is what we make it. This newsletter publishes bimonthly, six issues annually. All readers are encouraged to participate at whatever level you feel comfortable with. If you would like to write an article, let us know. If you have a great picture or story that you want to contribute, please do. All inquiries and suggestions can be made by emailing admin@silverlabforum.com, or by making a post in the *Silver Lab Forum*. We look forward to working with you and hope you find “d” Labradors News interesting and beneficial.

If you know of a fellow Silver Labrador Breeder that did not receive this Newsletter, feel free to share yours with them, or have them request one by emailing admin@silverlabforum.com

Breeders who contributed articles and ideas for this issue are:

Silver Mountain Labradors, UT
Silver Springs Labradors, GA
Stardust Labradors, CA
Texaz Silvers, TX

This Month's Training Tip

Health Care

A Cost-effective Source for Health Clearances.

Are you considering any health clearances for your dogs? International Genetics or INGEN is something worth looking into. They offer DNA testing for a vast array of genetic diseases. Your one stop shopping for disease screening will include a DNA fingerprint and a coat color test to see if your dog is carrying any hidden colors.

Diseases tested for are many but, for the Labrador the most common would be Pra/PRCD (Progressive Retinal Atrophy / progressive rod-cone degeneration). The cost of the test is relatively inexpensive as compared to some of the usual companies that provide the service.

Pra/PRCD done through Optigen is priced at \$175 per test; Color coat testing through Healthgene is done at the cost of \$105 per test for 3 alleles; DNA fingerprint done through AKC is priced at \$35, and \$40 with Vetgen.

The package deal done through INGEN is only \$75 for single and \$70 for breeder kits that include 5 or more.

This is quite a deal compared to \$315.00 if done through individual companies. INGEN is a Bahamas based company so surely they are not under such strict government regulations as U.S. based companies therefore the price difference. The turnaround time for the test is quoted at 30 days on the website, but comments have been made that it has recently been a bit longer. The company has reported they are having new equipment installed in their laboratory and should soon be up and running, this should solve the delays in testing. Another advantage to using INGEN, no blood is drawn for sampling. The test kit includes all necessary collection equipment, two cheek swabs and a pair of tweezers for hair follicle samples. To learn more about INGEN and their breeder offers, visit:

<http://www.ingen.bs/>

"Sit", the essential command.

Sitting is a natural position for a dog and as such is one of the easiest and most basic skills to teach on command. It is essential in that it commands the collected attention of your dog, and allows the dog an opportunity to focus all attention on you and your next command. To teach "Sit", move a toy or piece of food (the motivator) from a position in front of the dog to a point up over his



head and say "Sit". The dog will probably raise his head to follow the motivator and in the process, lower his rear end to the floor. You may gently help the dog at first by tucking his bottom under with your free hand. When he sits, praise the dog exuberantly and give him the toy or treat as a reward. Now repeat until the command is mastered. In time you will replace the physical motivator (treat or toy) with simple praise. Happy training!

Genetics

The Dilution Gene

The Silver coloring of the Silver Labrador Retriever is due to the homozygous presence of the dilution gene "d", a rarity in Labradors, mentioned by breed authors only a few times historically. Technically, a "Silver" Labrador is a dilute Chocolate. The normal Chocolate pigment is unchanged, but its dispersal in the hairs is clumped and random rather than evenly dispersed as in a Chocolate Lab.

The "d" gene also acts on Black Labs in the same fashion, resulting in what we call "Charcoal", a dark grey to nearly black coloring. Lastly, "d" affect Yellow Labs as well, turning the already light colored coat lighter. Many are now calling these dilute Yellows "Champagne". The silver producing "d" gene is a recessive gene, meaning when in combination with a dominant "D", the dilu-

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tion is inactive so the typical Black, Yellow, or Chocolate is expressed; our "Silver Factors" (Dd). The dilution gene also affects the pigment of the skin of the nose, lips, and eye rims. Perhaps most stunning is the affect of the "d" gene on eye pigment, producing a light blue eye in puppies and a amber or hazel eye in adults. Dilute colors are only produced if both the sire and dam each carry at least one "d" gene.

The LRC Reverses Position on Silver Labradors!

Then.... "In 1987 the AKC, in corporation with the Labrador Retriever Club of America {LRC}, conducted an inquiry into the breeding of litters that contained members that were registered as silver. An AKC representative was sent to observe these dogs. The report and color photographs of these dogs were reviewed by AKC staff and representatives of the Labrador Retriever Club of America {LRC}. Both Parties were satisfied that there was no reason to doubt that the dogs were purebred Labrador Retrievers, however they felt that the dogs were incorrectly registered as silver. Since the breed standard at the time described chocolate as ranging in shade from sedge to chocolate, it was felt that the dogs could more accurately be described as chocolate rather than silver. This remains the current policy of the American Kennel Club". - Jack Norton, Special Services Dept. AKC

Now.... "There is no genetic basis for the silver gene in Labradors. The silver color is a disqualification under the Standard for the breed. The LRC does not recognize, accept or condone the sale or advertising of any Labrador as a silver Labrador. The Club opposes the practice of registering silver as chocolate. - Francis Smith, Genetics Committee LRC

In the ensuing two decades since the LRC first stated that there was no reason to doubt that Silvers were purebred Labradors, their view has changed so much so that today they suggest there is no genetic basis for the silver gene in Labradors. What will they say next? Will our parent club stop the AKC from allowing us to register our dogs as Black, Yellow, or Chocolate? Will they ostracize us forcing a split in the breed? As concerned breeders, we must all begin working together with common purpose for the very future existence of our dogs. We have two choices; we can sit idly by, watching as others who openly despise us and our dogs control our future, or we can stand up, unite, and take control of our own destiny. In short, if we as breeders do not stand up for our own dogs, who will?