

The Controversy over Silver Labs

Written by: Robert Young of the AKC 3-27-00

At the end of the Twentieth Century, the frequency of silver (gray) labs began to increase in North America due to an increase in the number of Chocolate Labs in the gene pool of Labrador Retrievers. These Silver Labs in turn fueled an enormous controversy within the Lab community.

Fortunately, by the advent of the Twenty-First Century, the controversy surrounding Silver Labs subsided except for a few remaining breeders of “standard colors”. These remaining opponents of Silver Labs are the K_9 version of the “Flat Earth Society”. Unfortunately, those holdout breeders who refuse to acknowledge AKC’s acceptance of the silver labs, continue to confuse the general public by making unfounded accusations about the purity of the Silver Lab breeding. In an attempt to quiet the ranting of the more vocal opponents of Silver Labs, one breeder of Silvers offered a \$100,000 Silver Lab Challenge to any of these “experts” who wished to put their money where their mouth was concerning their accusations surrounding the ancestry of the silver labs. And to the man, not one of those “experts” you see on the internet was willing to stand behind their Flat Earth accusations regarding Silver Labs.

Are Silver Labs Pure Bred Labrador Retrievers?

DNA testing and mapping of silver labs was done during the close of the Twentieth Century and meticulous investigation of each silver labs ancestry was conducted by investigators from AKC. All conclusions were the same i.e. “there was no reason to doubt the dogs were purebred Labrador Retrievers.” (see conclusion issued by AKC). Amazingly, the Flat Earth Opponents of Silver Labs counter these scientific conclusion with the incredibly insane accusation that the “cross-breeding” which allegedly produced the Silver Labs was either covered up by line breeding or happened to long ago to be detected by DNA testing. If anyone ever needed on indication of just how ignorant opponents of Silver Labs are, this statement should be the key. Every K-9 carries in its genes complete history of its ancestors going all the way back to wolves.

Everything written about the Silver Labs is based on speculation. One statement that is commonly made it that there had to have been a Weimeraner introduced into the bloodlines to produce the silver color. This statement has been proven false. UC Berkley studied the genetic makeup of the Silver Lab against that of a Weimeraner. Research concluded that it was not the same.

Conclusion

Silver Labs are pure bred Labrador Retrievers and their ancestry is beyond reproach. Fortunately, kennel clubs around the world do not have the political pressure from mercenary American breeders of “normal” colored labs and already accept silver labs without all the political fuss and pressure being applied to AKC (the original standard for a lab has always been “a coat of solid color”). If a

person should come upon one of the remaining “Silver Lab Hate Sites” on the net and develops ANY doubts about Silver Labs, *that person should too directly to AKC and ask the pertinent questions to learn the facts.*

Why The AKC Registers Silver Labradors As Chocolates!!

“In 1987 we conducted an inquiry into the breeding of the litters that contained the dogs that were registered as silver and one of our representatives was sent to observe several of the dogs that had been registered as silver. Color photographs of these were forwarded to the office of the American Kennel Club where the staff of AKC and the representative of the Labrador Retriever Club of America examined them. Both parties were satisfied that there was no reason to doubt that the dogs were purebred Labrador Retrievers, however both parties felt that the dogs were incorrectly registered as silvers. Since the breed standard describes chocolate as ranging in shade from Sedge to Chocolate, it was felt that the dogs could more accurately be described as chocolate than as silvers.

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