

March 2011

## AWS Pattern Baldness Study

- **Pattern Baldness affects *some* AWS. Samples from *all* AWS are needed.**

American Water Spaniels sometimes exhibit symmetrical areas of poor fur coat on their bodies which is at times called *pattern(ed) baldness* and at other times called *follicular dysplasia*. This condition does not harm the dog, but can be surprising and upsetting for the owner or breeder. Breeds such as Irish Water Spaniels and Curly Coated Retrievers are also working to understand the problem.

The American Water Spaniel Club, Inc.'s work with Dr. Roe Froman, DVM, of the Van Andel Research Institute (VARI), Grand Rapids, Michigan, has enabled our breed to enter into a study to determine the genetic background of this condition. Your dog is important to the study! *Samples are needed from dogs with good coats and from dogs with varying degrees of affected coats.*

You can easily request a saliva collection kit from VARI with the contact below. Shipping is covered both ways. (To also enter also your dog into the CHCC cancer study, request both kits.) All information collected by VARI is confidential and immediately transferred to a barcoded sample number. There will not be any identifying information attached to the results of this study.

- *VARI indicates that a pedigree is not necessary but would be welcomed. On the Informed Consent sheet you **may** indicate the dog's a.) Registration Number, b.) Attach a copy of the pedigree, or c.) Write in the dog's name, parents and grandparents.*

**VARI Contact:** Angela Rhoades, VARI, 616-234-5437 or  
[Angela.Rhoades@vai.org](mailto:Angela.Rhoades@vai.org)

It is accepted that pattern baldness/follicular dysplasia is a genetic condition. Hair loss is caused by malfunctioning hair follicles that form weak hairs which break easily. Healthy fur should withstand collar contact and brushing. Many times this 'pattern' of gradual symmetrical thinning is seen at the ventral neck, where the collar rubs the fur, and in the posterior aspects of the rear legs and tail. The condition can range from slight and only noticeable when the dog is wet; to a much more involved area where the dog is bare on its lower half, from neck to tail, but has fur on the face, legs, back and sides. In a condition which may be separate, a dog could exhibit missing patches of fur on the torso, for a moth-eaten appearance.

### Examples:



- **Most affected dogs only have a small area of fur loss at neck and thighs.**
- **These pictures are an intermediate example.**
- **Rare dogs have a much larger area of fur loss on the lower half of their neck and body.**
- **Rare dogs have a patchy appearance.**