

SPORTING GROUP



Curly-Coated Retriever

Curly-Coated Retrievers TWO DIFFERENT CHALLENGES

Recently, one of my Curly-Coated Retrievers was diagnosed with Cushing's disease. At that time, I had never met a dog who had this ailment and certainly needed more information in order to learn more

about it. My vet had simply said that no medication was needed at that time, and she shared with me the results of the all-day test that Shine had in order to diagnose her problem. I then went to work to find out about Cushing's disease.

I found out that every case is different, and

some owners did share that their dog had been through it in the past and did well on medication prescribed by the veterinarian. Shine demonstrated a ravenous appetite and extreme thirst. After six months of deterioration of coat quality (over her back she was almost bald and her coat was an orange color, while her sides and legs remained dark liver, with some curls, but not good coat), I again visited our veterinarian. She agreed that it was time to start her on a medication, and Shine is now on one pill a day.

She has now started very gradually to improve in slow motion and is growing a bit of coat over her lumbar area, which had been very sparse, with just tiny wisps of hair. I realize that any improvement will be a slow process, and I am hoping that her coat will continue to gradually improve, but she has a very patchy coat now, with spots of baldness.

Meanwhile, I continue to learn more about this disease, and Shine maintains her wonderful ways.

If any of you reading this column have any hints for dealing with Cushing's disease, I would really so appreciate hearing from you.

Another challenging subject that I have read nothing about lately is that of a bitch producing one or more "swimmer pups" in a litter. Quite some time ago, I asked Cathy Lewendowsky, a well-known Curly breeder,

about this subject, as she had, in the past, a litter in which a few of the pups had this problem. She shared the following with me:

First, she checked the subject online but then decided to raise the pups like orphans, more or less. She allowed the pups to feed and held them on their sides while they fed. After feeding, she held them while the bitch cleaned them and then put them into baskets propped with rolled washcloths under their front, to put them in the most natural position.

"They had eaten and were ready to sleep. I carried them room to room to make sure no one flattened out. If they were restless, I picked them up and cradled them, and that usually tires out a pup.

"Once they were ready to eat again, I repeated the cycle all over. It took only three days to note that the chest cavity was back to a bowed chest—not a pancake! I had to take time off from work, but no more than if it was an orphaned litter.

"I shall now wait to see whether these pups are more people oriented, since they spent so much time with me or my husband."

Thank you, Cathy, for sharing this very worthwhile information with us.

—Ann Shinkle,
amshinkle@aol.com

Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America