



July 2011

## Learning Why Dogs Die

Story from Pet Age Magazine

### A University of Georgia study produces surprising findings on common diseases in certain dog breeds.

A new study may signal the end of the era in which dog owners and veterinarians rely on a mix of limited data and anecdotal evidence to determine which breeds are at risk of developing what conditions.

A comprehensive look at causes of death in more than 80 breeds, the study may be used to create breed-specific health maintenance programs, according to its authors at the University of Georgia.

Researchers examined data from the Veterinary Medical Database to determine the cause of death for nearly 75,000 dogs from 1984 through 2004. They classified deaths by organ system and disease process, and further analyzed the data by breed, age and average body mass. Eighty-two breeds are represented in the study.

Some of the findings corroborate smaller, breed-specific studies, but many findings come as surprises. For example, toy breeds like Chihuahuas and Maltese are known to have high rates of cardiovascular disease - but the study shows

that fox terriers also have high rates of cardiovascular disease. Golden retrievers and boxers are known to have high rates of cancer-but the data show that the Bouvier des Flandres actually has a higher death rate from cancer than the boxer.

The previously unknown high risk of cancer in the Bouvier, a relatively rare breed, highlights the power of their comprehensive approach, said Dr. Kate Creevy, an assistant professor in the Univ. of Georgia's College of Veterinary Medicine.

"With rare breeds, an individual veterinarian may not see enough cases to be able to develop the opinion on whether the breed has a high incidence of conditions such as cancer," Creevy said. "But if you analyze records that have been compiled over 20 years, you can detect patterns that you wouldn't otherwise notice."

The study shows that larger breeds are more likely to die of musculoskeletal disease, gastrointestinal disease and, most notably, cancer. Smaller breeds are more likely to die from metabolic diseases, such as diabetes and Cushing's disease.

"If we can anticipate better how things can go wrong for dogs, we can manage their wellness to keep them as healthy as possible," said Creevy.

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## Scooping Poop for a Living

When it comes to professional poop scooping, members of the Association of Professional Animal Waste Specialists (Santa Clarita, CA) know how to have a little fun with their occupation.

At the group's annual convention, aPAWS scooper engage in some friendly competition called the "Scooper Bowl." Dozens of fake pooh piles are placed on the grounds and participants race to pick up the most piles in two minutes. The winner earns a trophy and bragging rights for the year.

Like mobile groomers and many other pet-service provider, Paul Chesler, who started his business in 2005, has felt the dual crunch of the recession and higher gas prices. As a result, he's had to cut back in other areas, such as advertising-even though it is essential for finding new clients.

Maybe if the Scooper Bowl makes it to prime time, the world will know about aPAWS. For now, the group can be found at [www.apaws.org](http://www.apaws.org).

Melissa Hart - Pet Age Magazine.



## Hydrant Happenings

### 2011 NFDA Leadership Conference

July 10-13, 2011

[www.nfda.org](http://www.nfda.org)

### Pet Bereavement Start Up Kits

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