



Cancer in our Breed

Mary-Anne Boulet

As many of you know, this has become a subject dear to my heart lately.

In August of 2010, I lost my beautiful girl C C Mistral of Waldenridge CGN CD TD AGN RE RA (CL) TEC HIC SGDC to Hemangiosarcoma. (pictured left, 2 days before her death and right 6 months before).



Then in March of 2011 at the age of 4, my boy, Tersha's Magnum Force CGN PCD CD TDX UTD AGN AGNJ AGNJS RE RN(CL) N-TDX TEC HIC was diagnosed with Stage IVb B-Cell Lymphosarcoma. (pictured below left before treatment, and in remission in early December on the right) I have elected to treat him with the Madison-Wisconsin Chemotherapy Protocol in an effort to keep my boy with me for a while longer. We did achieve a short remission period but just before Christmas the Lymphoma became active again and we are back into treatment phase.

In conversation with the Oncologist at Ontario Veterinary College, she mentioned that they were seeing more and more cases of cancer being referred to them and they didn't know if it is because our incidences of cancer are rising, or if they are being diagnosed and referred earlier for treatment. That kind of got me thinking about all the dogs that don't go to OVC that have died from cancer and wondering if there is any correlation to where we live or what we do with them.

So, with the blessing of my oncologist technician, I have decided to try to start a database which will give us some anecdotal information to work with.



If you're interested in contributing, please drop me a line privately. Your name, city, province/state, dog's registered name, breed, titles, if it was spayed or neutered (and why it was spayed or neutered and at what age) the type of cancer, age when it was diagnosed, duration, treatment (if any), outcome...also let me know if siblings in a litter or direct dams/sires or offspring have been affected. Did you notice anything odd in the weeks before the diagnosis (ie. limping for no reason). Since I will be doing this with tracking dogs also (there seems to be a fair amount of nasal cancer arising lately) let me know the type of areas you track in and if they are maintained with pesticides, herbicides or you live in an industrial area (ie. Lively, Ont. where they used to smelt ore outside).

I realize that there is a Health Study going on in the US with the GSDCA but not all GSD folk belong to the American club. I would really love if breeders could pass this article on to their pet owners and to anyone that they know that has German

Shepherds – whether they be North American Show Lines, German Show Lines, German Working Lines, White German Shepherds, Coated German Shepherds...they are all German Shepherds and this monstrous disease is ravaging our community.

While this is totally unofficial, I will be keeping my Oncologist Technician at OVC updated with results and I've promised to share the information with Dr. Christine Zink who is a well known performance veterinarian who is interested in the results from early spays and neuters (of which cancer seems to be a primary result).

Statistics show that 1 in 5 Golden Retrievers die from Hemangiosarcoma or Lymphoma and that German Shepherds are rated at about 1 in 7. The more information that we can give researchers, the greater the chance that an indicator (DNA) may be found or perhaps even a cure (yes, I am a dreamer). Sitting here bemoaning the loss of my best friends does not help in any way so please ... **deluge me with information.**

I also want to emphasize that I will not be sharing this information with anyone except OVC and Dr. Christine Zink. This is not an attempt to center out a certain breeder or line. This is an attempt to gather as much information as possible to help researchers fight against a disease that is decimating our dogs.

I am available by email at versatileGSDs@gmail.com or by mail at Box 1402, Stn B, Sudbury, ON P3E 5K4.

Please, please, please help me help our breed, for Misty, and Magnum and Kayla and all the other GSD's that were affected and their time with us cut short.

Thank you ~ Mary-Anne Boulet

