



# HOUND HEALTH

## RESULTS OF A DECADE-LONG MFHA FOUNDATION-FUNDED STUDY PRESENTED

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Foxhounds are 20 times more likely to contract Leishmaniasis than other sporting dogs due to the prevalence of ticks in their working environment.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some dogs can have the Leishmania parasite for extended periods and may not exhibit any signs or symptoms of disease (asymptomatic). In asymptomatic dogs, the parasite can lie dormant for a while, sometimes years. A trigger like stress or illness causes the parasite to multiply and attack the body. Both asymptomatic and symptomatic dogs are capable of infecting sand flies and spreading the disease.

Symptoms may include sores on the skin, peeling, ulcers, loss of weight, bald patches, conjunctivitis, blindness, nasal discharge, muscular atrophy, inflammation, swelling and organ failure, including mild heart attacks.

It is a deadly and terrible disease.





In 1980, the first case of Leishmaniasis was reported in an Oklahoma foxhound kennel. Since then, 33 states and two Canadian provinces have reported cases.

The Masters of Foxhounds Association of North America (MFHA) recognized the risk to foxhounds and all dogs. For the past decade, the MFHA Foundation has collaborated to research and reduce tick-borne illness and Leishmaniasis at the University of Iowa and the Petersen Lab. At the May board meeting, Christine Petersen, DVM, Ph.D., presented her results.

The study's objective was to test the effects of tick preventative drug (Seraloner) on Leishmaniasis progression and to identify immune changes linking tick-borne infections to Leishmaniasis.

The study included 50 hounds with asymptomatic Leishmaniasis. One-half of the hounds received a tick prevention drug and the other half were given a placebo. The hounds were monitored for two years with blood drawn every three months and ticks collected off the study hounds during monthly visits.

The study results showed that the drug treatment blocked multiple tick species from feeding on the hounds. It also found that the treated hounds did not get sick after being exposed to tick-borne bacteria. They had lower Leishmaniasis clinical scores and mortality rates than the placebo group. For hunt clubs and all dog owners, the study proved that committing to tick prevention vastly reduces the rates of tick-borne illness and Leishmaniasis.

The treatment prevented multiple tick species from feeding on hounds, lowered the incidence of tick-borne disease and decreased the severity of Leishmaniasis.

Another ongoing study for the National Institutes of Health in cooperation with the MFHA is measuring the ecology of a Lyme vaccine. The study has been validated and set up for continuation. Director Dr. Anthony Fauci's organization, the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases has shown interest in this study due to the possible implications for human health.

Dr. Petersen's full report and findings will be available this fall.

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