

more rapidly aware of emerging diseases, and aids in funding decisions regarding research projects.

## **Research**

We are very fortunate to have veterinary ophthalmologist Wendy Townsend, DVM, MS, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine, investigating pigmentary uveitis. And we are extremely grateful to the owners of dogs with pigmentary uveitis who have submitted DNA samples, pedigrees, and diagnostic information to Dr Townsend. However, there is still much work to be done, and owners of **both affected and unaffected dogs** can help; please see “How to Participate in Pigmentary Uveitis Research” at <http://www.grca.org/health/uveitis.html> for details. This disease is extremely challenging to control without a DNA test, so owner participation in research is vital to improve control of pigmentary uveitis in the breed.

**Dr. Townsend graciously agreed to answer the below questions:**

*Q: Many dogs diagnosed with pigmentary uveitis come from lines with a long pedigree history of normal eye examinations and no known prior affected dogs. How certain are ophthalmologists that this is an inherited disease, and on what is this based?*

Dr Townsend: We strongly suspect that the disease is inherited because we don't see a condition that really looks exactly like this in any other breed. If we were dealing with an infectious cause, etc. we would expect to see it in other breeds. Also from my discussion with ophthalmologists in the UK, the condition is very infrequently seen in the Golden Retriever population there. We also have pedigrees in which we can trace the condition for several generations. In those pedigrees in which there are large gaps (or long histories of normal) it could be that we have some individuals that were going to express the disease but unfortunately died due to other conditions before pigmentary uveitis could develop.

*Q: Is there any additional information or comments that you would like to share with our membership and other Golden owners?*

Dr Townsend: Because Goldens with pigmentary uveitis often have iris cysts, if iris cysts are noted on an eye examination, those dogs should be monitored very closely. While the presence of iris cysts does not mean that an individual will go on to develop pigmentary uveitis, almost all Goldens with pigmentary uveitis do have the iris cysts. Therefore I recommend owners of those dogs have their eyes examined every 6 months or sooner if they notice any redness, discharge, etc. as those may signal early signs of pigmentary uveitis.

## **Additional Information**

Please see “Expert Ophthalmologists Answer GRCA Member Questions about Pigmentary Uveitis” on the Health section of the GRCA website <http://grca.org/>