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Dogs with colitis can get loose stools.



What's wrong with her poo?

Q My dog has blood and mucus in her poo. She eats a grain-free dog food containing smoked salmon. Although it's helped, she still has issues. What else can I do?
Your Dog reader, email address.

A **John says:** Blood and mucus in the stool suggests chronic colitis. Assuming your dog has been wormed properly, this is probably a question of finding the right diet for her. Many grain-free foods use sweet potato which sounds fine, but I am not a fan of this. My information is that the sweet potato used



Sweet potato is found in many grain-free pet foods.

in pet foods is the outer hull, which is the fibrous, indigestible part. You need to find a highly digestible (low fibre), hypo-allergenic type food. There are plenty of grain-based foods which can do this very successfully. You need to get the feeding amount right too; this is where it is useful to liaise with the manufacturer which can fine-tune the feeding.

DID YOU KNOW?
Colitis refers to inflammation of the large intestine or colon.

It's all about stress!

Q I can't find a suitable food for my rescue dog. She's still pretty nervous of most things, which I think is causing terrible bouts of stress-related digestive problems. We've tried feeding her raw food, wet food, and dry food, but she won't eat most of it. She will eat lots of grass and other vegetation however. She's been to the vet's, but no cause has been found for her symptoms. Any advice?
Your Dog reader, email address.

A **John says:** It's possible that your dog's nervous temperament could have

upset her digestion, but conversely, her weak digestion could be contributing to her nervousness. In traditional Chinese medicine the two are seen to be related. Her lack of interest in food suggests she's getting more than enough to eat, so you can stop worrying about that. The best approach is to offer her a high-quality, hypo-allergenic food which is very digestible. Adjust the amount so that she will always clear it. Feed her once a day in the evening, by which time she should be feeling hungry. The less food the more effective the digestive process, which will reduce the amount coming out the back end.



Diary of a countryman



ABOUT STEPHEN

Stephen Jenkinson is an expert on where you can go, and what you can do, with your dog. He's access adviser to Your Dog Magazine, the Kennel Club, and local councils across the UK and abroad. He lives in Orkney with his Border Collie, Jess.

Needless suffering to sheep can't only be blamed on dog attacks, says Stephen Jenkinson.



It's important to keep dogs on leads near sheep.

The farmers on Dartmoor are desperate. Desperate for an end to the needless suffering of their sheep due to out of control pet dogs.

And I know the feeling, having caught the same dogs killing my ducks and hens for a fourth time.

So, I really can understand why Dartmoor farmers are calling for a compulsory national dog DNA database, promoted as a solution by a company selling the DNA tests.

Let's be clear. No one is saying that pet dogs killing or chasing sheep is acceptable. Purely on a welfare basis, we must all do our bit to stop unnecessary suffering. Just like dogs, farm animals deserve a quality life and a dignified, minimal-stress death.

The big issue for me is whether forcing all dog owners to have their pets DNA profiled before going for a walk is justified and proportionate. And when you look calmly at the facts, the figures don't stack up.

Each year in England, 1.5

billion countryside walks are taken with a dog. The Farmers Guardian claims there are 2,000 sheep attacks annually. That alone shows there's one attack on sheep for every 750,000 dog walks.

Compare that with the 1998 Veterinary Record report that one in 5,500 sheep died each year on the way to the slaughterhouse. Or consider the 2.4 million sheep and goats that are slaughtered each year without pre-stunning, according to the British Veterinary Association.

Causing needless suffering to sheep — be it by pet dogs or in the hours before slaughter — is never acceptable. Nor does one type of needless suffering excuse the other.

But if we really want to reduce needless suffering, let's not be seduced by the questionable and disproportionate merits of compulsory canine DNA profiling.

We must keep our dogs on leads around farm animals. But we must equally keep a sense of perspective.



Stay safe in the countryside with news and advice from access adviser **Stephen Jenkinson**.

Call for dog DNA database

Dog walkers must act responsibly around livestock.

ABOUT STEPHEN

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Farmers in the Dartmoor National Park are demanding that the Government records a dog's DNA when it's microchipped, to reduce attacks on sheep and other livestock.

The call is timed to coincide with the introduction of the compulsory microchipping of dogs in England from April 6, 2016, and reflects the approach some councils are exploring to track down people who don't pick up (see the *October issue*).

Farmers hope that DNA found on a dead or injured farm animal could be matched with that on a canine DNA database to identify the guilty dog and owner.

The move follows a meeting last May in Dartmoor organised by Streetkleen, the company marketing its US-based canine DNA profiling services, although — as with microchipping — it is unlikely to have a monopoly on testing.

The Kennel Club would seem well-placed to benefit if such a law was passed, as it also offers canine DNA testing with the added bonus that any profits are reinvested to help dogs, for example through its Charitable Trust.

But despite the potential income from profiling all the dogs in England, and the fact the KC deplores attacks by dogs on any animal or person, it opposes the use of DNA

technology in this way for a number of reasons, namely:

- Innocent dogs could be branded as sheep killers — and possibly destroyed — if they lick or roll on an already dead animal, leaving their DNA behind.
- Microchipping is primarily a means of reuniting dogs with owners; linking this to a risk of prosecution arising from DNA sampling could make it less likely.
- Farmers can already shoot dogs that are attacking livestock, so the additional threat of a £100 fine if traced by DNA seems a modest deterrent.

The KC also points out that initiatives by other councils such as Hampshire and

Brighton show dog walkers will avoid conflict if given better information about where off-lead access can be taken, away from farm animals.

Studies show that 85 per cent of dog walkers want some off-lead exercise during a walk, but at present the Dartmoor National Park's messaging for dog walkers calls on residents and visitors alike to use leads everywhere at all times from March 1 to July 31. This is now under review to better accommodate the wishes of both farmers and dog walkers.

Dog walkers need more involvement with councils' plans

Following concerns about local councils penalising innocent dog walkers, either by imposing compulsory canine DNA registration before visiting public parks, or conducting spot checks for poo bags (see the *October issue*) Defra has updated its national guidance.

Government officials are warning over-zealous councils that Public Spaces Protection Orders that apply to everybody — rather than just people who have

broken the law — must be very carefully considered, with clear evidence to justify imposing restrictions over a wide area.

Defra also emphasises that councils need to provide alternative areas if they restrict people from dog walking in some places.

The guidance also demands greater consultation than is happening at present, with councils needing to involve local dog walkers as well as national canine bodies like the Kennel Club.



Are more restrictions on the way?

While the KC seeks to monitor all new proposals and oppose excessive restrictions, it does not always get consulted.

Dog owners are asked to let the KC know about any local proposals and join its KCDOG scheme for more support, by emailing kcdog@thekennelclub.org.uk

Signs of the times

This friendly sign in Hampshire also has credibility as it only asks for leads when sheep are present. This is more effective than leaving 'on lead' signs in empty fields.

