

Who's your "doggy" daddy?

With the advent of the consumer friendly swab test and a decline in the price of the technology, animal DNA testing is popping up with growing frequency in homes and animal shelters across the country. These simple tests can now detect over 190 different breeds and industry leading organizations like Mars continue to improve the accuracy and scope of their tests to further improve upon the technology. So what does this mean for us?

Having strong roots myself in animal welfare, I know firsthand that lives depend on your ability to walk the fine line between health and welfare and profitability, and that that kind of pressure can sometimes leave new opportunities overlooked until proven practical by those in the community with the resources to experiment and test new approaches; which is why I'd like to discuss here the value DNA testing offers your business.

DNA testing has multiple applications in animal welfare; it can save you money *and* make you money at a variety of different levels. Here are a few of the top reasons why I strongly believe DNA testing belongs in shelters:

Increase Adoptions, Reduce Length of Stay

The majority of dogs that enter our facilities are "unknowns." We have to rely on looks, character, and experience to select the breed(s) and in reality, our guess work can often be wrong. According to research performed by Dr. Victoria Voith and published in 2009 in the *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, 87% of dogs identified to have 1 or 2 specific breeds in their ancestry did *not* according to DNA analysis.

This is obviously of no harm for those dogs we can adopt out quickly, but in some cases selecting the wrong breed, like a Staffordshire terrier mix, can seriously reduce adoptability and increase length of stay (LOS). When we factor in the financial and psychological costs of long term housing, can we afford *not* to test these dogs?

Look at your average day cost for sheltering dogs compared to the cost of a DNA kit. If by posting the results of a genetic test you can reduce LOS by two days or more, you're not only saving money, but at the same time you're reducing the risk of psychological deterioration from long term housing – a risk we know all too well can ruin a dog forever.

Keep Dogs in Homes

There is nothing more frustrating than a pet owner required to relinquish their dog because of breed discrimination. Would it not be prudent to ask these pet owners to purchase a DNA kit and test their dog first? Whether it's a landlord, the community, or an insurance company, DNA

testing is increasingly being brought forward in legal disputes to help pet owners keep their pets—and MARS Wisdom Panel is at the forefront of this movement.

Understanding Behavior and Risks

We all know that breed greatly influences a dog's behavior as well as potential health risks down the road. DNA testing can help pet owners better understand their pets and execute better training and preventative care.

As an example, I have lived with Boxer and Boxer-type dogs for the past 25 years, so I know the breed is prone to small, yet aggressive mast cell tumors and as a preventative measure, I perform weekly touch and feel tests to check for unfamiliar lumps. For clients who adopt a dog without knowing there is Boxer in the bloodline they may not conduct these rigorous exams to the detriment of the dog and themselves.

Get in on the FUN!

I haven't met a mixed-breed dog owner yet who wasn't curious about the heritage of their "mystery mutt." Aside from the benefits described above, DNA kits give us a unique opportunity to tap into that curiosity and generate revenue for our shelters. Whether purchased as a gift for the dog owner who has everything, offered at the point of adoption, or simply as an added draw at your microchipping events, DNA kits are a great way to expand your revenue streams.

If you have a successful application to share for the DNA kits please email me and I promise to share in future email correspondence.

Did you know? Pethealth is currently offering limited time offers on DNA kits?

Right now, **Get 2 FREE MARS DNA kits when you purchase 22 DNA kits, Or 6 FREE MARS DNA kits when you purchase 250 MiniChips.** With a purchase of **500 MiniChips get 6 DNA kits AND a FREE scanner.**

Call us now to learn more about how the MARS DNA test kit can help your shelter, and how these limited time offers can save you money; **1-866-597-2424**

Sincerely,

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