

2007 Tufts

Canine and Feline Breeding and Genetics Conference

By Debra Eldredge, DVM | Photos by Mary Bloom

I had the great good fortune to attend the 2007 Tufts' Canine and Feline Breeding and Genetics Conference in Sturbridge, Mass., on Sept. 13 and 14. Just a look at the sponsors shows what an in-depth conference this was — the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, AKC, the Canine Health Foundation, OFA, Nestle Purina, Veterinary Information Network and all of the respected genetics labs — PennGen, the University of California at Davis, VetGen, Optigen and the University of Missouri. (For you feline fans, the Winn Foundation was also a sponsor.) I was a bit skeptical about a conference claiming to provide information for veterinarians, researchers and breeders but this conference succeeded.

I can highly recommend this conference to everyone. Breakfast and lunch were provided so participants got to sit down with everyone; the speakers were very approachable and the networking was outstanding. Panel discussions that were basically question-and-answer periods were held twice daily. My only complaint is that the conference is currently only held every other year.

The first lecture, by Dr. Paula Henthorn, Ph.D., of the University of Pennsylvania, was on "Gene Quests — Past, Present and Future." Dr. Henthorn emphasized how valuable it is to study genetic diseases in companion animals. Much of the genome overlaps between species, so information gained on genetic diseases in dogs may be applicable to humans and vice versa.

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