

Technology Predetermines Dog Sexes

The first dogs to have their sex chosen before conception have been born, company says.

Posted: March 9, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

The world's first dogs to have their sex selected prior to conception have been born, according to XY Inc., a company based in Fort Collins, Colo., that developed the XY Sex Selection Technology.

The black Labrador Retriever pups — three females and two males — join a line of other animal species that the company says has produced sex-selected offspring. Species include the domestic cat, cattle, horses, sheep, elk, the bottle-nosed dolphin and the Mediterranean water buffalo.

“Using sex-sorted sperm to artificially inseminate dogs is probably not too practical for typical breeding,” said Greg Burns, DVM, owner of South Mesa Veterinary Hospital in Fort Collins and part of XY's research team. “However, for specialty breeding, this is a major breakthrough with great potential.”

One example is in the case of seeing-eye dogs. Labradors, particularly females, are a desired breed due to their calm and gentle disposition and intelligence.

“The Seeing Eye would find it very helpful if some litters could be produced that are mostly females, and I believe that access to sex-selection technology would be useful to dog guide schools around the world,” said Eldin Leighton, the Jane H. Booker director of Canine Genetics, The Seeing Eye, which breeds guide dogs for the blind.

XY said it typically guarantees at least a 90 percent accuracy rate in selecting for the desired offspring in animals in which the technology has been rigorously field-tested, such as in cattle, but the Labrador litter of sex-selected puppies was 60 percent accurate in delivering the desired sex — female.