



# UNLEASHED

Volume 32 Issue 4 A publication of the Central Ohio Labrador Retriever Club April 2021

## 2021 Meeting/Event Dates

**Meeting:** Wednesday, April 7  
Home of Jan Eichensehr  
6:30 p.m.  
Pizza available for \$5./person

**Agenda:** Our May 16th Specialty in conjunction with Miami Valley LRC will be the main topic of discussion.

The feasibility of our club's health clinic will open for discussion as well.

## Meeting/Event Dates

May (Health Clinic)  
June 2  
July 7  
September 1  
October 6  
November 3  
December TBA

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CHECK OUT CENTRAL OHIO LABRADOR RETRIEVER CLUB  
ON FACEBOOK  
[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/575516432535825/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/575516432535825/)

## Aflatoxin Poisoning in Pets

Aflatoxins are toxins produced by the mold *Aspergillus flavus* that can grow on pet food ingredients such as corn, peanuts, and other grains. At high levels, aflatoxins can cause illness (aflatoxicosis), liver damage, and death in pets. The toxins can be present even if there is no visible mold on the pet food.

### Causes

Pets that eat food containing unsafe levels of aflatoxins can develop aflatoxin poisoning. Pets are highly susceptible to aflatoxin poisoning because, unlike people, who eat a varied diet, pets generally eat the same food continuously over extended periods of time. If a pet's food contains aflatoxins, the toxins could accumulate in the pet's system as they continue to eat the same food. Aflatoxin poisoning can also occur if a pet eats moldy corn, grains, peanuts, or other aflatoxin contaminated food.

### Signs of Illness

Pets suffering from aflatoxin poisoning may experience signs such as sluggishness, loss of appetite, vomiting, jaundice (yellowish tint to the eyes, gums or skin due to liver damage), unexplained bruising or bleeding, and/or diarrhea. In some cases, aflatoxins can affect blood clotting and cause long-term liver problems and/or death. Some pets may suffer liver damage without showing any signs in the early stages of aflatoxin poisoning and if they continue eating contaminated food, they may

die suddenly. Pet owners who suspect their pets have been eating products contaminated with aflatoxins should contact their veterinarians and immediately stop feeding the suspected food, especially if the pets are showing signs of illness.

***If you suspect your pet is showing signs of aflatoxin poisoning, take him/her to a veterinarian immediately.***

## **Diagnosis**

Only a veterinarian can diagnose aflatoxin poisoning. Usually, the veterinarian evaluates the pet's signs, asks about what food the pet has been eating and what the pet might have been exposed to, and they might run some tests to check a pet's liver health. Because the symptoms of aflatoxin poisoning are nonspecific and could point to multiple toxins, a veterinarian may recommend having pet food samples analyzed to determine if aflatoxins are present. For deceased pets, tissue samples can be analyzed for aflatoxins and other toxins. Depending on the results of a veterinarian's examination, they will determine the best course of action.

## **Treatment**

Treatment will depend on a veterinarian's assessment of each case. There is no antidote for aflatoxins, so the aim of treatment is usually to remove the source of aflatoxins to prevent additional exposure (e.g., stop the feeding of contaminated pet food), to provide supportive care management of the specific blood and biochemical imbalances in the pet's system. Extremely severe or rapid-onset cases of aflatoxin poisoning may progress so quickly that the pet dies before receiving any treatment. Pets exposed to non-lethal doses of aflatoxin may survive, but can have long-term health problems, such as liver injury.

## **For Pet Owners**

There is no evidence to suggest that pet owners who handle products containing aflatoxins are at risk of aflatoxin poisoning. However, pet owners should always wash their hands after handling pet food and treats.

If your pet is showing signs of aflatoxin poisoning such as sluggishness, loss of appetite, vomiting, jaundice (yellowish tint to the eyes, gums or skin due to liver damage), unexplained bruising or bleeding, and/or diarrhea, contact a veterinarian immediately. If your pet passes away prior to seeing a veterinarian and you suspect possible aflatoxin exposure, contact your veterinarian to discuss whether an autopsy (necropsy) may be appropriate to determine the cause of death.

Provide a full diet history to your veterinarian, including what food or pet treats, you (or other household members) give the pet, and what other food or items the pet might have been exposed to. You may find it helpful to take a picture of the pet food label, including the lot number and best-by date. If your veterinarian suspects the food is the source of aflatoxins, having the lot code and best-by date helps FDA identify exactly when the contamination occurred and what other products might also be affected. This can help prevent other pets from getting sick. Don't feed the products to your pets or any other animals.

Pet owners can report suspected illness to FDA electronically through the Safety Reporting Portal or by calling your state's [FDA Consumer Complaint Coordinators](#). It's most helpful if you work with your veterinarian to submit a pet's medical records as part of

the report. For an explanation of the information and level of detail that would be helpful to include in a complaint to FDA, please see [How to Report a Pet Food Complaint](#).

It's also helpful if you save the food in its original package, in case it's needed for testing. If testing is not needed, contact the company listed on the package for further instructions or throw the products away in a way that children, pets and wildlife cannot access them.

If your pet is otherwise healthy, but you are still concerned about potential aflatoxin contamination in your pet's food, it's best to consult with your veterinarian before making changes to your pet's diet, especially if your pet has other health conditions that require a specialized or restricted diet.

### **For Veterinarians**

In any pets presenting with signs of acute liver failure suspected to be linked to a toxin, veterinarians should consider aflatoxin poisoning as one of the possible causes. Ruling out other causes can provide additional support for a diagnosis of aflatoxicosis. If a patient you are treating for suspected aflatoxicosis dies or is euthanized, a necropsy may be useful in identifying pathologic changes consistent with hepatotoxicity.

FDA encourages veterinarians treating suspected aflatoxicosis to ask clients for a detailed diet history. If you suspect that the pet food is the source of the aflatoxins, we welcome case reports, especially those confirmed through diagnostics. Please ask the owner not to feed the product to their pet or any other animals and to store the leftover food in its original packaging in a safe place. Product photos, purchase receipts and lot information are vital information to include in case reports to FDA.

Reports to FDA can be submitted through the online Safety Reporting Portal or by calling your local FDA Consumer Complaint Coordinators. For submissions through the Safety Reporting Portal, when asked "Who are you?" please select, "A private citizen/business submitting a voluntary report," on the selection screen in order to guide you through a veterinary submission. For an explanation of the information and level of detail that would be helpful to include in a complaint to FDA, see [How to Report a Pet Food Complaint](#).

In select cases, a representative from FDA's Veterinary Laboratory Investigation and Response Network (Vet-LIRN) may contact you about your report. Vet-LIRN may request medical records or permission to contact the owner for a dietary history and environmental exposure interview. If you have saved any diagnostic samples (e.g. tissue biopsy, whole body for necropsy, or leftover food), Vet-LIRN may request and pay for any tests requested.

### **Recent Pet Food Product Recalls for Unsafe Levels of Aflatoxins**

In December 2020, FDA notified the public about potentially fatal levels of aflatoxins in multiple recalled varieties of Sportmix pet food manufactured by Midwestern Pet Foods, Inc. As of December 30, 2020, FDA is aware of at least 28 deaths and 8 illnesses in dogs that ate the recalled product. FDA has not confirmed any cat deaths or illnesses, but some of the recalled pet food is made for cats.

Previously, in September 2020, Sunshine Mills announced a recall of certain pet food products after a retail product sample was found to contain an unsafe level of aflatoxins. Shortly after, FDA determined that additional products made with the same corn may contain unsafe levels of aflatoxins and in October, Sunshine Mills expanded its recall to include additional products. FDA also issued an advisory to ensure the public was notified about all of the potentially unsafe products that may still be on the market or in pet owners' homes.

FDA is continuing to investigate how these incidents occurred and if any expansion of currently identified products or other foods should be recalled. FDA will issue public updates with any additional recall information as it becomes available.

### Additional Resources

[FDA Alert: Certain Lots of Sportmix Pet Food Recalled for Potentially Fatal Levels of Aflatoxin](#) (Midwestern Pet Foods, 12/30/20)

[FDA Alert: Certain Lots of Pet Food from Multiple Brands Recalled for Aflatoxin](#) (Sunshine Mills, 10/9/20)

[Save Your Pet Food Lot Number!](#)

[How to Report a Pet Food Complaint](#)

[Pet Food Safety Reporting Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Reprinted from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration; March 23, 2021; [Aflatoxin Poisoning in Pets](#); <https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/animal-health-literacy/aflatoxin-poisoning-pets>

Three Specialties...



**Miami Valley  
Labrador Retriever  
Club, Inc.**

**FRI. MAY 14 2021 JUDGES:**

DOGS & INTERSEX -  
Lenore Hamilton (Blackwing)  
BITCHES -  
Linda Maffett (Sunnydaze)  
SWEEPSTAKES -  
Dawn Nacey (Empress)

**SAT. MAY 15 2021 JUDGES:**

DOGS & INTERSEX -  
Linda Maffett (Sunnydaze)  
BITCHES -  
Lenore Hamilton (Blackwing)  
SWEEPSTAKES -  
Jennifer Hoffmann (Hoffmann)

**New Location:**  
Lima Kennel Club Show Grounds  
Lima, Ohio

Show Chair:  
Gerardo Saldana  
419/358-0428  
zinfndelabs@gmail.com

Show Secretary:  
Nina Fetter  
567/289-3890  
executivedogshows@yahoo.com

Back to Back!!!

**Central Ohio Labrador  
Retriever Club Speciality  
with MVLRC**

JUDGE: MIKE HAMILTON (BLACKWING)  
SWEEPS: JENNY MONEGHAN (CHESTNUT)

SAVE THE DATE!

**05.16.  
2021\***

\*PENDING AKC APPROVAL



**LIMA KENNEL CLUB  
SHOW GROUNDS  
- LIMA, OHIO**

SHOW CHAIR:  
Cora Fleming  
937/564-1385

SHOW SECRETARY:  
Nina Fetter  
567/289-3890  
executivedogshows@yahoo.com

## General COLRC Information



The **UNLEASHED!** is a publication by and for the members of the **Central Ohio Labrador Retriever Club** and others interested in the betterment of the sport and advancement of cooperative communication within the Labrador community and the dog fancy.

The articles and information contained in this publication have been deemed by the editor to be of interest to our readers but do not necessarily reflect the beliefs or the opinions of the editor or COLRC members. Reader input is actively solicited.

Please address or email all articles, announcements, comments and suggestions to [newsletter@colrc.com](mailto:newsletter@colrc.com). Unleashed is published ten to twelve times per year. Closing for each issue is the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month prior to publication.

Dues are \$25 annually for a single membership and \$40 for a joint membership. Business cards will be placed on the COLRC website for the year at a cost of \$50 for members and non-members.

Club members who wish to utilize the Litter Listing Column of the newsletter and website will be required to pay \$50 per litter listing unless they have worked at two of our three club events during the course of the year.

**Meetings** General meetings shall take place the first Wednesday of every month unless otherwise noted.

### OFFICERS

President.....	Sally Bell	(Term expires Dec 2021)
Vice President.....	Lori Bentine	(Term expires Dec 2021)
Treasurer.....	Linda Bednarski	(Term expires Dec 2021)
Secretary.....	Brian Tipton	(Term expires Dec 2021)

### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Membership.....	Linda Bednarski
Newsletter.....	Christine Nickerson
Puppy Match.....	Linda Bednarski
Show Chair.....	Cora Fleming
Eye Clinic.....	Jennifer Stotts

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cindy Gerhan	(Term expires Dec 2023)
Christine Kofron	(Term expires Dec 2023)
Jennifer Stotts	(Term expires Dec 2023)
Cora Fleming	(Term expires Dec 2023)