

Ashland Labradors

Long Coated Labradors?

Never say “never” in the world of pure-bred dogs! After 29 years in the Labrador Breed, it finally happened. I got Long Coats! Three in ONE litter.

No, they are not rare and we surely did not breed to purposely produce long-coated offspring. Matter of fact, this was a repeat breeding which a litter of nine pups born to the same parents 2 years earlier produced NOT ONE long-coat puppy. Go figure!

Long coat puppies are born looking just like their normal litter-mates. It is not until around 3 weeks of age you start to notice certain pup(s) have such a stunning looking coat and wonderful “otter tail”. You’re really thinking “this is my keeper”.

Another two weeks pass by and you say “Ooh Lord, this pup is looking GOOD. Wow, coat, bone, head, tail. You’re in love!





Then another week and POOF go's the hair. OMG!! "Did someone add "grow coat" to their water"!?!? WTH happened? Someone stole my pup and replaced it with a Flat Coat..or is it a Newfie? THEN you realize.....I have a LONG COAT! Ooh my!!



The long-haired coat is inherited as an autosomal-recessive trait. Therefore, the parents of this litter, we “obviously” know NOW are both carriers of the long coat gene, even though they both have normal coats.

Long-haired coat length is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait. Therefore, dogs that are carriers of the long-hair mutation will appear to be normal (short hair) themselves, but will likely pass on the long-hair allele 50% of the time.

Being that the gene is recessive, it can lay hidden for many generations before two parents carrying the gene are bred which results in an average of 25% of the offspring affected, and thus they will be long-coats. One thing I have seen on common pedigrees with breeders who have also produced Long-Coats, is the sire to this litter is Bru and Bru’s sire is CH.Blackwing SuperFine , aka “Big”. Big was obviously a Carrier of the long coat gene. Then on the dam’s side is Guidelines dogs, who I have been told have also produced Long Coats, however I am not able to verify this information as being 100 percent accurate.

There are many theories on how the long-coat gene originated in the Labrador Breed.

“One needs to understand that the dog that these text books call a “Labrador” isn’t necessarily the same as the breed called the “Labrador retriever.” The modern Labrador retriever traces to the 1880’s, when the line of smooth-coated retrievers that was kept by the Dukes of Buccleuch was combined with that of the Earls of Malmesbury. This was the only British retriever to be selected for the dominant smooth coat. Modern Labrador retrievers are almost universally smooth-coated dogs.

However, although seldom, a long-coated puppy is born.

The exact origin of these modern long-haired Labradors isn’t exactly clear.



Figure 1 Ch.Zelston

They could have always been hidden within the smooth-coated St. John’s water dog bloodlines that eventually gave us the Labrador retriever, but if this were so, it probably would be more common in the breed than it is today. I think a much more likely source for this coat is cross-breeding. Labrador, golden, and flat-coated retrievers were considered varieties of a single breed, and interbreeding the varieties was very common. When the Labrador retriever needed fresh blood, it was occasionally bred to wavy or flat-coated retrievers, which may have included dogs we would

call golden retrievers. The Dukes of Buccleuch and the Earls of Malmesbury tried to keep their dogs from being bred to long-haired retrievers, which is one reason why they were so eager to import more smooths from Newfoundland. However, other breeders certainly did outcross.



Figure 2 The St John's Waterdog or "Lesser Newfoundland"

Long-haired Labrador retriever puppies.

Long-haired Labrador retrievers are a sort of atavism. The dogs look very much like the old wavy-coated retriever and the long-haired St. John's water dogs, which were essentially the same breed. They also point to the simple reality that Labrador, golden, and flat-coated retrievers are much more closely related than one might assume."

There is nothing "genetically" wrong with a long-coat. They are 100 percent Labrador in every way, maybe even more special as many of them retain some of the truly wonderful Labrador Characteristics of yesteryear.

Regardless, they do tend to be stunningly gorgeous with their fine, wavy long coats but breeders should never intentionally breed for long-coats as it not in our breed standard. Since it is a recessive gene, it can lay hidden for many, many generations and just pop up. Breeders can test for the Long coat Allele if they have dogs from lines known to produce Long Coats.



Here she is at 9 weeks. Stunning!!!

As she grows...



