

Benson's Story



Meet Benson, our 52kg gentle giant! He is an adorable Newfoundland dog with the most placid temperament – of course we are only a little bit biased!

When Benson joined our family, being new pet owners, we listened to others more knowledgeable than us and from day one chose to feed our puppy “premium” dog food.

We have been lucky in that Benson has always been a fairly healthy dog – no large vet bills, major surgery or the like. But there were two things that have been persistent throughout his first 8 years – a smelly discharge from his ears and constantly itchy feet.

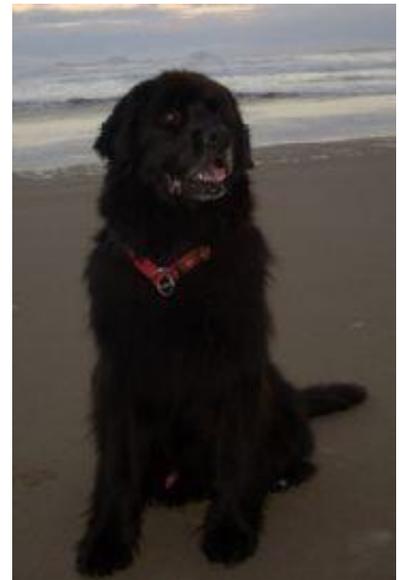
His smelly ears and discharge were treated from time to time with a course of antibiotics. Unfortunately, the irritation caused Benson to scratch and shake his head, which in turn caused aural haematomas (These are when blood vessels burst in the ear flap and cause an uncomfortable swelling– just like a large blood blister.)

We thought his itchy feet were caused by an allergic reaction to grasses and that nothing could be done about it.

So for 8 years Benson struggled with itchy uncomfortable ears and he constantly chewed on his feet, until our vet suggested that these problems could be related to his diet. Because a dog's sweat glands are located between the paw pads, if they are intolerant of something, the body excretes it through the sweat glands – hence the itchiness and resultant feet chewing.

A little sceptical at first – we had, after all, always fed a “premium diet” not a supermarket brand, we changed food and experimented with an elimination diet. We also started researching extensively about dog food ingredients.

What we discovered was that many dogs suffer allergies as a result of their diet and in particular the ingredients that traditionally have gone into pet food. We also discovered that there is a wide range of all natural pet foods, made with wholesome human grade ingredients, available in Europe and North America that are not available in New Zealand. By changing Benson's diet (in his case, eliminating foods that contain grain, which most dry foods are primarily made from) we saw a significant improvement in his health - he stopped chewing his feet literally overnight! And we were able to get on top of the ear infections – he's now a completely different dog!



This experience spurred us to ask – why can't we have the products and the information in New Zealand? And so Healthy Pet Foods was born - with a vision of educating pet owners and helping to improve the health of New Zealand's dogs and cats.

PS. Sadly, Benson crossed over the rainbow bridge at the age of 12 ½ years – which was a great age for a giant breed.