

## ROUND HOUNDS MAY BE HEADED OUT OF THE DOGHOUSE!

Is your hound round? Too much flab on your Lab? Is your husky, well, husky? A new drug may provide some help.

Portly and pudgy pooches may be on their way out of the doghouse. The Food and Drug Administration have approved the first-ever canine obesity management drug - also signaling that man's best friend has joined his owners as a casualty in the war on weight.

Pfizer Animal Health received federal approval for Slentrol (dirlotapide) and will begin selling it this spring at a cost of \$1 to \$2 per day, depending on a pet's poundage.

With nearly 62 million dogs in the United States and 5% of those considered obese, 3.1 million dogs fit that description. Obese is a any dog that weighs 20 per cent more than its ideal weight.

Given once daily as an oral solution, Slentrol suppresses a dog's appetite and reduces fat absorption, much like the human weight-management drugs Meridia and Xenical.

But to keep any overweight owners from trying to use the dog's diet product, the FDA will require a Slentrol warning label stating "not intended for human use." Slentrol is not to be given to cats either.

An initial course is 14 days, though a therapy course could last three months. Reported side effects in dogs include vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy and - not surprisingly - loss of appetite.

Chicago Veterinarian, Dr. Tony Kremer said Slentrol won't be an easy fix for owners too lazy to walk off their pet's pounds, but "it actually has a potential" to help fight heart disease and other conditions.

Dr. Kremer, is co-founder of UnLeashed Fitness, an exercise program that combines nutrition and exercise. Kremer, along with Miguel Calhoun, a personal trainer specializing in veterinary fitness, worked together to create program for dogs.

Dr. Kremer noted the rise of obesity in dogs increased his business and caused him to come up with a solution. Kremer states "Over 70% of the patients I see are overweight. Dogs in the city tend to get less exercise than those in the suburbs. While this may not be the cure for obesity, combining this along with an effective exercise and nutrition program is a good start."

The American Veterinary Medical Association says 20-40% of the 61.5 million U.S. dogs are overweight or obese.