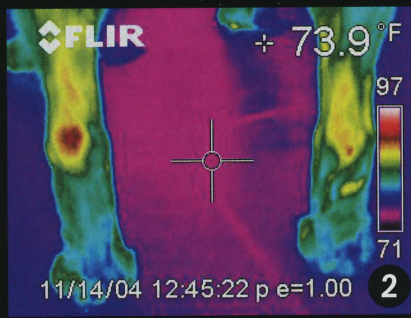
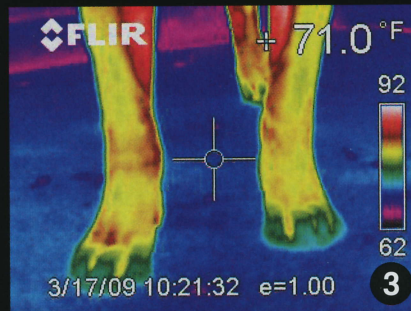


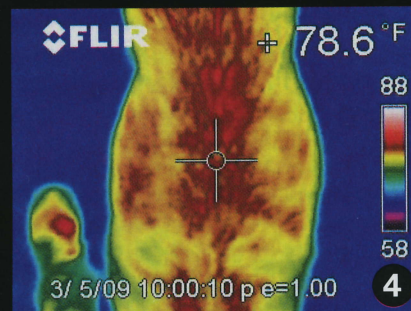
This is an agility dog (Photo 2) with a pulled Achilles tendon. Notice the red spot (indicating a warmer area) at the attachment of the left Achilles tendon to the hock. The presenting complaint was that the dog's times would start slowing down by the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> day of a trial.



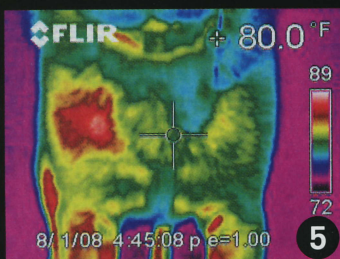
Here is the right wrist and toes in a young team sled dog (sprint) 2 days after a race. (Photo 3) This was a maintenance check to keep on top of any training stresses. Note the areas of more intense red in the wrist and toes of the right front. We used this information to examine physically and discuss why this dog might be stressing the right front. He was adjusted chiropractically and his booties and stretching regimen were changed.



This is scanning from above onto a dog's spine, (Photo 4) head is at the bottom and tail at the top, during a pre-race check-in. The musher had concerns with a sudden onset of a lack of drive. This is a wheel dog from a distance team that completed the Iditarod last year. She had just gotten new harnesses with a slightly different design...notice the heat on right ribcage (and musher's inside ball of left foot!). Probably a harness and/or chronic crookedness issue.



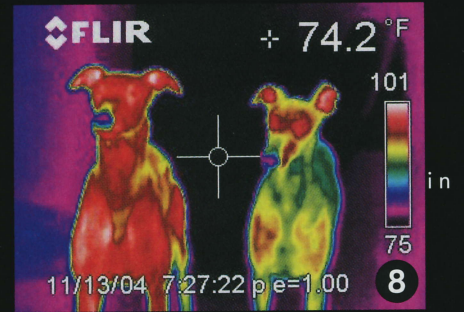
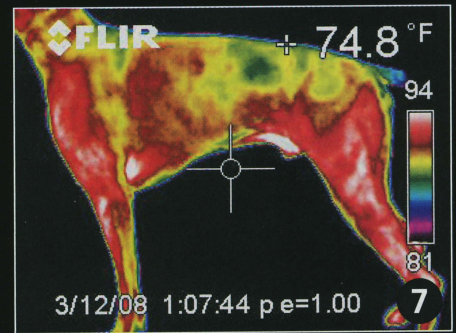
Here is one of those avalanche dogs with the harness problems. It is pretty hard to miss the hot area across the front of the right shoulder, and note how the harness is fitting. I consider this a MAJOR problem, especially in a dog that might have to be backcountry searching in deep snow for the day. There was no clinical lameness yet, but I guarantee that there WILL be if this situation is not fixed. (Photo 5 & 6)



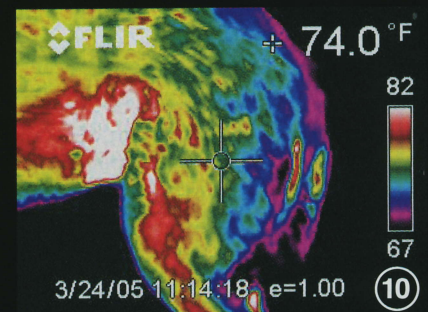
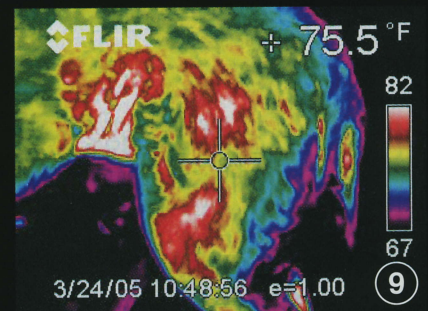
Heat is not the only abnormality that can show up. Cool areas are also signs of problems. Areas can become cold if there is pain (nerve reflexes will constrict blood vessels in the area) or if there is edema or bruising, since this fluid is now removed from the flow and heating of blood as it passes through the body. In this photo, (Photo 7) you can see a cooler, green area in this agility dog's lower back; the

culprit was thought to be bruising from some body slamming while playing with other dogs.

(Photo 8) Here was one of those 'dang, what the heck is that?' moments. I was in a 'swarm' of lure coursing whippets, trying to work our way through to the dog in question. His buddy didn't want to leave his side so I just scanned them as is (initially). Imagine my surprise to see the difference the overall body temps in two dogs that had been doing the same thing in the same environment for the past day. We ran them around the house a bit and the temperature difference remained the same. I suggested having the cooler (and older) dog looked at. Blood work showed that dog to be hypothyroid.



(Photo 9 & 10) Often I use thermal imaging to monitor acupuncture treatment. Sometimes I see a very quick change and sometimes I don't. Here are two pictures, before and after acupuncture treatment for hip problems in an aging avalanche dog; you can see how in just half an hour (the photos are time-marked) the warmer area around the left hip and down towards the stifle has cooled down after the acupuncture treatment. Note that even though this dog has a thicker hair coat, we are still able to get usable images.



I hope you can see what potential this imaging has for performance dogs. Not only can certain injuries be identified faster, but it can also be an excellent device to monitor conditioning, equipment use and return from injury. You don't have to be a veterinarian to acquire and use a thermal imaging camera, although you would need a veterinarian's help in interpreting images if you are a lay person. In the continental US, the main supplier for thermal cameras and training is Vetel Diagnostics ([www.veteldiagnostics.com](http://www.veteldiagnostics.com)). Camera costs are coming down as technology improves and new models come onto the market.

And last, but not least. Sometimes I use the camera just to have fun and remember that it is all about the team...just a slightly different perspective on it. (Magazine cover photo.)