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Mold-sniffer may help

May 24, 2003

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When they are not wasting their time turning bluebonnets maroon, Aggies sometimes come up with good ideas.



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The latest is Max.

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Max is a "lovable mutt," a 1-year-old golden Labrador and border collie mix, the Houston Chronicle reported.

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He also is believed to be the state's first mold-sniffing dog.

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Max belongs to Eric Voss, a Bellaire allergy store owner who received his MBA from Texas A&M University in 1987.

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Voss recently took Max to College Station to have the veterinary school test his mold-sniffing abilities. The lovable mutt demonstrated that by locating a moldy canister and pointing at it with his nose.

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Voss will have Max inspect a site for mold for a fee starting at \$500. Given how common the pesky stuff is in humid parts of the state, the dog will have his paws full.

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In 2001, mold claims cost the insurance industry \$1 billion, helping drive up the cost of homeowners insurance.

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At least some of that was hype. Mold is a fact of life in much of Texas. Homeowners and other property owners need to combat it constantly.

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But locating mold is not always easy, when it hides behind walls or in other places that are not readily accessible.

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So "new technology" such as Max may be useful in locating mold so property owners can clean it up before it becomes a bigger and more costly problem.

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