



CAIRN TERRIER HEALTH GROUP REPORT 2013

Cairn Terriers will inevitably, like all types of dogs, other animals and humans, sometimes suffer from illness. The breed does however thankfully very much appear to be a typically healthy one and not burdened by a number of inherited diseases, common in some breeds. It is nevertheless important to be vigilant and monitor the health situation, on a yearly basis. Old, or new, diseases can start to become prevalent, and of concern, in a breed. Case reporting and information from owners or breeders is therefore necessary to reveal such a trend, so it can be dealt with. Much valuable information has again been received during this year. Many thanks to the contributors!

The cost of veterinary treatment and specialist investigations can now be very high. Some procedures are indeed so costly, that owners, however much they love their dogs, are unable to afford them, if insurance cover is not in place. This is a problem that has recently been highlighted. Owners, who already have insurance for their dogs, can still encounter problems, if the insurance company does not continue to pay for an ongoing condition. The advice is therefore to carefully study the 'small print' when choosing pet insurance. A slightly higher monthly premium, for an insurance that pays out for continued claims, may well be better long-term 'economy'.

Reported conditions this year, apart from those affecting eyes and liver (see below), include 2 cases each of: Addison's disease; kidney disease, and 1 case each of: Diabetes; Myasthenia gravis; Mitochondrial Fatty Acid Oxidation and polyarthritis. Cases of cancer in veteran dogs have yet again been reported, including 1 case each of osteosarcoma, bladder- and liver -cancer. Cairns tend to live well into their teens, so some of them will unfortunately develop tumours.

Porto Systemic Shunt (PSS), or Liver Shunt.

The number of breeders notifying about Bile Acid testing of litters has not increased, despite the ABS recommendation. One of the tested puppies required further investigation.

PSS was reported in a Cairn/Westie cross. Cross breeding does not guarantee freedom from hereditary conditions, despite such claims from some supporters of 'designer breeds'!

1 case of Hepatic portal bridging fibrosis has also been reported.

Ocular melanosis (OM), Abnormal pigment deposition (APD)

The subsidized Eye examination, organised at the Joint Open Show, was held again and well attended this year. 35 dogs were examined by Mr J V Goodyear BVM&S CertVOphthal MRCVS.

2 new cases of OM have been reported, one of them with eye enucleation.

Advanced retinal degeneration and optic nerve atrophy has been reported in a young dog. One case of corneal ulcer was also reported.

Warmest thanks to my fellow Health Group workers, Yvonne Catto and Sonia White, for their valuable help!

Sincere Thanks to those, who have given generous donations to the Health Fund

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Real time health recording became a requirement for all breeds, when the KC Breed Health Plans were introduced 2009. Our breed is of course one step ahead, since health monitoring has already been undertaken from the mid 1990s. It was however decided that the health reporting could be made more efficient with the aid of a Health Form to accompany all puppies (and re-homed older dogs), when they go to their new owners. The Cairn Terrier Health Group's form is now ready for launch and will be available to download for printing on the clubs' websites. Breeders without downloading/printing facilities can order their forms from Sonia White, Tel: 01844 292501, email: kervaig@aol.com

Many more breeders are now also using bile acid testing on their litters and this is good news indeed. It must however be pointed out that when the single test is used, then this would best be done on a post prandial sample. Discussions with Federico Sacchini (IDEXX) and Dr Jackson (Glasgow Veterinary School) have confirmed that the post prandial test is sufficient when looking for liver shunt.

The research at the University of Utrecht to establish the inheritance of this disease, and thereby enable the development of a DNA test, is progressing well. This work can however only be speeded up with the submission of more DNA samples from affected dogs and their close relatives. DNA swabs from the UK have therefore been sent to Utrecht for some time now. It is vital that everybody, unfortunate to breed a puppy or own a dog with PSS, helps the research along by submitting buccal swab samples ! It is a very simple procedure and the swab kits, together with all the necessary instructions, are available from Maud Hawkes, Tel: 01623 812856, email: msascience@onetel.com

The members of the Group are happy to advise on any queries you may have concerning the health of your Cairn Terrier!

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