

Cairn Terrier Health Group Report 2016

Introduction

Many thanks to all the owners, who have kept us informed during the year! Emails, letters and quite a number of 'phone calls have yet again been received. Some contacts have been re documented case histories, whilst others have been about more general concerns and worries. Notable cases reported this year include Addison's disease and Steroid Responsive Meningitis Arteritis (SRMA); both autoimmune conditions. Portosystemic Shunt (PSS) has sadly again been reported.

KC Pedigree Breed Health Survey 2014

The results of this latest survey were published in the spring 2016 and can be viewed at www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/publications-statistics-and-health-results. The response to the 2014 survey was slightly better than to the 2004 one but still rather poor. 300 live and 38 deceased Cairn Terriers were represented. Most dogs (198 dogs or 66%) were not affected by a

Health report data are typically dealt with on a generational basis for statistical purposes. This is also the method used by the Kennel Club (KC) for the intervals of their Health Surveys (see below). The end of spring 2017 marks the 10 years of data collection made by the Cairn Terrier Health Group (CTHG) and the results will be published, as soon as the data have been processed.

It would be most appreciated, if any information, you may have forgotten to report earlier, could be forwarded to make the data as representative as possible!

disease condition. The most common disease in live dogs was lipoma and the two most common, equally represented, causes of death were old age and hepatic(liver)tumour (median age for the latter 13.5 years). There were strangely no cases reported as diagnosed with neither PSS/MVD nor Ocular melanosis (OM), but they could of course be hiding under another umbrella.

Give A Dog A Genome

The Animal Health Trust (AHT), together with the KC, launched this worthwhile project early in the year. The aim is to get the genome sequenced for as many breeds as possible to enable/facilitate future research. It can be of benefit not only to one specific breed but also to other breeds involved in DNA analysis and sometimes even in human mutation research (e.g. certain cancers). The KC was subsidising a limited number of places, on a first come, first served basis. The normal price for sequencing is £2000/dog, but the KC are now paying half the cost. It was decided that the Cairn

should have a place in this DNA collection, so an application was made and accepted and £1000 were sent from the CTHG. Comprehensive information, including on peer reviewed, published research, also had to be submitted. It was most encouraging to be notified that the researchers at AHT have decided to sequence the DNA from a Cairn with OM and cooperate with other research done on the condition. Very good news since a DNA test would be so much better than regular eye testing. Let us hope the research bears fruit!

Eye Testing

The CTHG has subsidised several sessions of Eye testing this year and paid £840 towards these. It is unfortunate that the BVA

increases the cost so frequently, but regular testing of breeding stock is obviously very important.

Many Thanks to Yvonne Catto for her invaluable help all these years !

Sincere Thanks to a benefactor for the generous donation of £100 to the Health Fund !

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CAIRN TERRIER HEALTH GROUP REPORT 2015

Introduction

Many Thanks for keeping us informed during the year! Please continue helping to keep our records updated, even with earlier cases you may have forgotten to tell us about before. 2016 is the year of reckoning, when one generation has been reached and all collected data will be calculated and compared with results from other sources!

The latest KC Breed Health Coordinators Symposium did have two interesting talks, worth reporting on:

Dr Mike Starkey, head of Molecular Oncology at AHT, gave a presentation on **Canine Cancers**. He confirmed, as other oncologists have also stated, that the incidence of cancer (benign and malign together) is somewhere between 1in3 and 1in4. This is actually roughly the same risk as for human beings, so one should not be too surprised if ones dog becomes ill with the disease. It is also the No 1 cause of death in dogs over the age of 2 years old.

Most cancers are due to sporadic mutations and not to inherited gene mutations.

Dr Tom Lewis, KC Quantitative Geneticist, introduced just finished research on **Trends in Genetic Diversity and Effective Population Sizes**. This is an extensive study covering all KC registered breeds. The observed inbreeding coefficient (COI) for the Cairn Terrier has been considerably higher than the expected one and was at its highest in the 1980s and 1990s, with a genetic bottleneck and loss of genetic variation. There has been moderate replenishment since the early 2000s with negative rate of inbreeding and less extensive use of popular sires. Import of dogs may also have helped a little. Estimated effective population size = 70.3 (if below 50 the future of a breed may be at risk). Those wishing to read more about the issue can find the information at www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/publications-statistics-and-health-results/breed-population-analyses

Lungworm (*Angiostrongylus vasorum*)

This potentially fatal internal parasite is a rather new problem in UK and was, until relatively recently, confined to the southern part of the country. It is however now spreading quite rapidly and cases have been reported as far up as in Edinburgh. Location of reported cases can be found on www.lungworm.co.uk to aid risk assessment. Foxes and dogs serve as definitive host animals, but can not infect each other directly. Intermediate hosts, in the form of slugs or snails, who have come in contact with infected faeces, are needed for the parasite to spread. Dogs become infected through, accidentally or on purpose, eating those slimy pests. It is therefore sensible not to leave toys and water- and food bowls outside,

especially since it is suspected that also the slime can carry the infection. Faeces should also be removed promptly.

The symptoms can be rather varied and include lethargy, chronic cough, exercise intolerance, breathing problems and subcutaneous bleeding. Correct diagnosis is not always made, especially since the condition is fairly new and not very common. One little bitch, owned by Mr and Mrs Firth, almost lost her life due to a severe infection. The condition had not earlier been found in the area, so the local veterinary surgeon failed to diagnose it. The life of the bitch was thankfully saved by referral to The Queen's Veterinary School Hospital in Cambridge, where they had prior experience of

cases. Most tests for internal parasites in dogs use faecal samples, but presence of this culprit has to be identified using a blood test, or SNAP test.

Prevention can be achieved by using a specific Advocate product or by using a product containing milbemycin oxime every four weeks.

DNA tests

Somebody asked, why no list of DNA tests for Cairns had been published by the CTHG. The simple answer is, that there is no such list, because no relevant tests have been found. Very many tests are now being offered from laboratories around the globe and targeted at a great number of breeds. DNA tests can indeed be a valuable tool to help dealing with important hereditary conditions in a breed, but they are not a 'quick fix' to be used at random. One first has to ask IF a hereditary condition, and based on reliable, compounded information, is a problem in the breed? IF it appears to be relevant to use a genetic test, one then has to make sure that

the specific test is accurate and has been validated for that specific breed i.e. one has to look at the scientific publication behind a test. The same inherited condition, e.g. PRA, can have a different mode of inheritance in different breeds, so that one test does not fit all. Tests also have to be incorporated in breeding programmes in such a way that the genetic variation is not unnecessarily reduced. Time and space does not allow for more in depth information on this somewhat complex topic, but I am more than happy to discuss further on the telephone!

Porto Systemic Shunt (PSS), or Liver Shunt; also MVD.

The number of breeders notifying about Bile Acid (BA) testing has not increased and the Scottish breeders are still top of the leader board.

1 case of PSS has been reported – a 7 years old bitch, who is thankfully doing well on conservative treatment.

Ocular melanosis (OM), Abnormal Pigmentation (APD).

The subsidized Eye examination was held in conjunction with the SKC show, with 8 Cairn Terriers being examined.

1 case of OM has been reported in a little bitch. She sadly had to lose one eye but is fortunately coping very well.

Many Thanks to Yvonne Catto for her invaluable help.

Sonia White, our fellow Health Group worker, did sadly pass away during the year. She was a truly lovely person and is much missed.

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