



CAIRN TERRIER HEALTH GROUP

REPORT 2014

Another year of health monitoring has gone by and we have, as usual, been contacted by a number of breeders and, especially, pet owners with case reports or concerns. We always try to do our best to give advice and support when needed and it is important to receive information on any diseases affecting the breed. Many thanks for keeping us informed and please continue to do so during 2015 !

A variety of conditions have been brought to our attention, but typically in singular number and of a nature that can affect any dog of any breed. The Cairn Terrier does still appear to be a generally robust and healthy breed, but can never the less suffer from ill health, just like other dogs and us humans. It is also an unfortunate fact that old age tends to increase the risk for health problems.

The media bombards us with statistics, however accurate or not, on a daily basis. It is always difficult to do surveys that are statistically significant and without bias. I have personally, for quite some time, suggested that a good way to gather more reliable data on dog health would be through a computerised program linked to veterinary surgeries. It was therefore encour-

aging to be introduced to, at the latest KC Breed Health Coordinators Symposium, just such a project. Dr Dan O'Neill, and his team at the RVC, has now got a computerised program called VetCompass up and running. Veterinary data are received from a growing number of Veterinary practices all over UK and will form a relatively sound statistical basis for further research and information on breed health. We will follow this promising project closely!

The bottom line is however, whatever findings from surveys and research, what individuals can possibly do to sustain or improve health in a breed. Breeders can: Make sure that they breed from healthy dogs, which have also undergone necessary health testing (in our case, eye testing, done regularly). Test the offspring for possible problems (in our case bile acid testing). Encourage long term feedback from the owners of their pups, so the breeder can become aware, if a health problem has been the result of a certain breeding programme. Owners can: Help their dogs by giving them a life with enough training, activities and exercise. Keeping coat, nails and teeth well looked after. Feeding a suitable and wholesome diet, free from artificial additives, and of the right amount for that individual dog. It is regularly pointed out, that obesity is very bad for us humans and can contribute to a number of illnesses. Dogs are not different in that aspect !

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

The number of breeders notifying about Bile Acid (BA) testing has not increased. 1 case and 1 suspected case of PSS has been reported. 1 sad death has occurred of a dog suffering from

MVD (previously reported) – unfortunately no puppy BA result forthcoming from the breeder, so it is unknown, if the condition could have been detected at an early stage.

Ocular Melanosis (OM), Abnormal Pigmentation (APD)

The subsidized Eye examination, normally held at the Joint Open Show, did unfortunately not take place this year due to problems with the venue. No new cases of OM have been reported.

1 case of Sudden Acquired Retinal Degeneration (SARDS) has been reported in a 7 years old bitch. This is a, at least from a human perspective, rather scary condition, causing blindness almost overnight. The little bitch does however, thankfully, not appear to be much troubled by it and is reported to still live a fairly normal and happy life.

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

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