

## **CANINE HEALTH AND WELFARE: APPLICABLE TO ALL TYPES OF SHOWS**

The Kennel Club remains committed to safeguarding and improving canine health and welfare, and as a part of this process, in January 2009 introduced a new Regulation F(1)15.b and an amendment to Regulation F(1)16 to ensure that all dogs taking part in shows are healthy and that only dogs without any visible condition which adversely affects their health or welfare should be exhibited.

Exhibitors should be aware that Kennel Club appointed Health and Welfare Monitors will be present at a number of General and Group Championship Shows during 2009.

Show Societies are required to refer to the Show Veterinary Surgeon any exhibits which have been brought to their attention by the Health and Welfare Monitor as allegedly being in contravention of the new regulation. Should such a report be received, the dog will be referred to the Show Vet for him/her to determine whether the report is valid. If the allegation is upheld the dog will be excluded from subsequent competition at the show by the Show Management. The new regulations give authority for this action to be taken. The Show Vet's decision is final and a written report will be forwarded to the Kennel Club for consideration.

Should a dog be required to undergo an examination by the Show Vet at the show, it is expected that an exhibitor will co-operate fully with this procedure. Therefore, the exhibitor should allow the examination procedure to be carried out unhindered and without obstruction.

It should be noted that the exhibitor may, if he/she wishes, withdraw the dog from further competition rather than be subject to the Show Vet's examination of the dog.

**Such monitoring will not take place at breed club shows, as there are many licensed shows which do not have a Show Vet in attendance, and at these shows the upholding of canine health and welfare standards rests entirely with the appointed judge(s). To give authority for this, Regulation F(1)21.n has been amended. Under these circumstances the judge's decision is final and the dog does not need to be referred to a Show Vet.**

### **F(1)21.n Judges & Judging**

Judges may exclude any dog from the ring if it is considered not in a fit state for exhibition owing to savage disposition or suffering from any visible condition which adversely affects its health or welfare and the exclusion must be reported immediately by the judge/steward to the Show Secretary. The judge's decision is final and the dog shall be excluded from all subsequent competition at the Show. The judge must make a report to the Show Secretary at the first opportunity after the Show.

In both instances a dog which has been excluded from further competition may remain within the precincts of the show to allow, for example, for the exhibitor to compete with other dogs he/she may have entered, but the dog cannot be exhibited in any other subsequent class or for any other show awards even if these are judged by a different judge(s).

## ERADICATION OF INHERITED DISEASES IN DOGS MOVES A STEP CLOSER

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust strengthened its campaign to eliminate inherited diseases in dogs last week, as it signed its formal agreement with the Animal Health Trust (AHT), to jointly create the Kennel Club Genetics Centre and revealed some of the exciting findings so far.

Representatives from both the Kennel Club and the AHT held their first meeting at the AHT's site in Newmarket, Suffolk. At the meeting, those in attendance received an update of the work undertaken since the project was launched at this year's Crufts in March. This update included research on estimated breeding values that will eventually enable entire dog populations to be evaluated for inherited disease, even if individual dogs haven't been scanned or DNA tested.

The meeting also revealed news of Hereditary Cataract (HC) research currently underway in a host of different breeds. Investigation into the genetic basis of HC in Golden Retrievers and American Cocker Spaniels has been in progress for several years but the Kennel Club Genetics Centre has recently started work with other breeds including the Siberian Husky, German Pinschers and Large Munsterlander. It is hoped that in time the research performed by AHT scientists within the Kennel Club Genetics Centre will lead to the development and launch of DNA tests to identify dogs of all these breeds that carry mutations associated with HC.

While there are no reliable statistics for crossbred dogs and some hereditary diseases are present in all dogs – those particular inherited diseases resulting from single gene mutations are more likely to occur in purebred dogs than in crossbreeds and can lead to welfare issues.

The Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the AHT will undertake research into approximately 25 inherited diseases over the next five years, facilitating the creation of further diagnostic tests which will improve the health and welfare of generations of dogs.

There are probably more than five million purebred dogs in the UK alone and the research at the Genetics Centre aims to ensure that the future of dogs is a healthy, happy one. DFS Crufts, the world's greatest dog show, will provide the perfect platform for showcasing healthy pedigree dogs, and recently announced a deal with TV channel More 4 to broadcast the event for the first time in 2010.

Mark Vaudin, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Research at the AHT, said: "We're excited about the prospect of what we can achieve together in the next five years. With the support of breeders we hope, in time, that our work will help to eradicate many adverse inherited conditions making life better for generations of dogs."

Mike Townsend, Chairman of the Kennel Club Charitable Trust said: "The KC Genetic Centre at the AHT is a very important development – we are hopeful that it will produce concepts and tests which will help dog breeders improve the health and wellbeing of their beloved breeds."

**For further information and/or interviews, please contact:**

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**Notes to editors:**

The Animal Health Trust is an independent charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit the website at [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)

- The Kennel Club Genetic Centre is led by Dr Cathryn Mellersh and Dr Sarah Blott, two of the AHT's genetics experts. Both have pioneered screening tests to identify a dog's genetic status and minimise the risk of producing affected puppies.
- The Kennel Club Charitable Trust has donated around £4m over the past 21 years to help fund research into dog diseases and to canine support and welfare charities. Money made by the Kennel Club, through events such as DFS Crufts, goes back into the Kennel Club Charitable Trust and into education and health initiatives to help all dogs.
- Through Kennel Club Charitable Trust funding the AHT is already investigating the genetics of a wide range of inherited conditions, including Hereditary Cataract and Progressive Retinal Atrophy in many breeds. These include Golden Retrievers, American Cocker Spaniels and Tibetan Spaniels, primary lens luxation in terriers and idiopathic epilepsy in Border Collies. The result of this will, hopefully, be DNA screening tests that breeders can use to control or even eliminate these debilitating diseases.

# The Kennel Club's Breed Health & Welfare Strategy Group's

## BREED WATCH

- The decisions made by judges in the show ring strongly influence future breeding plans
- Judges must take conformation related health problems and temperament into account when making their decisions as well as breed type
- All show dogs should be *Fit for Function: Fit for Life* <http://www.fitforfunction.org.uk/>
- Judges should never award prizes to dogs which are visibly suffering from any condition which would adversely affect their health or welfare. For example:
  - Obvious breathing difficulty
  - Significantly over or under weight dogs
  - Lameness, including hopping
  - A discharge from one or both eyes or any signs of discomfort in either eye
  - Obvious skin or ear irritation
  - Inappropriate temperament- refusal to be handled, timidity or aggression
  - Exaggerations that would make the dog unsuited for fulfilling its original function
- A judge is expected to make such decisions based on their extensive experience of dogs as owners and breeders – they are not expected to display the knowledge of a veterinary surgeon and should not undertake any extra examination of a dog other than that which they would normally perform in assessing general fitness and breed type.

Particular points of concern for **individual breeds** may include features not specifically highlighted in the breed standard. The features listed are derived from health surveys, a meeting of Kennel Club Group Judges (Feb 2009), feedback from judges at shows and consultation with individual breed clubs / councils.

### **Staffordshire Bull Terrier**

#### **Points of concern for special attention by judges**

- Misplaced lower canine teeth
- Breathing difficulties