

LABRADOR BREED COUNCIL HEALTH SUB COMMITTEE (HSC) 12.4.10

Those present: M. Brown, J. Hodge, F. Braddon, L. Heron, J. Venturi Rose

Election of Health committee representatives and constitution

The current representatives have been in position for five years so a new term of office needs to be sorted out.

Changes on the health front over the last five years were reviewed.

Hip, Elbow, annual eye test results and optigen results for Prcd PRA are now put on registration documents by the KC

The ABS scheme has been introduced

Microchipping or Tattoo has finally become a necessity for health screening.

The health committee recommends that. The number of representatives remain the same. The breed council secretary sends out requests to breed clubs for names of nominations as health reps (the representatives present were prepared to stand again if asked) which should be returned by the end of June and then voting slips be sent out within the month for return within the next month. Once elected club linkings can be same or changed according to who is elected.

For the future to improve feedback and timings to the Breed council and get feedback from clubs the health committee recommends that we have two meetings a year (see below for schedule of meetings) and that a report from HSC/health issues be a standing item on the Breed Council agenda each year.

Next HSC meeting planned for 18th September 2010 (Day before Darlington).

Items raised to go to Breed Council agenda for onward discussion by breed clubs.

Next HSC meeting planned for 2011 day before East Anglian LRC to discuss health items on Breed Council agenda.

May 2011 Breed Council meeting.

Health items on the Breed Council agenda for May 2010 were discussed and this led to the following comments/recommendations

Item 6. Health Schemes – That ALL (recognised) health tests be printed on KC pedigrees in the form of a table with the words TESTED/UNTESTED indicated and the results printed.

If point d) is not acceptable the second proposal would be:

Health Schemes – That all recommended ACS health tests be printed on KC pedigrees in the form of a table with the words TESTED/UNTESTED indicated and the results printed.

This should have said registration documents not KC pedigrees

It was felt that understanding of the test results was as an important an issue regardless of what was approved. Therefore, the following was recommended. A straight forward factsheet should be produced for breeders and puppy buyers that helped to educate them about the interpretation of each test and the relative importance of results. For example, “DNA tests carriers will never be affected with X

disease but could pass on the mutant gene to approximately 50% of their progeny if bred from". Or whether or not the numerical incidence of a particular disease was felt to be of any particular significance to the breed or not.

Government report (Bateson) The HSC recommends that: Any attempt to, restrict the number of times a stud dog is used, is resisted as this could actually have unforeseen consequences for health rather than the opposite. For example, If they knew they only had a limited number of bitches allowed to a dog the owner might only allow certain bitches e.g. champions only to the dog thereby, restricting potentially beneficial health advancements being spread more widely in the Labrador population. OR whether or not people might rush to use a given dog earlier than normal in order to be sure of being one of a limited number allowed and might in fact then find out a detrimental health issue emerges later.

Item 7. Should we consider making health testing compulsory for all dogs and bitches who are bred from? And by that I mean only pups from tested parents can be registered with the KC. This may one day become law and if we were ahead of this it could stand us in good stead.

If yes then which health tests, including DNA tests, do the council think we should use. If we agree to health test then there needs to be some way of adding new tests to the list, or removing them if we find that we have bred out the problem in the future.

The HSC recommends that the KC be asked not to register puppies where the parents do not have BVA/KC Hip Scores or an up to date BVA/KC eye certificate.

The HSC recommends that the KC should make the following adjustments to the Accredited Breeder Scheme (ABS) move elbow scoring from recommended to compulsory and that one parent must be compulsory Optigen Tested Clear or Hereditarily Clear.

The HSC recommends that the KC put EIC results on registration documents and/or holds a central list.

Further discussion centred around at least one top winning Field Trial Bred Labrador who was untested for Optigen Prcd PRA and had sired 2000 puppies some of whom were affected. The HSC recommends The KC should be asked by the BC what they could do about this situation as at least one parent from each mating should be Optigen clear to prevent affected puppies being born. This is not an isolated situation in the FT world and could just as easily arise in the show world.

The HSC recommends that the KC put a list of tests that are available in the Labrador Retriever on their web site to compliment the individual dog results that are currently available.

Further discussion on the Breed Health watch web page on the KC web site led to the following: The HSC recommends that there be a section on the Breed Council Web site for a health blog so that Labrador enthusiasts can feedback any health concerns that the HSC can discuss and the Health co-ordinators can forward to the KC where appropriate. This way we may get better feedback about what most breeders consider is important. Fiona Braddon volunteered to police and manage this if desired.

It was requested that this report and the BC minutes go on the BC web site as soon as possible (possibly entitled draft minutes) in order for more Labrador breeders and owners to understand the issues and what was being discussed.

JVR explained her understanding of the Breed Health Co-ordinators role. She had gleaned most of this from a video interview between a Dog World reporter and Ronnie Irving not from any formal written role specification from the KC. There is a Labrador Health Watch page on the KC web that anyone can access to raise “emerging potential health issues” and the KC can raise issues they wish the breed/judges to take note of. The only issues so far were weight (dealt with in the standard changes by KC) and perceived short legs. JVR published some research by Alison Scutcher in Dog World Breed Notes and would pass the findings to the KC. Actually it showed there was little leg length difference between work and show bred Labradors. There is a meeting on 11th May regarding the Dogslife Labrador health research study (see below). Members were concerned about the quality of information this research would generate and how any health diagnosis would be verified. It would be important that sufficient sensible and knowledgeable breeders attend the meeting. All LRC breed club secretaries had been invited as have the Health Co-ordinators. JVR is unfortunately unable to go. She will telephone Marion Hopkinson to see if she is able to go. JVR can send a deputy and would like a volunteer.

End of meeting

DOGS LIFE NOTE

*We are delighted to announce the launch of a brand new research project called **DOGSLIFE**, which will look at exactly why your beloved Labrador Retriever is healthy. Have you ever wondered how much exercise your Labrador should have? How often should you feed your Labrador? Is it okay for your Labrador to sleep in your bedroom at night? Incredibly, we don't yet have reliable information to answer many of these simple questions! Leading scientists and vets at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and the Roslin Institute at the University of Edinburgh, the University of Manchester and the University of Liverpool are collaborating to try and find the answers to these questions and others. Why?... because if we know the answers then we may actually be able to **prevent** Labradors getting ill, just by making little changes in the way they we look after them!*

Any Labrador Retriever aged 12 months or younger registered with the Kennel Club, or whose registration is transferred after the 1st July 2010 can be part of the project - you just need to join at the website www.dogslife.ac.uk after this date. Your Labrador will have its own page where you can enter information about its health and activities. You will be able to follow your Labrador's progress, and see how he/she compares to other puppies at the same stage in their life. The website will contain lots of interesting information about keeping dogs healthy, and by registering with the project you will be the first to find out the results of the study...as soon as they happen. With your help this will be the biggest and most important study of Labrador health anywhere in the world. Together we can make a real difference to health and happiness of Labrador Retrievers.

