

Labrador Breed Council Health Sub committee meeting held remotely on Monday 4th January 2021

Those present: Joy Venturi Rose, Lynda Heron, Fiona Braddon, Fiona Maclean, Elaine Grummitt, Kira Leith-Ross Kate Smith Apologies: Kirsty Jones

The meeting was mainly called to discuss the crisis and poor service with particularly the hip and elbow schemes from the BVA/KC scheme during the pandemic and the massive backlog caused by BVA staff having been furloughed and the scrutineers not sitting during lockdowns.

JVR had sent a letter to the Veterinary Times on the matter and thanked everyone on the committee for their input. If the letter is not published it will be sent to the BVA , KC and breed clubs anyway.

The following points were discussed:

We should now follow up with a letter to the BVA and the KC asking:

What they see as the way forward for management of these schemes in the future?

How can responsible breeders work within the current limitations e.g. inadequate access to BVA/KC schemes. What is the KC strategy going forward?

What type of breeders to the KC want to work with? With the situation above and the removal of important features of the mykc facility from the web site it seems that responsible breeders are not the preferred customer base of the KC

We need to state our ambitions within the letter we want to move from the currently archaic systems with handwritten documentation for example.

The Breed Council Chairman to be copied into the BVA/KC letters once they were drafted.

LH in her capacity of one of the breed health Co-ordinators had a meeting back in September with Katie Thatcher at the BVA and it appears that keeping up with technology in relation to electronic scoring has not been a feature of the scheme necessitating scrutineers many of whom are elderly and in the vulnerable group in relation to the pandemic having to travel to London to conduct these duties.

The committee recognised that electronic submissions needed to be of good quality and ideally DICOM files but other countries used systems where these can be uploaded and scrutineers, if necessary, provided with the relevant equipment e.g. larger screens to view the images. In this day and age such aspects should not present unnecessary barriers to modernising the process. Joy and Lynda had also had a meeting with the BVN about 2 years ago to discuss an online more transparent system but it seems the BVA have made no progress in this area. The group were also aware of highly qualified vets who had been approached to become panellists' in the past but declined as they did not consider the necessary train trip to London to carry out the duties a worthwhile use of their time if they came from another part of the country.

It was evident from Facebook and from the personal experiences of some in the group that they were now using the ANKC system as it was possible to submit plates electronically online, have the results in a way that was comparably reported to the BVA/KC system and the results were coming back in a matter of days. One of these people had apparently been told by the ABS team that their results would be accepted for the purpose of breeding in line with ABS requirements but the results would not be published. The group considered the non- publication of results to be unacceptable and raised many questions. Breeders would have to pay out again to submit through the BVA/KC to have results published and if they did not do this the data would result in an incomplete record for

the breed on line and potentially for the Estimated Breeding Values calculations. Anecdotally it appeared that the ANKC scheme may be a point or two more lenient than the BVA/KC scheme but the breed means were broadly comparable being KC 10 mean 9.8 median and the ANKC 8 mean and 6 median. However, it would be for veterinary professionals to validate and moderate any scoring differences and is therefore outside the scope of this committee.

The group felt that there was insufficient consultation and a lack of transparency by either the KC or the BVA with primary stakeholders (their customer base) regarding many issues and this has been brought to a head with the unsatisfactory administration of the health schemes during the pandemic and the withdrawal of my/kc from the KC web site. Both organisations were taking money from breeders but not providing a good enough service. The group would like to be informed about where the funds collected for the health schemes go? Is it all kept and used by the BVA or did any get shared with the KC for their part of the publication service? It was pointed out that other organisations and workers were all facing the same issues and we had to be flexible think out of the box and continue to offer our services.

The group were of the opinion that if breeders were given the go ahead to breed under the ABS scheme using the ANKC results then the KC should insist that the breeder allowed the results to be published. They should also consult with the ANKC to insert a clause for UK breeders that the results will be sent to the KC for publication in that same way that different providers of DNA tests agree to this. Whilst it could be desirable to have an alternative to the BVA scheme publication of results should also be part of this and the vast majority of breeders that radiograph their dogs would want this to happen anyway.

All breed health related data should as a matter of course be released to the Breed Health coordinators /Health Committee in order for them to carry out their work.

There was discussion around the EBVs and that some members thought that if a dog was unscored for Elbows this was entered into their system as a score of 0 meaning such a dog could potentially have an advantage over one that was scored. JVR would look into this.

KLR thought it would be of value to potentially set up our own college of radiologists as a separate entity to the BVA scheme. LG stated that years ago the Army Veterinary College ran their own scheme. The group was unsure whether this would be desirable however, felt that some competition would not be a bad thing providing proper reporting of results was carried out.

LH and FM described a comprehensive pedigree data base run by a company called Grass Roots run for cattle breeds and equines. A detailed leaflet was sent on to the committee (copy attached). It was evident from this that the company for a comparatively small fee of £1700 could do for the breed what we require from the KC particularly in the light of the demise of mykc. JVR also noted later that the scheme could additionally manage show entries and advertising of kennels/dogs which could potentially raise the income necessary to run the scheme. It was suggested that the scheme could represent a Breed Specialist Register. The company can set it up and run it or set it up and then breeders run it. They are specialists at merging in historical data from other organisations e.g. back catalogue of pedigrees, health results, EBVs etc. This is not without precedent as the Working Collies, foxhounds and Greyhounds run similar systems. The first step would be to ask for our historical data from the KC. It could be for example a single breed system or incorporate other

breeds. Looking at all the current BVA/KC schemes it was felt important that copies of health results be routinely copied to the Breed.

Other issues: Some members had experienced queries with eye certificate results and it was difficult to know who to address issues to: The group was unsure who the current chief eye panellist currently was for example and for individual issues this was an essential person to know lines of communication with some individual panellists at this time was sometimes difficult.

There was also the outstanding issue of the MFRD reporting that the KC health department were aware of and had promised to ensure our request for evidence that this had/could evolve into a more serious eye condition that was detrimental to Labrador health would be presented at the next KC health committee meeting. Presumably these meetings were currently on hold. JVR will ensure follow up.

The Breed Council Chairman to be copied into the BVA/KC letters once they were drafted.