

## **AGM Health Report March 2014**

Overall the health initiatives that have been instigated are running smoothly.

### **Cause of Death Register -**

We have received a preliminary report from Dr Jane Dobson, who would like us to stress the need that this is not just a cancer register, but is for ALL causes of death, she writes:-

“In response to concerns about the prevalence of cancer, particularly histiocytic sarcoma in the breed, early in 2013 Cambridge Veterinary School in conjunction with the Breed Health Sub-Committee, set up a web-based data base for the purpose of monitoring the “health” of the breed by recording the cause of death when dogs die.

The summary below is the first report of entries to this data-base since its inception in May 2013. This report and its findings can only be regarded as preliminary for reasons outlined below:

The Register of Death was and is intended to be an ongoing means of monitoring the health of the breed, with the intent that entries were made shortly after a dog had died.

104 dogs were entered historically having died between 2007 – 2012. Whilst all such information makes a useful contribution, for future reports to truly reflect ongoing disease issues in the breed, they will be dated from 2013 onwards.

Also to be noted: 22 dogs have no date or cause of death, and a further 2 were still alive.

The results should be interpreted with caution, although it appears that 65% of dogs died due to tumour related causes, and that sarcomas are by far the most common tumour type. These figures could be seriously biased by owners of such dogs being more aware of the Register of Death and more motivated to enter their dog than owners of dogs who died of other causes. Hopefully a truer picture will emerge over the coming years if we can keep up the momentum for people to use the Register.

Thank you to all those who have entered their dogs.

Dr Jane Dobson, March 2014”

### **Eye Screening for Goniodysgenesis (G) and DNA sampling by the Animal Health Trust (AHT)**

This day at the breed Ch show on the 6<sup>th</sup> April is now fully booked, however, the AHT are willing to take their seminar and FREE G testing day around the country if numbers warrant. If you are running a day where you feel that you can get enough Flatcoats to take part I will give you the contact number of James Oliver. It is critical for the AHT to obtain DNA from the older Flatcoat and those who are affected with goniodysgenesis and also those that go

onto to develop glaucoma, with this in mind they need to reach as many of the general public not only in the UK but worldwide as possible. I am pleased to report that with input from Yvonne Jaussi (Switzerland) the Institute of Genetics in Berne and the AHT have been able to collaborate, resulting in DNA from the Swiss dogs that were part of the study and subsequent paper "Evolution Of Goniodysgenesis Over Time In Two Populations Of Flatcoated Retrievers" (the full article is now available to read on the Society's website), being sent to the AHT.

A full report of the proposed research to be undertaken by the AHT is on the Society's website.

### **Flatcoated Retriever Sires**

The list on the website is fully updated for 2013.

### **Goniodysgenesis, Coloboma and Generalised Progressive Retinal Atrophy (GPRA)**

We have not received any further information from the BVA, therefore, at present there is no change in the screening for Goniodysgenesis and GPRA. Coloboma would be noted at the time of the basic eye examination.

### **Group Study (Open to any Flatcoat Worldwide)**

The following is Liz Branscombe's report for March 2014:-

"Initially 67 owners elected to take part in the study when it commenced in 2011 however only approximately 50 actively took part.

In 2013 the study was re-opened and 29 new participants expressed interest in joining the group. We are now receiving data from a total of 68 dogs. Hopefully the number of owners willing to participate will continue to grow.

Two of the original participants have decided to withdraw their dogs from the study; ironically, given the aim of the study, one was withdrawn because the dog was unhealthy. Unfortunately a second dog from the original 2011 group was put to sleep during last year.

Currently:

66 year one questionnaires have been returned, 50 year two and 22 year three.

Year four questionnaire will be circulated in May 2014

The majority of respondents report their dogs to be fit and healthy with only occasional incidences of minor illness.

Thank you once again to all owners who have agreed to allow their dogs to be part of this study group; your participation is much appreciated.

Liz Branscombe Dip AVN (Surgical) RVN”

### **Health Seminars**

Two seminars were run during 2014 one by the Trustees of the Tumour Survey and held at Cambridge and the other at the Animal Health Trust (AHT). Both of these were well attended and an overview of each may be read on the Society’s website.

It was pleasing to have input from Barbel Kilian (Switzerland), who kindly let us publish her notes of the day held at Cambridge.

We are currently looking at holding the next seminar in 2015 or 2016.

### **Patellar Luxation**

The screening continues to expand and 90 dogs have been through the scheme, of which 33 have some degree of minor abnormality (not luxating); but the possibility could be when breeding if these minor abnormalities are doubled up may lead to luxation in some puppies; dogs that would be graded as 2,3 or 4 are not presented, as this degree of luxation would be obvious to the owner. This screening is another tool for the breeder to be able to use when planning a mating, no dog that takes part is failed or passed; as has been mentioned previously the examination undertaken gives a report on a dogs’ patella’s that cannot be seen visually or by x-ray. It is hoped over time to see a reduction in the incidence of patellar luxation that affects young dogs in the breed.

### **Renal Dysplasia**

Cases are still being reported (5 during 2013) although a few contact us too late (when the dog has been euthanized). We would ask if you hear of any cases to encourage owners to send in DNA to the Animal Health Trust for future research.

DNA kits are available from me at no cost to the owner.

### **Hip, Eye and Elbow results**

The following figures have been taken from the KC Dog Health Group Annual Report 2013 (the full report may be viewed on the KC website).

**Hips** - from 6504 Flatcoats scored over a 15 year period the breed mean score is 8.3, median 8; the scores ranged from 0-84.

**Elbows** – from 180 Flatcoats graded of which:

175 graded 0 (97.2%)

2 graded 1 (1.1%)

2 graded 2 (1.1%)

1 graded 3 (0.6%)

**Eye examination:**

3217 Flatcoats have been screened during the last 15 years for Goniodysgenesis, of which 218 have been Affected.

As always my thanks to the health sub-committee for their continued support throughout the year.

Finally, I would like to let you all know as from 2015 I will be relinquishing my position on the health sub –committee, as I feel after 10 years it is now time for new ideas, new enthusiasm, and youth to be brought to the committee. I am, therefore, pleased to announce that Liz Branscombe (approved by the general committee), has offered to take over from myself during next year, this will be a gradual process, with Liz taking on more responsibility, therefore, to make this progression run as smoothly as possible to try and ensure there is no lack of continuity, as from today Liz will be vice chair of the health sub-committee.

Val Jones March 2014