

AGM Report 2013

Cause of Death Register

Dr Jane Dobson has sent letters to the Vet Record, Vet Times Online, Dog Breed papers, various dog magazines including Sporting Dog who are running an article on the breed including photographs, and Dogs' Today who are going to write a News piece – this will hopefully raise awareness of the register.

We know that when one loses a much loved companion it is a difficult time, but would ask that you take the time to complete the online questionnaire.

Group Study – this study group has now been reopened and we are accepting Flatcoats aged 1 year and under, to include dogs from outside of the UK – as it is felt that lifestyle can affect a Flatcoat regardless of breeding. For those wishing to register their puppy with this group please contact Liz Branscombe or myself. This will be a rolling register for the foreseeable future.

The following is Liz Branscombe's report:

Update on Group Study March 2013

Initially 67 owners elected to take part in the study when it commenced in 2011, since then two have chosen to opt out and one dog from the original group is sadly deceased.

To date 50 year one questionnaires from the original participating group have been returned, despite reminders the remaining questionnaires have not been forthcoming so I think we must assume that these owners no longer wish to take part in the study group. In the light of this we have recently re-opened the study to new participants and intend to make it a continuous rolling study, 11 new puppies have been added this year.

To date 33 year two questionnaires have been returned (not all dogs have turned two yet)

The majority of respondents report their puppies to be fit and healthy with only occasional incidences of minor illness. I have been surprised however by the number of owners who do not routinely give worming or flea treatments to their dogs on a regular basis. BVA health screening tests have been carried by some of the owners in their dog's second year but not all of them have sent photocopies of results.

The third questionnaire will be circulated, as in previous years, during May so this will be finalised in the next couple of months.

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 Survey

The health survey has now been published in the 2012 Newsletter and is available to read on the Society's website. The Society is willing to share this analysis with other Flatcoated Breed Clubs outside of the UK and has now been made available to both Flatcoated Coated Retriever Clubs' of the Netherlands. However in the first instance General Committee permission is required.

It would appear from the analysis that we are covering the main issues that need further investigation and that we are working in the right direction.

Goniodysgenesis

Following on from the re-examination of Flatcoat eyes in 2011 and the subsequent abstract titled 'Evolution of Goniodysgenesis Over Time In the Flatcoated Retriever Population; which was to be discussed at an Eye Panellists

Working Party on the 26th November 2012. The BVA (British Veterinary Association) invited all Breed Clubs to put forward questions for the Working Party's (WP) consideration.

We have received the following response from Dr David Gould which cover all the questions put forward:

1. The research is currently in abstract form only (ECVO Proceedings May 2012), although a paper is currently in preparation for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. It takes time for this process to be completed, but the paper is expected to be submitted within the next few months. Assuming it passes the peer review process then we can expect it to be published around 2-3 months later
2. The research is based on 96 dogs. In terms of veterinary studies, this is actually quite a large sample.
3. 39% of dogs showed progression of goniodysgenesis over time. Of these, 21% showed moderate/severe progression and 4% showed severe progression.
4. By definition, the abstract is only able to present a small amount of the data gathered during the study. Full data analysis will be presented in the paper itself
5. To our knowledge, the study has not been replicated in any other breed on Schedule A for Goniodysgenesis.
6. We currently generally recommend that gonioscopy is performed from 6 months of age, as the technique is technically difficult to perform in younger animals, and this advice still stands.
7. Until the study has been fully peer-reviewed (i.e. until after publication in a journal), we feel that we should not make recommendations regarding such specific questions such as the timing of first gonioscopy, the number of tests that should be performed within a dog's lifetime, and advice to owners of dogs whose drainage angle has changed over time. Once the paper has been published then we hope to officially address these issues as fully as possible
8. This is not a pilot study (these usually involve only small numbers, typically 5-20 dogs). It was conducted on as many Flatcoated retrievers that could be gathered for testing with the help of the breed societies, and that fulfilled the inclusion criteria for the study. However, further studies involving more dogs of this breed (and others on Schedule A for goniodysgenesis) would always be welcome and would be expected to add to the existing data.

Coloboma & GPRA

We have received from the BVA the following comments from Ian Mason (Chief Eye Panellist) regarding Coloboma and GPRA.

"To date the incidence of coloboma seen in the Flat-coat Retriever has been very small, but we still await figures for 2012. At this stage we do not have sufficient evidence to class the condition as inherited, though of course, subsequent findings may alter that opinion.

The two cases of GPRA seen in the UK are pan-retinal degeneration indistinguishable (ophthalmoscopically) from GPRA; that is they look like GPRA in other breeds, but we cannot yet say they categorically are GPRA. Samples of DNA from such cases are submitted currently to Optigen to be checked against known GPRA gene defects and for storage for later examination if, and when, more Flat-Coat Retriever DNA is submitted from dogs with GPRA like signs. The Animal HealthTrust will also store DNA for later testing if requested. The number of cases seen to date would not justify a move to Schedule A, but again this may change with time."

The BVA inform us that they will contact us when any more information becomes available.

At present the examination for Goniodysgenesis remains the same, a once only test.

The eye certificates have been expanded to include three sections

The first section to include the dogs Reg no, M/Chip No., Owners details, etc.

The middle section now includes boxes to be ticked of any abnormalities detected whether they are inherited or otherwise acquired.

The third section identifies any inherited eye disease which is relevant to the breed of dog being examined.

Breeders need to examine these certificates carefully. I have with me today a sample of the new certificates if you would like to pass these round.

With the above in mind all breeding stock (as recommended in the Society's Code of Ethics) should have an up-to-date eye certificate for Hereditary Cataract and Generalised Progressive Retinal Atrophy, at which examination any other conditions would also be noted (updated annually for all popular sires and definitely before breeding for all other stock).

Patellar Luxation

Jane Alexander is still running a screening scheme and to date has tested approximately 90 Flatcoats. Following this through we are liaising with Dr Dylan Clements, Senior Lecturer in Small Animal Orthopaedics at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, who is, with the help of his colleagues, looking into the heritability factor of patellar luxation in the Flatcoated Retriever.

Last weekend there was an excellent response to the screening held at the breed Ch Show by Jane Alexander. However, it came to light during the day that the scheme is not fully understood, therefore, the following is an explanation.

The scheme does not pass or fail any dog, it is intended to assist you, the breeder, to make more informed breeding decisions by helping you to know the status of your dogs' stifles that cannot be seen visually or by x-ray. By following this screening we hope to see over time a reduction in young Flatcoats diagnosed with PL.

Popular Sire Effect – There is an article on the website and a list of Flatcoat sires for 2012. It is intended to update the list at least annually but we are aiming for a quarterly update, depending on the amount of work involved. The list will also be published in the Yearbook alongside the hip and eye results.

Renal Dysplasia

The AHT are still banking samples from Flatcoats affected/thought to be affected with this condition and DNA kits (paid for by the Society) are available from myself.

The AHT have started work to investigate the frequency of the RD mutations in UK Flatcoats. Their plan is to genotype 95 Flatcoats that they already have DNA from, that have unique parentage (different sires and dams).

Once they have completed this project they will let us know the results.

Website

There are now a number of interesting articles on the site and these will be expanded during 2013. The health section is updated on a regular basis, and serves as a port of call for those who wish to know what the Society has planned/planning and gives up-to-date information on the various health initiatives that are being undertaken.

To conclude

With all of the above being undertaken, although some of the schemes are long term, it is hoped to gradually see an improvement overall in Flatcoat health and to enable us to gain insight on how lifestyle may or may not affect the health of the Flatcoated Retriever.

The following is taken from the KC key to official health screening schemes, DNA tests, Breed Club and Other Schemes: "Kennel Club Assured Breeders must participate in any breed health survey or reasonable health initiative in their breed(s)."

We would like to thank all those who participate in the various schemes.

And finally my thanks to Jane Alexander for making herself available for patellar screening, and always on hand for those questions that I am unable to answer that come through either by email or telephone; Tamsin Swain for the work

put in on the Health Survey; Liz Branscombe for taking on the Group Study, Shirley Johnson for running the Brenda Phillips Memorial Health Fund and the others on the health subcommittee who work quietly in the background; Chris Hewison for his excellent article on Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus (Bloat) and lastly Sue Goodman for her promptness in getting all our health articles uploaded on the website, and especially for her patience when we wanted to review the health section and change everything, in an effort to make it easier for the web browser to find articles of interest.

All of these people put in many hours of work in order that you the membership receive information, help and advice when needed