



Flatcoated Retriever Society

AGM Report March 2015

This will be my final AGM report and I would like to thank the health-sub-committee for their help and support over the last ten years. This was intended to be fairly brief, but several issues have arisen over the last two weeks and need to be mentioned

Brenda Phillips Memorial Health Fund

This was set up originally in 2007 and called the Health Fund; the name was changed to that above later in the year. I would like to emphasize this fund was set up to remain within the Society and to be used to encompass any disease that affects the Flatcoated Retriever. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all who have given so generously, raised monies, sold raffle tickets etc., and this fund now stands with a balance of over £16,000.

Cause of Death Register

Report / Update March 2015 by Jane Dobson

There were 40 entries for 2014, all of which had a date and cause of death.

Sex:

Female: 20.....13 neutered, 7 entire

Male: 20.....8 neutered, 12 entire

Cause of Death – general category

Haemolytic anaemia	3
Kidney disease (not specified)	1
Old age	3
Other (suspected haemorrhage)	3
RTA	1

Comment

There do not appear to have been any entries to the Cause of Death Register since October 2014, ie for the past 4 months. I have checked that the link is live and there does not appear to be a problem in entering cases. The number of dogs entered for 2014 is somewhat disappointing. The majority of entries during the past year (>70%) are for tumour related death.

I am concerned that the Society's membership are still viewing this as a Cancer Registry. The data collected will not be representative of the "Health" of the breed if this is the case.

Perhaps we should consider how to promote more widely, or whether to continue?

Following on from Jane Dobson's comments above, to find the best way to move forward, discussion will take place with Dr Dobson, Jane Alexander and Liz Branscombe, with input from the other breed clubs.

Update on the AHT's Goniodysgenesis and Glaucoma Project in the Flatcoated Retriever**February 2015**

We have received the following report from James Oliver (veterinary ophthalmologist at the Animal Health Trust (AHT)).

The AHT is one year into a 6 year research project into the genetics of goniodysgenesis (also known as pectinate ligament dysplasia) and primary angle closure glaucoma in multiple dog breeds including the Flatcoated Retriever. This research forms the basis of a PhD being undertaken by James Oliver, a specialist in veterinary ophthalmology, under the supervision of Dr Cathryn Mellersh, head of Canine Genetics Research at the Animal Health Trust. The first part of the project consisted of providing current prevalence data in the population.

Between September 2013 and August 2014, gonioscopy and cheek swab sampling were performed in 170 Flatcoated Retrievers. 17.1% of these dogs were affected by goniodysgenesis which is much lower than the prevalence rate of 34.7% reported by Read and others in 1998. This reduction likely reflects relatively widespread uptake of screening for the condition under the BVA/KC/ISDS eye scheme since 1998. Our results also show a significant association between goniodysgenesis and age - older dogs are more likely to be affected than younger ones. This finding supports the previous findings by Pearl and others (2015) who documented progression of goniodysgenesis over time in individual Flatcoated Retrievers. Thus, although prevalence of goniodysgenesis has reduced over the last 16 years, it remains relatively high which is most likely explained by the potential of progression of the disease. It is therefore likely that a significant number of animals who

appear normal when examined at a young age enter the breeding population before becoming affected at a later age.

We suspect the key to solving the problem to lie in the genetics of goniodysgenesis to which the AHT is now turning its attention. DNA has now been extracted from the cheek swab samples taken from affected and unaffected dogs and the AHT is in the process of comparing the DNA between these two groups. Initial analysis of this data is anticipated to be completed by April 2015.

New BVA Guidelines for screening for Goniodysgenesis

The current advice is to have the Flatcoated Retriever's eyes tested 3 yearly, and we have received the following information from Ian Mason, Chief Eye Panellist:-

Any dog(Flat coated Retriever) examined under the BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Scheme will receive an Eye Certificate with the relevant findings noted whether or not this is a different result to previous findings. This is the case for all breeds examined and no matter what conditions of an inherited nature are being recorded.

The advice as to breeding from a dog found to be affected with Goniodysgenesis (whether or not found previously unaffected) remains as stated that it is inadvisable to breed from such animals. Glaucoma is a sight threatening and painful condition and as such needs to be limited by careful breeding.

As our knowledge of the mode of inheritance of Goniodysgenesis and related Glaucoma is limited it is not possible to say with certainty how safe it is to breed from offspring of dogs whose status has changed from unaffected to affected, even if the offspring has an Unaffected result. Equally from the breed point of view I realise that to exclude all such offspring from breeding would be a potentially very serious reduction in the gene pool. The safest approach at this time maybe, although this is not proven, to leave breeding from such offspring until perhaps four years of age, allowing some time for progression of Goniodysgenesis if it were to happen in that animal. We do not currently have sufficient information to know with what frequency progression of Goniodysgenesis occurs in offspring of parents in which progression of Goniodysgenesis did occur.

The charges for Gonioscopy have been adjusted where Gonioscopy and a general eye examination take place at the same time and are as stated on the BVA website.

We are in the process of having a breeding strategy drawn up by Aimee Llewellyn (geneticist), and she has asked Dr Tom Lewis (AHT, Quantitative Geneticist) to look at this as

he may have some additional helpful advice— we are planning for this to be in time for the Yearbook.

KC Health Survey

We have received the following information regarding the recent KC Pedigree Breed Health Survey.

The PBHS got over 36,000 responses, representing over 47,000 live dogs across 207 breeds and over 9,500 dogs that have passed away since 2004. In the 2004 survey 13,773 forms were returned, of which, 13,741 were useable and represented 36,006 live dogs and 15,881 deaths.

Data Analysis and Beyond

The KC has begun the cleaning process of the data to ensure that there are no duplicates and that those the survey_completed are Kennel Club registered dogs. Once this is done they will start the data analysis and report writing, which will be carried out in alphabetical order by breed. With this large amount of data they are sure we can understand that the reports will take some time to be produced. Each breed will be made freely and publically available on the Kennel Club website health section once completed. And it is hoped to have all breed reports available online by Late spring 2015, before then we will be sent regular updates for general statistics gleaned across breeds.

Data for the Flatcoated Retriever There were 716 surveys filled in for live dogs and 208 filled in on deceased dogs.

Patellar Luxation

There will not be any screening this year at the Breed Ch Show in April; however, for those who would like to screen their dogs Jane Alexander has once again kindly offered to do this in her own time at her surgery. Please contact Windmill Veterinary Centre, 33 High Street, Winslow, Bucks, MK18 3HE Tel: 01296715660 to make an appointment.

Renal Dysplasia

We are still receiving reports of cases, in some instances there have been more than 1 case in a litter. The beginning of 2014 saw no cases being reported and then we received a flurry of reports towards the end of the year, from June 2014 to March 2015 there have been 10 cases. Please send in DNA to the AHT if your Flatcoat is diagnosed with this condition, the kits are FREE and the information is confidential. The collection of the DNA can be undertaken by yourself and full instructions come with the kits.

The AHT require at least 24 samples before research can be begin, so please try to ensure when sending in DNA to include as much clinical information as possible, this is obtainable from your veterinary surgeon.

These kits can now be obtained from Liz Branscombe, address and email in Yearbook.

Group Study I would now like to introduce Liz Branscombe who from today is your new Breed Health Co-ordinator and she will now read her report:

Currently the study group comprises 84 dogs (21 dogs are from the initial cohort born in 2010). We have up to date information for 69 dogs in the group with fifteen questionnaires still outstanding from 2014 (3 of these owners did not return the 2013 questionnaire either so we must assume they have withdrawn from the study?)

In 2014 21 new participants expressed interest in joining the group although only 11 have to date returned the initial questionnaire.

No major illness or deaths were reported in 2014, the majority of respondents report their dogs to be fit and healthy with only occasional incidences of minor illness. Approximately 40% of dogs in the study have had their hips and eyes screened (BVA/KC schemes)

In 2015 there will be one questionnaire for all dogs of 2 years and older, it will be emailed to participants as usual in May. The year one questionnaire will vary slightly and will be emailed when participants enrol for completion on their dog's first birthday. In addition copies of the questionnaires will be available for participants to download from the website.

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.

Val Jones

29th March, 2015