

ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT 2013

PDP1 Screening Project

The Clumber Spaniel Club commenced this project in 2007 to investigate the extent of this condition in the UK population; it was made possible by a generous grant from the Kennel Club Charitable Trust and offered free testing for 100 dogs. The project concluded in 2012 and we are now able to evaluate the results.

This scheme has tested 100 dogs and 12 were tested prior to this scheme with partial funding from the Club; some dogs were tested outside of this scheme and there are a total of 166 dogs tested for PDP1 as at early March 2013.

It had been agreed that priority for testing would be given dogs/bitches that had already been bred from and then to those that were to be bred from, however many of the dogs that had applied for testing were found to be hereditarily clear by the testing of their parents and this caused a delays in assembling the last two groups for testing. Four carriers in a related group have been identified and all others have tested clear. All of the results are available on the Club's website on the health pages.

Within the last group we researched using the BRS for individuals that would give us as much information as possible; several were identified and we invited the owners to test e.g. one bitch had been bred on four occasions, each time to a tested dog, and her daughters had also been bred to tested dogs and by testing her we now have the known status of 41 progeny.

Registration data to the end of 2012 is now available and we can determine the full extent of the screening programme for the breed from 2001 to 2012. By testing older breeding stock we were able to identify hereditarily clear litters as far back as 2001 however only 4 litters are determined for 2001 and 2002 with the majority being from 2003 onwards. The results are as follows:

	2001 – 2006	2007 – 2012
Litters registered:	185	238
Litters hereditarily clear:	40 (22%)	119 (50%)
Puppies registered:	1012	1289
Puppies hereditarily clear:	237 (23%)	687 (53%)

The percentages relate to the number registered and are rounded to the nearest whole number. It is evident from this that as we move forward there is a significant increase in the numbers of dogs being born as hereditarily clear however there is still a large proportion of the population that is still untested.

From the dogs tested and identified as hereditarily clear we now have the known status of 1090 Clumbers; with only 4 carriers identified this gives an incidence rate of just 0.36% which is extremely good for the breed and is markedly better than the United States where their initial research found their population to have 25% carriers.

We continue to recommend that all breeding stock is tested for PDP1. The Animal Health Trust will give a discount on group submissions and we are facilitating this offer to all.

Eye Testing

The inclusion of the Clumber Spaniel as a High Profile Breed focused attention on the eye health of the breed. The Clumber Spaniel Club has always recommended health screening and eye testing with the KC/BVA Eye Scheme has been utilised by some over the years. However the results are not published therefore in 2009 the Club started its own database for the results and anyone with a eye test certificate for a Clumber is invited to forward a copy. This will enable the Club to gather information on the true status of the breed's eye health.

The Club agreed to subsidise the cost of eye testing for its members throughout 2012 and an eye testing session was held in conjunction with the Club's Championship Show and 42 dogs were tested on the day. Prof Bedford carried out the eye testing and gave a short talk about his findings afterwards. He stated that many of the dogs had too much exposure of the eye probably stemming from a long term acceptance of "showing haw" although he had also seen some very good eyes and therefore it was within the breed to improve the health of the eye. He advised that we should breed with dogs with tighter eyes. The critical factors were length of the eyelid, size of the eyeball and depth of the socket.

From the debate at a meeting held after the show it was agreed that problems regarding the conformation of the eye could be exaggerated when there was too much loose skin on the head; it was acknowledged that the Breed Standard states "No exaggeration in head and skull" and therefore dogs with excessive loose skin on the head are undesirable. The term "showing haw" has been generally accepted to describe an eye with loose lower lids, however the haw is the third eyelid and in some breeds a little may be seen even when the eyelid margins are in contact with the eye. It was agreed by those present that it was important that breeding stock should be routinely eye tested and that everyone should aim to breed for healthy eyes.

The BVA has provided data on the number of eye certificates issued for Clumbers each year since 2006 and it has increased steadily each year from 13 in 2006 to 30 in 2011; in 2012 a total of 79 eye certificates were issued which is a very positive increase. The results, again available on the Club's website, are varied but give us a good base line for measuring progress and can be used as evidence when we apply to be removed from the High Profile Breed List.

Current Surveys

At the start of 2013 the Clumber Spaniel Club circulated two survey forms to both its members and to the Working Clumber Spaniel Society.

One follows on from the meeting held to discuss head and eye conformation in the breed and is seeking feedback from as many Clumber owners and breeders as possible as to what would be the acceptable ideal head and eye for a Clumber Spaniel. Given the criticism about eye conformation and health in Clumbers the Club may need to take forward a statement with regard to eye conformation as it prepares evidence towards applying for removal from the High Profile Breed List. This is a matter for the breed to establish rather than have others decree to us in the future.

The second survey is also aimed at gathering information that can be used as evidence when we apply to be removed from the High Profile Breed List. This is with regard to weights in the breed and we have asked for vets to certify the weight and also to assess the dogs on a body condition score; this is to establish whether the Breed Watch "overweight" point of concern is justified. Over 50 forms have been returned so far and 82% are defined as optimum weight and a further 10% borderline between optimum and overweight.