

DBC News

December 2010

Dachshund Breed Council



In this Newsletter:

[Lafora's Disease in MWHD | IVDD | A2 Applications | Breed Seminars | Season's Greetings](#)

Lafora's Disease in Miniature Wirehaired Dachshunds

Most people will know by now that the WHDC has received the results from the DNA swabs taken to test for Lafora's Disease in Miniature Wirehaired Dachshunds over the period end March to mid July 2010. 96 samples were taken, of which 95 had sufficient DNA to test. Twelve dogs were identified as "Affected" and, of these, three were already known to have the disease. This incidence is higher than was expected, at around 12 per cent. All who submitted tests have been contacted and, in every case, if the result was "Not Affected", it has been explained that this does not mean the dog is "Clear" of Lafora's Disease; it could still be a "Carrier". It is vitally important that all Miniature Wire breeders understand this.

At present there is no test available to distinguish between "Clear" and "Carrier" dogs - this was explained to everyone who brought their dogs to be tested and it was apparently the reason that some breeders decided not to have their dogs tested.

The researchers at the Canadian hospital who carried out the tests have requested five-generation pedigrees from every dog tested to help identify "Carrier" lines, to enable Miniature Wire breeders to breed away from this debilitating disease, and there has been an excellent response to this so far, with more than a third of the pedigrees submitted already.

Every Miniature Wirehaired owner/breeder must surely want to breed *away* from this condition. No-one is at fault for the existence of the disease, and because the age of onset is after normal breeding age there is no way anyone can be thought to have deliberately bred from Dachshunds with Lafora's.

We have discussed the results with Dr. Cathryn Mellersh who leads the KC's Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust. She said that if the 12 % "Affected" is a representative sample of the breed, she would expect there to be approx. 45% "Carriers" in the wider population as well. This is a high proportion, which further emphasises the need for action to reduce the mutation frequency. As a comparison, 45% is approximately the proportion of cord1 PRA "Carrier" Mini Longs back in 2005.

We have also discussed breeding strategies and Dr. Mellersh felt that breeders should adopt the same approach as with cord1 PRA; i.e. allowing "Carriers" to continue to breed as long as they are only mated to "Clears". Advising people not to breed from "Carriers" would be likely to have an adverse effect on genetic diversity in what is a relatively small population.

Most people seem to think that a substantial sum of money should be invested by the Dachshund world in developing a test to distinguish between Dachshunds who are "Clear" of Lafora's and those who are "Carriers". Unlike the DNA test for cord1 PRA which is available from the AHT, the full Lafora test will only be available in Canada from the [Toronto Hospital for Sick Children](#). However, the full test is not currently in use and will need to be reinstated and it is for this, plus the running of the tests, which we need to raise funds. Dr. Mellersh supports the Wire Club's decision to work with the Canadian team on establishing the full Clear/Carrier/Affected DNA test.

The WHDC, the Miniature DC and the Breed Council will be working on the next steps over the coming weeks, including plans for raising the required funding. The WHDC has published the results on its website ([here](#)) and they will also be in its next newsletter.

Lafora's Disease has also been reported in Beagles and we have been speaking with the Beagles' Health Coordinator to ensure we can share learning and potentially pool resources.

A support group for owners of dogs with Lafora's was set up in 2010 and their website is: www.laforadogs.org where you can find out more about the disease and living with an affected dog. You can also download the Breed Council's information sheet [here](#).

We are sure all Mini Wire owners and breeders will wish to thank the WHDC for their work so far on this health condition and in particular, former Chairman Lesley Patton who managed the implementation of the 2010 screening programme.

IVDD (Inter-vertebral Disc Disease)

IVDD Education:

The Breed Council has kindly been given the rights to distribute copies of the DodgersList IVDD DVD (www.dodgerslist.com). Contents include: Care and Tips for healing & living with disc disease, Treatments, Recovery Suite, Expressing: Bladder & Bowels, Living with IVDD. Buy one for yourself and buy one for your vet. This is now available at £4.50 per copy. This price covers our costs and includes a donation to DodgersList from every sale. Please e-mail Dawn Norton (Miniature Dachshund Club secretary) at: halunke@talktalk.net for more details.

IVDD Research:

In the October Newsletter we explained the outcomes of a meeting with specialists at the Kennel Club regarding the potential to establish an X-ray screening programme for IVDD, based on the approach being adopted in Scandinavia. Their recommendation was to pursue DNA research instead and we have now held discussions with Dr. Mellersh at the AHT to identify how this might work.

We are still in very early discussions, but it looks like we may need to find about 50 Dachshunds that have had Type 1 Disc herniations and 50 that have survived to beyond 9 years old with no herniation. DNA swab samples from each of these groups can then be analysed with a view to identifying the gene, or more likely, genes associated with back problems.

This would have to be established as a research project and the current initial estimate is that we would need to find £20,000 to cover the costs of testing and analysis.

More information will be circulated as we investigate this further, but your views would be welcomed. IVDD is the most significant health issue in Dachshunds and the research indicates that between 1 in 4 and 1 in 5 Dachshunds will have some degree of disc related problems in their lifetimes.

A2 Approval process

A number of judges who aspire to award Challenge Certificates are going through the Kennel Club's assessment process which would enable them to be promoted to the A2 Judging List.

We want to remind people that they have to meet ALL the A3 Criteria before they can be nominated for the A2 List. Nominations for candidates to be promoted to the A2 List can only be made by a Breed Club, directly to the Kennel Club. Candidates therefore MUST be sponsored by one of the Breed Clubs and must not send their A2 Application Form to the KC. Application Forms should be sent to the sponsoring Breed Club who will check all the criteria have been met and, if they are satisfied, will submit the Application to the KC.

Anyone who wishes to be assessed should contact a Breed Club Secretary to ask them to arrange the necessary three assessments and to sponsor them through the process. Please note that the Breed Council does not organise assessments for individuals.

Breed Seminars

WEDA 6/3/11:

West of England DA will be running a Breed Seminar on Sunday March 6th 2011, near Taunton, Somerset. This will be an education event, with an opportunity for hands-on practical work. It is not an Assessment day. Details and Booking Forms are available from Roger Hayward (info@rogershayward.co.uk).

ECDA:

Eastern Counties DA will be running a Breed Seminar in conjunction with the Beagle Association in the Spring. Date and venue details will be published later.

Season's Greetings

Christmas is approaching and many parts of the UK are still gripped by snow. We hope everyone has an enjoyable break over the festive period and wish you every happiness in 2011.

Issued by the Dachshund Breed Council.

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