

DBC News

July 2011

Dachshund Breed Council



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Lafora Disease

Our big news in June was the launch of a full DNA screening programme for Lafora Disease in Miniature Wirehaired Dachshunds. This was the subject of a separate Press Release. We are now able to announce that we have received a grant from the Kennel Club Charitable Trust to help support this programme over a two-year period. The KCCT grant will be matched by similar grants that have been promised from the UK Breed Clubs.

Nora Price (Samlane MWHDs) is coordinating the screening programme on behalf of the Wirehaired Dachshund Club, with the support of WHDC Committee members.

The grants will help us implement a DNA testing programme to identify Clear, Carrier and Affected MWHDs for the EPM2B Lafora gene mutation. We will also be able to conduct a full gene screening exercise on a small sample of dogs to identify other possible mutations on the same gene.

The Breed Council has updated its [Lafora Information leaflet](#) and produced a colour-coded [guide to the genetics of Lafora matings](#) of Clear, Carrier and Affected dogs. An FAQ list will also be published once the testing details are finalised.

There is a Lafora Support Group and their [website](#) has lots of useful information on the disease and how it can be managed in affected dogs.

Please contact Nora Price for further details of testing arrangements.
(e-mail: laforatesting@mypostoffice.co.uk)

Ethical Behaviour

In our April Newsletter we raised the subject of unethical behaviour and published some guidance from the Kennel Club. Our news item prompted a number of e-mails and comments on the Breed Council's Facebook page. Here are some of the things that people told us they felt were unethical behaviours for exhibitors and judges:

- ⤴ Exhibiting under a judge (friend) with whom you normally travel to shows
- ⤴ Travelling to or from a show with the judge
- ⤴ A Committee member who has provided a judge with accommodation the night before a show and then exhibits under that judge the next day
- ⤴ Awarding top honours to an exhibitor with whom you normally travel to other shows
- ⤴ Sitting at the ringside, watching the judging in one of the other varieties that you are due to award CCs in later in the year when you never normally watch that variety
- ⤴ Defaming and posting libellous comments about judges or other exhibitors on Facebook or other internet sites

- ⤴ Failing to collect a Reserve Challenge Certificate from the judge, after judging, because you felt you should have had the CC
- ⤴ Failing to congratulate the class winner when you have been placed second
- ⤴ Loudly berating the judge for their decisions as you leave the ring, having not been placed first

Do let us know what else you consider to be unethical or unsporting. Perhaps the obvious, isn't so obvious to everyone!

Back Disease Research

We announced in April that we would be starting a research programme with the help of the Animal Health Trust to see if we can identify a DNA test to help predict back problems. This exercise is being coordinated on behalf of the Breed Council by Lesley McNaughton (Cedavoch Smooths and Longs). Initially we will be seeking cheek swab samples from any Dachshund over the age of 12 who has never experienced a back problem. These will be assumed to be "Clear" dogs that can be used as controls in the research.

There will be a separate announcement calling for samples and giving details of how you can help with this research.

Lesley is also looking for information from everyone on veterinary referral practices, chiropractors who work on animals, hydro-pools, acupuncture, or other UK sources of help for dogs with IVDD. She will be putting together a list for the Breed Council. E-mail cedavoch@talktalk.net if you can recommend a service in your area.

[Dr. Nicolas Granger](#) at the Cambridge University Vet School has written to us asking for potential dogs to include in his latest research programme...

We have started a new research program in which we are treating paralysed dogs' incontinence. We have been awarded money to treat ten dogs and we have already treated 4 dogs. We are basically looking for paraplegic dogs who have not recovered urinary continence; so any time from a few months post injury (disc herniation or trauma to the spinal cord), any age or any breed - there is little restriction for this program, but the lesion has to be between T3 and L3).

We are implanting a little electrode along the nerves going to the bladder and this allows us to control with a remote (given to the owner) the emptying of the bladder. This is not really a 'clinical trial' but more a 'first time in dogs' as all included dogs are receiving an implant. We are just demonstrating that it is feasible in dogs as it has been done for paraplegic human patients for 20 years now (so not new for humans, but new for dogs!). The results so far are very good and the system does restore almost normal continence (controlled by the owner). The massive advantage is that it keeps the bladder empty, no need for manual bladder expression or catheterisation and in the long run should prevent bladder infections and associated complications such as kidney failure.

Regarding the previous cell therapy trial, I am currently analysing the results of the trial, so it is difficult to say more for now. We have recruited 36 dogs. As soon as I have more information, I will forward them to you.

If you have a Dachshund that could participate in Dr Granger's trial to improve bladder control in cases of spinal trauma you can contact him here: ng311@cam.ac.uk

For more information on back disease: The Universities' Federation for Animal Welfare has published an [article](#) on Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD) which provides a comprehensive, science-based

review and summary of the condition as it affects Dachshunds.

Don't forget, you can order the DodgersList DVD on back disease from us for only £4.50. [Download an Order Form.](#)

PRA cord1

Following the Animal Health Trust's recommendation that Miniature Wirehaired Dachshunds should be DNA tested for cord1 PRA, we wrote to the Kennel Club asking for this to be included as an official testing scheme and a Requirement for Accredited Breeder Scheme (ABS) members. This request has now been approved and all breeders of MWHDs should now be using this test on any dogs before they are mated. The prevalence of the cord1 mutation is low in MWHDs and we want to keep it that way.

The advice for MWHD breeders is the same as for the other two Miniature varieties: Carrier and Affected dogs should only be mated with Clear dogs.

We are still getting reports of Stud dog owners (of MSHD/MLHD) allowing their cord1 Affected dogs to mate untested pet bitches. There is no excuse for this and it is a breach of our Code of Ethics.

More cord1 PRA research carried out by the AHT on UK Mini Long-haired Dachshunds using clinical & ERG testing has been [published](#). There's nothing particularly enlightening that we were not already aware of, but they do show that retinal signals are statistically reduced in dogs homozygous for the cord1 mutation: i.e. "Affected" dogs have reduced quality of vision even though they may appear clinically normal.

More worrying in this research was the extent of other eye conditions that were found on clinical examination of these MLHDs. The high prevalence of distichiasis (42% overall) and known to be hereditary, was of most concern and reinforces the continuing need for clinical eye examinations. Some breeders seem to have lost sight of this (no pun intended) in the headlong rush to adopt cord1 DNA testing.

Critique Writing

In the last Newsletter we mentioned the requirement for judges to submit critiques in a timely manner and that these should be more descriptive than the "nice head and eye" ones we see all too often.

The Breed Council has now published a [Guide to Critique Writing](#) which describes what a good critique should contain and highlights some of the pitfalls to avoid. This should be essential reading for every Dachshund judge as it also points out issues related to the updated Breed Standard.

Most judges are exhibitors as well and they know how much they enjoy reading about their own dogs in a critique. A short, badly written critique just adds to exhibitors' annoyance! A well-written critique adds to the exhibitors' enjoyment and will almost certainly be cut out and kept to remember the show and the judge.

Breed Descriptions

The Kennel Club's website has a series of "[Breed Descriptions](#)" which members of the general public can read to get a brief understanding of the six Dachshund varieties. The descriptions were not written by a Breed Specialist so we have recently supplied some updated descriptions to the KC. These have now been approved and are "live" on the KC's website.

Please note: the Breed Descriptions ARE NOT the Breed Standard, which has not been changed since its 2009 revision.

Mate Select

The Kennel Club launched its [Mate Select](#) programme in May. At the launch of the KC's "Mate Select" service the Coefficients of Inbreeding for Dachshunds were as follows:

Smooth = 8.2%, Mini Smooth = 8.1%, Long = 8.6%, Mini Long = 7.6%, Wire = 6.7%, Mini Wire = 11.3%

Please visit [Mate Select](#) and read the KC information/advice. Higher CoI values mean a dog is more inbred and potentially more likely to have genes (good or bad) doubled up from its ancestors. There is no 'good' or 'bad' CoI score for an individual dog, or for a breed. However, the KC says genetic diversity is decreasing in many breeds (CoI scores are increasing) and this is a bad thing because health typically suffers.

We've recently published an [Introductory Guide to Genetics](#), written by Helen Geeson (H&W Sub-Committee member). It explains, in plain English, why an understanding of genetics is important to dog breeders and how tools such as the Coefficient of Inbreeding can be used to help improve genetic diversity.

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