

DBC News

October 2010

Dachshund Breed Council



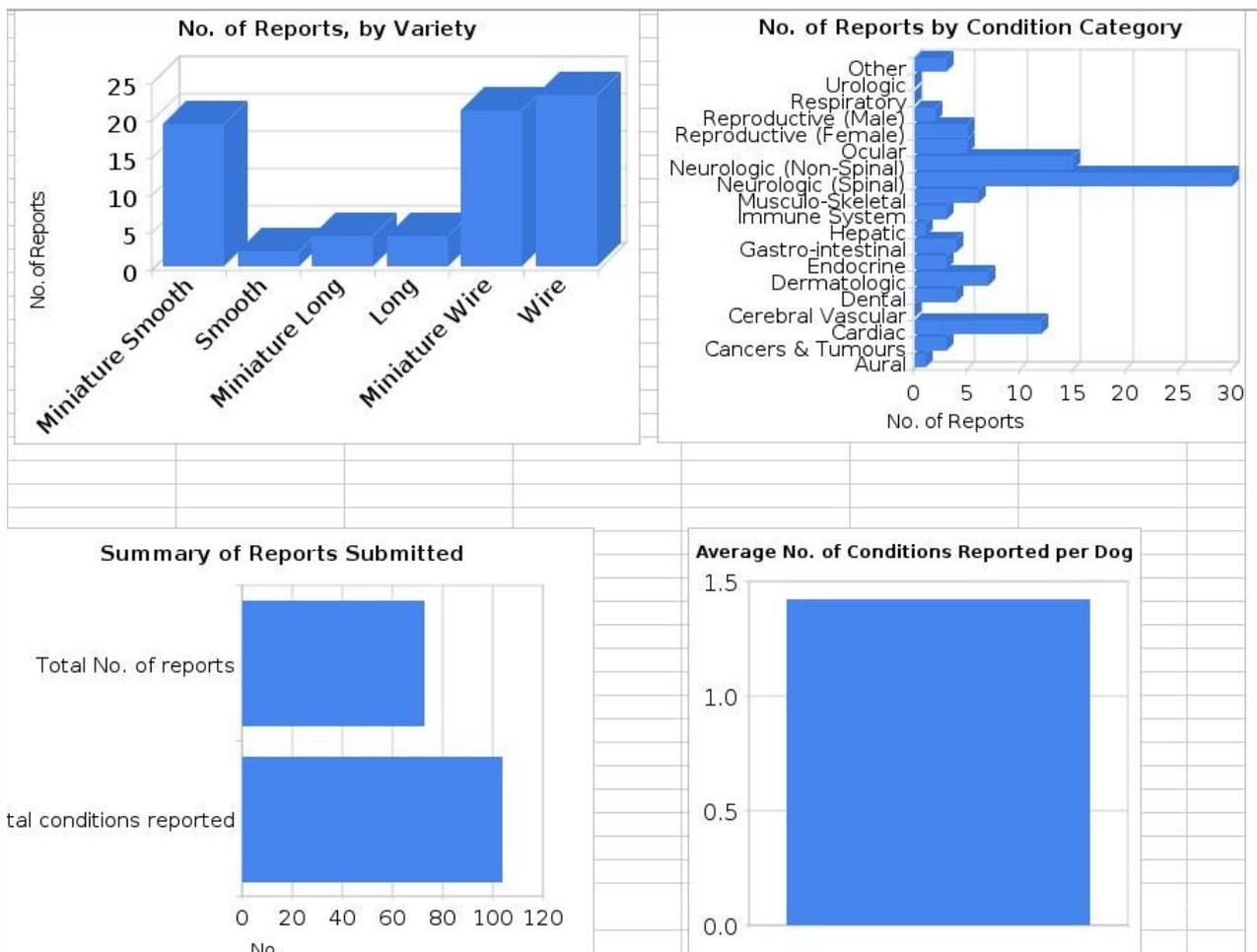
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This Newsletter summarises the main discussions held at the Breed Council's October meeting. The Minutes of the meeting will be published on the Council's website: <http://www.dachshundbreedcouncil.org.uk>

Health Reports

The Breed Council's health reporting website (<http://www.uk-dachshund-health-report.org.uk>) has now received over 70 reports on health issues with UK Dachshunds. The data are available in real-time on the site and so far confirm the priority conditions being looked at by the Council.



We still need more people to report on the health of their Dachshunds, including death through old age.

Lafora's Disease in Mini Wire Dachshunds

The Wirehaired Dachshund Club (WHDC) reported that nearly one hundred DNA samples from Mini Wire Dachshunds had been sent to Canada for Lafora Testing to identify "Affected" and "Not Affected" dogs. The results were due to be available by the end of October and a summary will be published on the Club's website, after individuals have been informed of their results. After that point it will be possible to decide on a suitable course of action with regard to re-establishing a full Clear/Carrier/Affected test for UK breeders.

The WHDC also made the point that the Kennel Club's announcement that Lafora Testing would become a "Recommendation" under the Accredited Breeder Scheme was rather premature, given the timing of the 2010 screening programme. The Council agreed to discuss the timing of this recommendation with the KC.

cord1 PRA in Mini Wire Dachshunds

The combined total for UK dogs tested is 106 (65 Research and 41 Diagnostic). This includes English dogs with Swedish and Finnish breeding within the pedigrees. Results:-
3 Affected, 19 Carriers, 84 Clear

The cord1 mutation was found in 20% of MWHDs but just under 3% were "Affected". Dogs tested with Swedish or Finnish breeding within their pedigrees were all genetically "Clear". Although 5 names of pure Continental breeding were submitted for research testing only 3 samples were able to be returned, but they were also all "Clear".

A further 10 samples went to the AHT from outside the UK, among which were 1 "Affected" and 3 "Carriers" – all from the USA (Parentage unknown).

The AHT has given us an estimate of approximately half a percent (0.5%) genetically homozygous affected in the general UK Mini Wire breeding population, assuming that random mating took place with respect to this mutation.

At the moment, the numbers are thankfully small, but it wouldn't take long for the incidence of untested Carrier to Carrier matings to increase the presence of the mutation and the number of Affected dogs. Without testing, the incidence of Carriers and Affecteds will increase.

The mutation percentage is lower than in the other Dachshund varieties, but the AHT think it would be advisable to eliminate these harmful mutations from the Miniature Wire population. The Council has agreed to recommend cord1 testing to all MWHD breeders. Matings (as in other varieties) should not knowingly produce offspring that could potentially possess 2 copies of the mutation (Affected) and give rise to clinical cord1 PRA. In other words, breeders should follow the same route as advised for the other varieties with this problem: only mate Affecteds and Carriers to Clear dogs.

The Breed Council has written to the the Kennel Club asking them to add cord1 PRA testing to the Mini Wire requirements within the Accredited Breeder Scheme.

NPHP4 PRA

In addition to looking for the cord1 PRA mutation in the research sample of Mini Wires,

the AHT also looked at 64 of the same samples for a mutation (NPHP4) which has been reported by Norwegian researchers causing “Day Blindness” in Standard Wires.

4 “Carriers” were found with this mutation. One was of mixed breeding on our research list and another “Carrier” for this mutation was also a “Carrier” for cord1 PRA.

Given the very low frequency of this mutation in Mini Wires the Council decided not to recommend further action for Mini Wire breeders at the moment.

We have decided to ask the AHT if they will help us carry out a research exercise to test UK Standard Wires for this mutation and they have agreed to do this in return for a donation to cover their costs. Further information on how to participate in this exercise will be published in due course.

IVDD (Inter-vertebral Disc Disease)

Representatives of The Breed Council's Health and Welfare Sub-committee met with the Kennel Club on 25th August to discuss the latest research into IVDD. We discussed the factors to be considered in deciding whether or not a screening programme would be of value:

- the reliability of the evidence (it may take some years to be certain that the Danish programme is making a significant difference)
- how easy/difficult it would be to persuade breeders that the screening programme would make a difference (the Danish are very specific about which dogs should/should not be bred from, based on their X-ray scores)
- the risks to dogs being screened (they require some degree of anaesthesia)
- the technical difficulty of the screening process (it requires accurate and specific positions of the dog's spine – this may mean it should only be carried out by “approved” vets in controlled conditions)
- the cost of any screening (estimated to be between £100 and £200 per dog)

On balance, it was felt that it would not be viable to establish a UK screening programme at present. Other options were discussed:

- Avoid breeding from dogs until they are older than the typical age at which IVDD occurs (i.e. 4-6)
 - This is impractical as most Dachshunds are bred from at a relatively early age
- Adopt an approach based on Estimated Breeding Values (EBV)
 - There is insufficient clinical data to enable this to be done
- Investigate the possibility of a DNA screening programme
 - Some work has already been started on this in the USA

It was agreed that a DNA screening approach would be worth investigating further since there have been significant advances in the technology over recent years. A research sample of approx. 60 “affected” dogs and 60 “unaffected” dogs might be enough to identify a working test. We were aware of some work being done at UC Davis in the USA and it was agreed we should find out where this had got to. Alternatively, there may be other labs interested in carrying out this research on our behalf.

It was also agreed that, if we were to start a research programme, this could have a positive effect in raising the profile of IVDD and the importance of reducing its incidence. The KC would be able to include information on any research programme on Registration and Transfer documents, to raise awareness further.

References:

The two main scientific papers we discussed were:-

(1) "*Quantification of the association between intervertebral disc calcification and disc herniation in Dachshunds*" (Jensen, Beck, Christensen, Arnbjerg; 2008). This paper deals with the current X-ray screening programme being adopted in Denmark which proposes a correlation between the number of calcified discs (at 18 months) and the likelihood of IVDD. This correlation, it is proposed, can be used to select away from high-risk dogs in breeding programmes.

(2) "*Prevalence of radiographic detectable intervertebral disc calcifications in Dachshunds surgically treated for disc extrusion*" (Rohdin, Jeserevic, Viitmaa, Cizinauskas; 2010) which concludes that disc extrusions occur as frequently in discs with X-ray evidence of calcification as those discs that do not have X-ray signs of calcification. This work challenges the view that X-raying and counting calcified discs can be a reliable predictor of IVDD, or used to reduce its incidence.

IVDD Education:

The Breed Council has kindly been given the rights to distribute copies of the DodgersList IVDD DVD (www.dodgerslist.com). This will be available soon at a nominal cost, including a donation to DodgersList from every sale.

Mentoring Scheme

Lovaine Coxon (Smooth Club) updated the Council on progress of the Mentoring Scheme which has had 5 candidates participating in 2010. Feedback had been extremely positive and Clubs agreed to support candidates who were able to demonstrate progress and commitment, by offering them Breed Club judging appointments, where possible.

An updated pack of supporting materials will be created, based on the feedback. Clubs also agreed to support the principle of allowing mentoring candidates to have some space at Breed Club shows, with a table, where they would be able to go over some dogs (after judging has been completed) with their mentor.

Anyone interested in joining the Scheme should contact Lovaine Coxon.

Breed Standard

The Council discussed the "colour clause" in the Standard and whether or not to ask the KC to exclude certain colours (as with Double Dapple). Each Club was asked to consult their committees on (a) "Piebald" and "Tricolour", both of which have large amounts of white, and (b) "Blue" and "Isabella", two recognised dilute colours both of which can suffer from Colour Dilution Alopecia (skin problems).

The Council has recently produced a 2-side illustrated "Quick Guide" to the Breed Standard which can be downloaded from the website. This now forms part of the educational materials being issued at Breed Seminars. It doesn't cover the entire Breed Standard, but emphasises the main aspects revised in 2009.

Unsporting Behaviour

From time to time the Council receives reports of unsporting behaviour and complaints

about judging. The former includes exhibitors who refuse to collect Reserve Challenge Certificates, those who loudly criticise a judge's placings as they leave the ring with their dog and a lack of willingness to applaud others' successes. Complaints about judging usually relate to "swapping CCs" and "favouring friends", rather than "incompetence". Our Code of Ethics addresses both these issues, with clauses as follows:

1. As a judge I will **act with courtesy and integrity** to all exhibitors, I will judge according to the standard of points and will consider as part of my decisions the temperament and physical condition of the dogs judged, in particular exhibits which appear thin and undernourished should be seriously penalised.
2. As an exhibitor I will enjoy and **applaud other people's success**, be welcoming to newcomers and ensure as far as I am able that my dogs behave quietly at a show.

Unsporting behaviour can therefore be dealt with by a formal complaint to any of the Breed Clubs and, of course, the Kennel Club also has formal processes in place which can be used, if necessary, by individuals or Clubs.

Judging Lists

The Council is compiling its Judges List for 2011 and confirmed a policy not to include any judge who failed to submit a critique within a reasonable time-scale after judging. A list of about a dozen judges was compiled at the Council meeting and each of these judges will be receiving a letter from the Council asking them to confirm that they have submitted critiques. It is a KC requirement that judges should submit critiques and this also forms part of every judge's contract of appointment.

CVs from people wishing to be considered for inclusion in the 2011 Lists should be sent to the Secretary before the end of November 2010.

E-mail: secretary@dachshundbreedcouncil.org.uk

Website: <http://www.dachshundbreedcouncil.org.uk>

Health Reporting Website: <http://www.uk-dachshund-health-report.org.uk>

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