

GPRA and the UK Sheltie

The Club has been advised that a singleton case of GPRA has been confirmed in a Sheltie in the UK by a BVA panellist. Whilst an isolated case should not be seen as a cause for alarm, the Club is keen to try and better understand whether there is a greater occurrence of this condition than the existing testing programme would appear to suggest. You may recall that an eye testing session was held at the Club's Championship show in 2012 when more than fifty Shelties were tested. Whilst none was found to be affected with GPRA, the recently identified case (an older Sheltie with no progeny) was one of those examined.

Currently available statistics do not provide enough information to indicate whether the incidence of GPRA is higher than we have been led to believe. The BVA/KC eye testing scheme includes CPRA as a schedule 'A' condition but GPRA is not mentioned and we know also that many Sheltie owners do not take their stock for follow-up tests in later life. The ESSC is approaching the BVA to request that GPRA is included as a schedule 'B' list condition – this will mean that panellists check for its presence and report accordingly but the results will not be published in the Kennel Club Breed Records Supplement. This in turn should mean that more meaningful numbers (not details) of affected and unaffected Shelties will become available.

It is well known that the Norwegian Sheltie Club has long been concerned about the incidence of GPRA in Scandinavia and has been working hard for several years now to find a DNA test which will, hopefully, be available soon. With international borders becoming less and less of an obstacle, the possibility of the mutation of GPRA identified in Scandinavia – which is different to the mutation now found in the UK – appearing in the UK must also be a cause for concern.

To encourage Sheltie owners to help improve the quality of the data available, the ESSC committee has decided that, for the foreseeable future, the Club will subsidise BVA/KC eye tests carried out at group testing sessions organised by the ESSC or any other recognised body – e.g. other Sheltie clubs, Branches of the ESSC, the Pastoral Breeds Health Foundation, &c. The subsidy will be on the same basis as was offered at the 2012 Championship show – i.e.

100% refund for dogs of 5 years of age and over

50% refund for dogs of 3 and 4 years of age

Refunds will be made on production of a copy of the eye certificate, payment receipt and agreement to provide a DNA sample (which would be by cheek swab). If the test proves positive, then the Club will expect closely related Shelties to be presented for eye examination and to provide DNA samples.

The Club will in future arrange a BVA/KC eye testing session at its annual Championship show in October at Stoneleigh.

Shelties tested under the BVA/KC Scheme at individually arranged examinations will be eligible for a subsidy as defined above but calculated at the group testing rate prevailing at the time. All the other conditions defined above must be met to qualify for a refund.

Details supplied to the ESSC of any positive tests will be strictly confidential. Owners of affected dogs will be consulted if and when the incidence of GPRA is found to require further action.