



DBRG Meeting 22 June 2017

British Veterinary Association (BVA), 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ

2.00pm – 5.00pm

Notes of Meeting

Members and Advisors present: Carol Fowler (CF), Chris Laurence (CL), Charlotte Mackaness (CM), Clare Rusbridge (CR), Sheila Crispin (SC), Julia Carr (JC), Fiona Cooke (FC), Dan O'Neill (DON), Julia Charlton (JCh), Tania Ledger (TL), Gudrun Ravetz (GR), Vicki Betton (VB), David Grimsell (DG), Stephen Charlton (SC), Rowena Packer (RP)

Apologies: Lesley Field, Katharine Williams, Pete Wedderburn

Guests: Peter Jinman (PJ) (FAWC), Ian Seath (IS) (Dachshund Breed Council), Claire Calder (Dogs Trust)

1. Matters arising

There were none.

2. DBRG Objective: Establishment of a Government-funded body to provide *independent* expert advice on Companion Animal Welfare (Peter Jinman, chair of FAWC)

While there is currently a Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) funded by DEFRA there is no equivalent independent body for companion animals. The former Companion Animal Welfare Council (CAWC), initially funded by DEFRA, is to all intents and purposes no longer in existence. CAWC provided the scientific evidence needed for companion animal welfare lobby groups.

PJ explained that CAWC existed as a body doing the work and the Welfare Fund for Companion Animals (WFCA) carried the monies thus putting a distance between the two.

Sector Groups were set up to provide discussion and assistance to Government as there had been a problem previously in the number of bodies engaged in lobbying. The sector groups provide recommendations for animal welfare, a means of achieving the agreed aims and doing the work of Government for them at no cost to Government.

FAWC continues to work well but its funding is essential and funding would need to be found for a resurrected CAWC. PJ suggested there was a limited timescale as the money held by WFCA will need to be distributed to other bodies if CAWC is not renewed.

3. IPFD Dog Health Workshop (DHW), Paris, 2017

DBRG was represented at the 2017 Dog Health Workshop. Feedback confirmed that it was the right decision to attend as a group representing dog owners, and it was felt that DBRG had an important perspective to add to that community. The DHW provided an opportunity to network with geneticists, kennel club representatives, breed club representatives, and welfare organisations. In particular, it was valuable to hear how other countries' kennel clubs were tackling problems. DBRG members and advisors present were CF, CM, RP, DON, GR.

4. Breed Health Strategies (Ian Seath, chair of the UK Dachshund Breed Council)

Ian began by drawing the group's attention to his YouTube video of his presentation at the DHW in Paris:

<https://sunsongdachshunds.wordpress.com/2017/04/23/ians-presentation-at-the-ipfd-paris-workshop-dbc-health-improvement-strategy-2017/>

He outlined the approach taken by the Dachshund Breed Council (DBC) which is influenced by his work as a management consultant and includes leadership, communication, engagement as well as the drive to improve the health of the Dachshund breed. Part of the Dachshund Breed Health Strategy has included, through social media, the involvement of owners who have nothing to do with

dog showing doing things to improve health and welfare. The Dachshund Health Survey, 2015, elicited 2000 responses and resulted in a published paper. The DBC has a strong leadership group which includes a vet, a biology teacher specialising in genetics, experienced breeders who bring a common sense perspective. Actions to improve breed health are carried out based on a good scientific evidence base and there is evidence that the strategy is working. The DBC follows the KC Breed Health Improvement Guide. The right mix of people and a combination of passion and data is essential in making things happen. It was suggested that this could be a template for all breed clubs.

5. Report on Progress of the National Dog Breeding Inspection Scheme (NDBIS) ('Breedright') (Julia Charlton)

JC presented on the progress so far of the work of the NDBIS Working Group. She began by saying that the Scheme is clearly the way forward – a practical outcome to achieve some of the Objectives of DBRG and the recommendations of the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding in 2014.

The Scheme is based on the Standard for Dog Breeding and is currently being piloted by the Cockapoo Club of GB.

The aim is that standards of dog breeding within the Breedright scheme will be considerably higher than the KC ABS. It will include compulsory use of the AWF Puppy Contract.

The NDBIS is currently finalising a 5-year business plan with the aim of attracting sponsors and the aim is to have a pilot scheme running by Spring 2018.

Potentially 40,000 unlicensed breeders have no representation by any industry standard. Therefore the NDBIS could be relevant to a large percentage of breeders.

CL then outlined the rigorous inspection process. Breedright breeders will be inspected annually.

6. DBRG Symposium: *Tackling inherited and conformational problems in dogs*, October 22, 2017, University of Surrey Vet School

The Symposium is confirmed. CM and Julia Gerhold at Surrey Vet School are liaising to send out some complimentary invitations and also notification for paid tickets.

7. DBRG presence at the National Pet Show, NEC Birmingham, 4-5 November 2017.

This will be the first public event where DBRG will be present and this time we will team up with the Cockapoo Club of GB and share their space.

8. Position Papers: Agreeing a process for future papers

The following papers have been agreed and uploaded on to the DBRG website: Inbreeding; Puppy Farming; Dog Owner Voice; Licensing and Registration of Dog Breeders and Sale of Puppies; Health Testing; Microchipping and Traceability; Brachycephaly. We agreed that these may need to be revised in the light of new scientific evidence or political changes. It was proposed that in future position papers should be sent to certain key individuals and organisations.

9. AOB

Chris Laurence - Congratulations, many thanks and much appreciation to Chris Laurence who has been appointed as Chairman of the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG). We will continue to maintain close contact with Chris and he will remain a crucial part of the National Dog Breeding Scheme, 'Breedright.'