



# Breed Health Co-ordinator Report

“ROTTWEILER”

Sarah Morgan | Breed Health Co-ordinator | May 7, 2016

## Introduction

It is a honour to fulfill the roll of “Breed Health Co-ordinator” I know by following on from Corinna I have big boots to fill, but I’m sure you will join me in thanking Corinna for her hard work this last year, and wish her well with her new upcoming role of “Motherhood”.

For those that don’t know let me introduce myself and share a little bit of my background. I am by profession a Nursing Sister in a Community Intravenous Therapy Team, having just finished my independent & supplementary nurse prescribing course, I am about to embark on my masters. I have owned Rottweilers since 1995, shown them since 2005, and bred them since 2008, under our affix “Melaisey”. I currently own 6 Rottweilers in partnership with my friend David. I have passed all the requirements to judge and currently sit on the C list “Breed Specialist”.

Breed Health as always been high on my agenda, I am delighted to now be in a position where I can not only educate and influence people, but also try to take some of the stigma out of health issues. In 2004 I read an article written by Sierra Milton called “Omerta” The Breeders Code of Silence, towards the end she quoted “we must take back the passion with which we all first embraced our breeds and passionately work with determination toward a future where the numbers of genetic disorders are reduced each year.” It was then I decided I wanted no part of this code, I would be open and honest about health problems.

I also understand that people have their own experiences and ideas. this role is not one of dictatorship, it’s about learning and educating together. Giving people the tools and information to make informed decisions, about the testing they decide to do and the choices they make within their own breeding program. Neither is this role one that should be done single handed it is about working together for the best outcome for our breed.

I would also like to add that as a nurse I understand the need for confidentiality, so at any time if anyone needs to discuss anything with me rest assured it would always be treated with the strictest of confidence.

## Genome Project

I was delighted when Kirstie messaged me saying we were one of the 50 breeds to be chosen for the Genome project, this has now all been paid for. However, I will still push for people to donate to help with the shortfall that the breed council paid so hopefully further donations will come. We now have to choose a dog to be sequenced, I have given this some thought and I have spoken to some breeders most are of the opinion it should either be a healthy dog with no problems or an influential stud dog. Interestingly one breeder mentioned that it shouldn’t really be an outcross. I think we all need to give this some thought. There are three health concerns we can choose for them to look at, from the information I had back from people top three issues were,

- 1.) Cruciate Disease
- 2.) Cancer
- 3.) Heart Murmurs (Sub Aortic Stenosis)

I think we should pick a particular cancer so I thought Mast Cell Tumours or Lymphoma as Osteosarcoma is being investigated in great detail at Nottingham University.

We have a deadline date of 31st May 2016 to get back to them with this information but I can request more time if you feel we need it.

### Osteosarcoma Study

This research is huge, with thousands of dogs now swabbed and data inputted, Nottingham University have done us a great honour, along with those who have taken part of course. However, I still believe it has its critics, what I say to those critics is please come along to the next update. I am working with Mark Dunning the senior vet over the project to arrange the next update on a weekend where there is less likely to be a show. We **have** to a greater attendance next time. I did ask Mark about possibly sharing their research with the Animal Health Trust (AHT) to co-ordinate with the Genome project, but he said this would be futile as they are way ahead the sequencing of a whole genome and o much of their research is subject to confidentiality clauses. He thought it best to get the AHT to concentrate on other health issues. Nottingham are very grateful for the tumour biopsies, swabs etc. that have already been donated but are still looking for more. If anyone as this unfortunate diagnosis in any of their dogs please contact myself, or Shareen Ahktar for information and guidance on donating biopsy samples.

### DNA Tests

There are two new tests now available at “Laboklin”

DM – Degenerative Myopathy

JLPP- Juvenile Laryngeal Paralysis & Polyneuropathy

Both these diseases have been found in Rottweilers, although I haven’t looked in detail at the prevalence of them, it is something you could send off for at the same time as the coat test. I will try and get more information about both ready for the next meeting.

### The Kennel Club

I have always felt that the kennel club let us down regarding the health of dogs in general, I must admit they seem to be “raising their game”. So many new features on their website I urge you all to go on and have a good look around.

Estimated Breeding Values (EBV) Allow us to see a greater scope of a dog’s health, not just taking into account one set of scores but those ancestors. This takes out the environmental factors that can sometimes prevent us from breeding from a dog with higher scores. I will add the more health tested that has been done the more accurate the EBV will be.

Donations the kennel club have made this year have been plentiful too, I noticed they have donated to Liverpool University to the study they are doing in Cruciate Ligament Injury in the Newfoundland. I am hoping the Genome project can utilize their information if we ask them to use cruciate injury as one of our health concerns.

The next Breed Health Co-ordinator meeting is Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September , I will be attending so if anyone has anything they would like me to take to the table please feel free to contact me.

Finally...

Thank you for taking the time to read through this report it is rather a rushed one so I apologise for any mistakes. I have been thinking about how I will disseminate future information, while social media is great I do think we should have a specific breed health website where information can be added as and when if you all agree I'd be happy to get this up and running.

Kind Regards

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