

Health Committee Report – February 2018

Members are Helen Ingher, Chair; Laura Liscum, Assistant Chair; Shelley Barclay, Karen Clugston, Peggy Evanich, Stephanie Holoubek, Pat Koprovic, Linda Murray, and Veronica Scheer.

The past month, the Health Committee (HC) focused on the following issues:

1. **Reno National Clinics.** The DNA clinic is all set; however, an ophthalmologist to perform eye tests at the Reno National has not been identified. Efforts are still being made but we may need to cancel that clinic. The HC is considering asking the Foundation to support eye exams for PBGVs by ophthalmologists at their home veterinary clinics in place of clinics at the Nationals. Reimbursement would be contingent upon exam results being submitted to an open database.

2. **AKC Registration Data.** The AKC is concerned about the decline in registration numbers in many breeds over the past decade. They are beginning to take steps to help breed clubs with this issue. Helen and Anne Gallant met with Mark Dunn while at the 2017 AKC National Championship in Orlando. They learned that the AKC is developing programs to assist low population breeds to conduct genetic diversity testing as part of their DNA program. Mr. Dunn will speak about this issue at the Reno National Specialty.

3. **Update on Dr. Bannasch's research project.** Dr. Bannasch submitted a proposal to CHF to study small dog breeds that are susceptible to intervertebral disc disease (IVDD). She had discovered that a specific genetic rearrangement leads to shorter/misshapen legs and IVDD in Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers and wanted to ask if this rearrangement was found in other breeds. The PBGV was one of the breeds she proposed to evaluate and we had agreed to collect DNA via cheek swabs for her at the Reno National. Unfortunately, her grant was not funded by the CHF. But in the interim she has analyzed the DNA of several PBGVs with short/misshapen legs and did not find the genetic rearrangement she was looking for. This means that PBGVs do not carry this particular predilection for IVDD. We will not be collecting cheek swabs for her in Reno.

4. **Breeder mentoring.** To counter the declining number of PBGV breeders and its long-term effect on the health of our breed, the HC is discussing a breeder mentoring program. Helen is drafting an application for breeder mentors and a document of expectations, with help from Pat and Karen. These will be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

5. **POAG clinical trial.** We have reported to you our previous discussions with Bruce Toenjes, who has a POAG affected dog being treated by Dr. Rachel Allbaugh at Univ of Iowa. Dr. Allbaugh is planning a collaboration with Dr. Andreas Komáromy at Michigan State to treat POAG affected dogs with gene therapy. Veronica has put together a list of POAG affected dogs and owner contact information. Once more details of the treatment are known, we will make preliminary contact to see which dogs might be eligible for the trial (i.e., pre-symptomatic or early pressure rises).

6. **AKC and PBGV.org website updates.** The AKC is updating their website. This is an opportunity for the PBGVCA to update the health information on the site to include information on POAG. Similarly, the health information on the FAQ page of the PBGV.org website needs updating. The HC proposes the following language for the websites:

AKC

Like all breeds there may be some health issues, like hip dysplasia and eye disease. Hypothyroidism, glaucoma, retinal folds, persistent pupillary membranes, hip dysplasia, epilepsy, and patellar luxation have been reported, but are not common. Primary open angle glaucoma (POAG) is a severe, blinding eye disease that occurs in PBGVs. Fortunately, a genetic test is available that distinguishes between dogs who are unaffected by POAG, those who are likely to develop the disease, and those who carry the

genetic mutation. Be sure to talk to your dog's breeder about the dog's POAG status as well as all possible health risks. You should maintain a close relationship with the breeder throughout the dog's life so the breeder can share his or her wealth of experience as your PBGV matures.

Some dogs may be faced with these health challenges in their lives, but the majority of the PBGVs are healthy dogs. Working with a responsible breeder, those wishing to own a PBGV can gain the information they need to know about specific health concerns within the breed. Good breeders utilize health testing of their breeding stock to reduce the likelihood of disease in their puppies.

PBGV.org

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Q: Is the PBGV a healthy breed?

A: In general, this is a very healthy breed. They are subject to the usual 'doggy' healthy problems - most of which can be prevented by vaccination or prompt attention.

Q: Are there any Health Problems that I should be concerned about?

A: Some of the conditions that have been reported are Neck Pain Syndrome, Hip Dysplasia, Patellar Luxation, Heart Murmurs, and some Eye Conditions. The occurrence of these diseases is under investigation by the PBGVCA Health Committee. Primary open angle glaucoma (POAG) is a severe, blinding eye disease that occurs in PBGVs. Fortunately, a genetic test is available that distinguishes between dogs who are unaffected by POAG, those who are likely to develop the disease, and those who carry the genetic mutation. You can learn more about POAG in the PBGV here [Link to this page: <https://pbgv.org/Health/HealthRescue.shtml#POAG>]. Be sure to talk to your dog's breeder about the dog's POAG status as well as all possible health risks. It is important to obtain a PBGV from a reputable breeder-and to have your dog examined by your veterinarian for any heart, eye, ear or other abnormalities. Anyone interested in purchasing a dog should discuss the prevalence of these problems in that kennel with the breeder.

Q: How long will they live?

A: You should expect an average life span of 12 years or more.

Q: What does a PBGV eat?

A: Like other dogs s/he will eat most anything put in front of him. Feeding a good quality dog food and dog treats will normally satisfy his/her nutritional needs. Supplements or special foods should be used only on the recommendation of your veterinarian.