

## Health Committee Report

April 10, 2015

The past year has seen major strides toward improving PBGV health. The big news was the identification of the gene mutation that leads to Primary Open Angle Glaucoma (POAG) in PBGVs. This discovery was the work of Dr. Cathryn Mellersh, head of the Canine Genetics team at the Animal Health Trust (AHT) in the UK. The hunt for the POAG gene was driven by the UK's BGV Club, but included DNA samples from those of you who had your dog's eyes examined by Dr. András Komáromy at past PBGVCA National Specialties. The Health Committee thanks all of you who participated.

It is important for all of you to learn your dog's POAG status. Dogs may be clear. That is, they will not develop POAG themselves nor pass the gene mutation to offspring. They may be carriers who will not develop the disease, but may pass the disease gene to offspring. Finally a dog may be affected. An affected dog is destined to develop glaucoma and will certainly pass the disease gene to offspring.

To determine your dog's POAG status, you should order a DNA test through the AHT website (<http://www.ahtdnatesting.co.uk/>). Select Canine DNA Tests, PBGV, and POAG. The £48 cheek swab kit will be sent along with clear instructions on obtaining the sample and returning the swabs. Approximately 2-3 weeks later, results will be sent via email. Every PBGV club worldwide was able to request a one-month 10% discount code for their members. The PBGVCA discount was valid from April 15 to May 14.

POAG is a painful, blinding disease. Before this DNA test, no one could predict which litters might have affected puppies. Now we can. The Health Committee recommends that all dogs be tested before they are bred. Dogs who will not be bred should also be tested if you want to know whether the dog is fated to develop this disease. Early diagnosis means early treatment, which may delay progression of the blindness.

For this test to eliminate POAG from our breed, all POAG status results must be available in an open database. The Health Committee urges all PBGV owners to submit the test results to the Orthopedic Foundation of America (OFA). To do so, download the DNA Based Genetic Disease form from the OFA website (<http://www.offa.org/applications.html>) and submit the form along with the POAG status certificate received from the AHT. If a dog is already in the OFA database, submission of the POAG results is free through August 31, 2015. After that, there is a \$15 fee that is reduced for multiple submissions.

The 2015 National featured a health seminar by Dr. Danika Bannasch, Professor of Population Health and Reproduction at the University of California Davis. Dr. Bannasch gave us insight on how the PBGV community should go forward now that the POAG test is available. There was also a CHIC DNA clinic and an eye clinic staffed by a board certified veterinary ophthalmologist.

The World Health Committee, formed in 2014, will soon be drafting a health survey for all BGVs worldwide. We hope that this unified survey will bring knowledge of additional health issues that we need to address. Articles on PBGV health and the research projects funded by the PBGV Health & Rescue Foundation can be found in every issue of Saber Tails. Please get in touch if there are particular topics you would like to see covered.

Laura Liscum, Vice Chair  
PBGVCA Health Committee