



Bichon Frisé

Health Newsletter

January 2013 Prepared by Pauline Johns

WELCOME to our second annual Health Newsletter.

David Walklate and I remain in the same positions we held last year, David as the Health Rep for the Northern & Midland Bichon Frisé Club and I as Health Rep for the Bichon Frisé Club of Great Britain and the Southern Bichon Frisé Breeders Association as well as the Kennel Club Health Representative for Bichons.

David kindly organised the Health Survey which is a requirement of the Kennel Club. The survey was sent to members of all three Clubs and, ignoring duplicate membership, a total of over 300 surveys were sent out with stamped addressed envelopes paid for by the Clubs. Additionally members were invited to submit a survey form for any health issues they may have known about from non members.

It has been disappointing that only 106 Survey forms were returned. At nearly 50p per stamp it seems a great shame that around £100 worth of stamps will have ended up in the bin. We do need to know about those bichons **without** problems so each and every return is important. If anyone has any ideas on how we might encourage more feedback in future years David and I would be open to suggestions.

I can only reiterate that health awareness is vital in safeguarding the future of our lovely breed and we can only do this with help from yourselves.

BVA/KC Eye Testing increases by 88%

Bichons were placed on Schedule A of the BVA/KC eye testing scheme on 1 January 2012. In July 2012 it became mandatory for all Assured Breeders to test both sire and dam for hereditary cataracts (HC) to entitle them to register their litters under the Assured Breeders Scheme.

I am delighted to report that the eighteen month period from July 2011 to December 2012 saw 119 eye tests compared with 63 in the previous eighteen months, an increase of 88%, with all testing clear for HC (figures supplied by the KC Health Dept). I should point out that two cases of previously diagnosed HC, both in bichons aged 3-4, came to light in our Health Survey. Both needed surgery to restore their sight.

It has been suggested by some that unwelcome attention has been focused on the health of bichons by being on Schedule A for eye-testing. In response to such views I can only say that, in my opinion, we as a breed should be proud of our very public commitment to assessing and monitoring the health of our dogs. Representatives of several breeds have contacted me asking how we managed to get ourselves onto Schedule A so relatively quickly. My answer was "because our breed supported it". Those in other breeds who have been trying unsuccessfully to go onto Schedule A are full of admiration for our breed and breeders.

In some European countries it is mandatory for all bichon breeders to test eyes before they can register their litters. How much easier it would be to monitor and help eradicate genetic health problems if the Kennel Club introduced the same rule. Food for thought!

All three breed clubs have put on eye testing sessions since August 2011 which gave everyone a chance to catch up with testing. The BFCGB and SBFBA generously subsidised the cost of an eye test for members only. We must remember that the N&MBFC are extremely proactive in rescue and have to meet heavy vet bills therefore it is understandable that they have not subsidised their testing sessions.

It was agreed by all three breed clubs at their 2012 AGMs that they would hold testing sessions in annual rotation as follows:

2013 & 2016 Southern Bichon Frisé Breeders Association
2014 & 2017 Bichon Frisé Club of Great Britain
2015 & 2018 Northern & Midland Bichon Frisé Club

Please continue to test eyes and do remember that one clear test does not mean that your dog is free of HC. Only a clear test around the age of 7 will conclusively prove that a bichon is unaffected.

Health Survey results

Survey Forms sent out 300+
Surveys forms returned 106*

*included were at least six reports of bichons belonging to non members.

If anyone would like a detailed print out of the health survey please email Pauline - pauline@manoirbichons.com

Most health conditions were related to bichons over 8 years of age. Of some concern were three cases of patellar luxation and two of cataracts in dogs aged 3-4. There were seven cases of uroliths/bladder stones to which we know bichons are prone, nine cases of mammary tumours mostly occurring in the over 8's and two cases of auto immune haemolytic anaemia (both bichons passed away aged 18 months and 6 years). There were two cases of pyometra in bitches aged 5-7 and over 8. The rest of the results are made up of age-

related complaints eg kidney problems, diabetes and Cushings or one-off or non-serious conditions eg warts, cysts and infections.

Overall the breed seems to be in good health with no one single complaint ringing alarm bells. I will carefully monitor auto immune haemolytic anaemia as two bichons passed away tragically young.

This year, for the first time, we asked questions concerning reproduction which produced some interesting results. *Cont. on next page*



Freezing Canine Breast Milk

Have you ever been in the unfortunate position of having a weak or small puppy or finding your bitch is not producing milk? In time it happens to all of us. Powdered milk may save the day although in the first seven days of life it is not as easy to digest as breast milk and can lead to colic.

Some bitches produce lashings of milk and other may have a surplus due to having a small litter. This would be a good time to express milk from your bitch and keep it frozen in case of emergency.

You can express milk into a clean glass and with a syringe measure out 15 or 20mls, put into human breast feeding bags and place in the freezer. This can be done over two or three weeks.

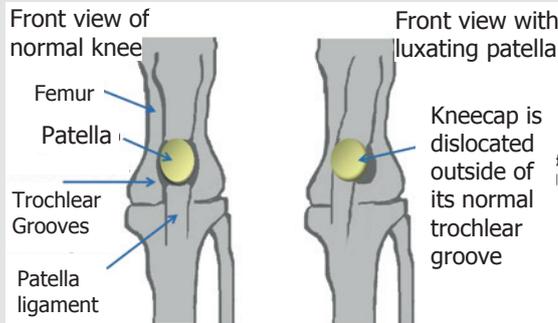
I have dashed over to a breeder's home when puppies were fading after 48 hours as the dam was not producing milk. I took with me 4 bags of breast milk from my freezer and tube fed the weakest while the other four puppies were able to suck from a small bottle. 20mls goes a long way on newborns as they consume only around 2 mls at each feed. The puppies turned around after 6 hours, the next day the dam's milk came in and the litter went on to thrive.

I currently have 10 bags frozen so if you have an emergency call me!

TESTING FOR PATELLAR LUXATION

What is Patellar Luxation?

A luxating patella is a knee problem, most common in toy breeds, which can cause considerable pain. Luxation happens when the kneecap (or patella) dislocates (or luxates) out of its normal position. When this misalignment occurs it is not only very painful but constant recurrence overtime can lead to cartilage damage and arthritis.



Note that three cases of patellar luxation showed up in the Health Survey. In some countries testing is required of sire and dam before being able to register a litter or import a dog. I have patella tested my bichons for 17 years and it is very easy to do. I use the Orthopaedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) form which is internationally recognised. Before I go to the vet for say vaccinations I fill in the online form with the relevant dog's details including microchip number and print out.. I ask my vet to check their

patellas (the grading criteria are printed with the form) as part of a health check. He verifies their microchip, examines the dog and signs the form. Each patella is graded 0-4, with 0 being a perfect score. My vet does not charge me for the examination which takes about 2 minutes by manipulation and is not painful for the dog. Some vets may charge and strangely some vets are terrified of signing anything on a form! If your vet is agreeable to testing patellas why not do it? It is very satisfying to look back at several generations of 0/0 tests. Testing at 12-18 months and again at 4-5 years is sufficient. The form you need can be downloaded and

filled in here: http://www.offa.org/pdf/plapp_bw.pdf

Health Survey results/cont

28 breeders answered reproduction questions. There were 5 unsuccessful matings and 9 matings that produced no puppies. From 65 litters there were 20 caesarians of which 5 produced no live puppies. Breeders were asked to give details of their last three litters and in total

there were 139 dogs and 123 bitches born. If you could share your experience on any conditions mentioned here I would appreciate hearing from you. We may just discover something that could help others in the future. Tel 01525 220607. Thanks to everyone who took the trouble to return the survey.