



Pauline Johns

Health Representative for
The Bichon Frisé Club of
Great Britain & The Southern
Bichon Frisé Breeders Assoc.
KC Health Coordinator
pauline@manoirbichons.com

David Walklate

Health Representative for
The Northern & Midland
Bichon Frisé Club
ashokabichons@talktalk.net

DOG FOOD



Do we really have any idea of what is in the food that our dogs eat? Do you know what 'meat and animal derivatives' contains? With obesity being a major problem in the canine world and shortening lives do you know what foods are packed with unnecessary calories? Did you know that 'derivatives of vegetable origin' can refer to an extremely wide range of ingredients, from some of the best to some of the worst?

At last there is a website that gives you all the information you need and grades every dog food sold in the UK according to its ingredients and labelling. This is one of the most informative sites I have come across and is a 'must read'. Some of the results will shock you!

Please go to

www.whichdogfood.co.uk

This site makes for compulsive reading!

THE KARLTON INDEX

Bichons have a zero rating

In 2011 Philippa Robinson founded the Karlton Index which is an independent register for measuring progress in the health of pedigree dogs.

'Improving breed standards for the best interests of the dogs within the breed rather than for showing standards, and making fundamental changes to help to improve the health and wellbeing of future generations of dogs is something that will take decades to fully implement, rather than years.'

The Karlton Index seeks to chart this development, and publish results denoting which breed societies and breeders have positively embraced change in the best interests of their dogs, how they have achieved it, and what the future holds for the breed as a whole.

Whilst we have made progress by implementing Eye Testing, unfortunately nothing is published to show what we have achieved and hope to achieve in the future. The internet is where most of the information is gleaned for a rating in the Karlton Index but there is no mention of health on The BFCGB or the SBFBA's websites. The N&MBFC as yet does not have a website. Bichons scored 0 points. From the Karlton Index 2013 report:

'62 breeds scored fewer than 10 points. Of those, several breeds registered a score of zero in 2013. This is for a variety of reasons. In some cases it is because there is no recognised breed club, for others it is because there is no online information available on their approach to health. It should also be pointed out that for many of these breeds the number of registered dogs is tiny. However in the case of the Bichon Frisé, there are breed club websites and there are significant numbers of registered dogs to warrant a better and more visible approach to health.'

New health website for Bichons

This situation urgently needs addressing and therefore I am developing a Bichon Health website which I hope will be live by the end of February. The website will publish health newsletters, give information on health and required testing and will include articles of interest. The link to the site will be given to all three clubs to both publish and add the link on their websites under a separate heading of Health. I would ask everyone to add the link to their own individual websites so that we have as much exposure as possible. The site will be:

<http://paul220.wix.com/bichon-frise-health>

BVA/KC Eye Testing

In 2013 (January to December) 87 bichons had eye tests all registering 'unaffected'. Good news for the breed but we must keep testing to make sure it stays that way. In view of the above article not only should we test but we should be seen to be wanting to test. The next Club eye testing session will be at the Bichon Frisé Club of Great Britain Open show on Sunday April 6th at Knowl Hill Village Hall, 13 The Terrace, Knowl Hill, Berks RG10 9XB The Club will be subsidising the cost of testing for members only.

Pet dogs are just as important as show dogs! All dogs must be microchipped and owners must remember to bring their KC registration.

Testing is scheduled to be hosted by the Northern & Midland Bichon Frisé Club in 2015



Inbreeding coefficient

Some years ago now, the Kennel Club took the decision to try to better understand the genetic population structure of the breeds that it recognises. Initially this work was undertaken in collaboration with research scientists at Imperial College in London. More recently, this work has been continued by Dr Sarah Blott and her colleagues at the newly established Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust (AHT). Moving forward breeders need to look at ways to manage the genetic diversity in the dog population to try and prevent breeds from becoming genetically homogenous. One way of achieving this will be to ensure there is a greater number of individual dogs contributing to the genetic population. For your interest I have listed the average inbreeding coefficient for all toy breeds. Bichons come out as joint fourth highest. Interestingly Sweden now recommends an inbreeding coefficient no greater than 6.25% for bichons.

Lowchen	14.5%	Chihuahua (Smooth Coat)	6.5%
English Toy Terrier	11.9%	Pug	6.2%
King Charles Spaniel	11.8%	Maltese	5.5%
Bichon Frisé	10.6%	Cavalier King Charles	5.3%
Italian Greyhound	10.6%	Pomeranian	4.9%
Yorkshire Terrier	8.9%	Papillon	4.8%
Chinese Crested	8.8%	Griffon Bruxellois	4.4%
Affenpinscher	8.7%	Chihuahua (Long Coat)	4.2%
Australian Silky Terrier	8.4%	Bolognese	4.1%
Miniature Pinschers	8.1%	Coton de Tulear	2.8%
Japanese Chin	6.9%	Havanese	1.9%
Pekingese	6.9%		

Basic Genetic Terminology

ALLELE An alternative form of a gene.

CHROMOSOMES & GENES Hereditary components in every cell that determine how a dog will look and act.

DOMINANT & RECESSIVE GENES A dominant gene causes a puppy to be born with particular trait, even if it is only present in one parent. A recessive gene is one that needs to be present in both parents in order to produce a particular trait. When there is a dominant gene on one side and a recessive gene on the other side, the dominant gene is the trait that is expressed.

HOMOZYGOUS & HETEROZYGOUS Refers to whether members of a gene pair are alike (homozygous) or dissimilar (heterozygous). Line breeding within first 3 generations increases homozygosity.

PHENOTYPE & GENOTYPE How a dog looks on the outside is his phenotype. A dog's genetic make-up is his genotype. How a dog looks on the outside will not be indicative of what genes he is carrying and what he will produce.

OXALATE BLADDER STONES

The Bichon Frisé appears to have a unique situation with oxalate bladder stones in that they seem to begin to recur virtually as soon as they have been removed. In a study presented by Jody Lulich's group at the University of Minnesota at the 2004 meeting of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, 24 out of 33 Bichons had oxalate stone recurrence after cystotomy (37% had had their first recurrence in the first year after surgery, by the end of the second year 57% had recurred, and by the end of the third year 73% had recurred, some more than once.) Steps to prevent recurrence need to be particularly aggressive from the beginning in our breed.

Historical Perspective

- 1792 First Intake of Veterinary students
- 1824 Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals set up
- 1873 The Kennel Club established
- 1881 NVMA/BVA set up
- 1891 The first Cruft's show in that name takes place at the Royal Agricultural Hall, Islington with 2,437 entries and 36 breeds.
- 1891 National Canine Defence League set up
- 1942 Veterinary Education Trust set up (now Animal Health Trust)
- 1965 BVA Eye Scheme set up
- 1974 First bichon to be registered at the Kennel Club
- 1985 The Kennel Club Junior Organisation is launched (now the YKC)
- 1998 Kennel Club appoints Genetics Co-Ordinator