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DOG FOOD UPDATE

The website
whichdogfoods.co.uk has
moved to a new address:
www.allaboutdogfood.co.uk
This site is up-do-date with
new foods being analysed
almost as soon as they
come onto the market.
There are some interesting
new products with very
high ratings that would be
worth looking at.

INBREEDING COEFFICIENT UPDATE

In 2012/13 the inbreeding
coefficient for bichons was
10.6% which put us fourth
highest in the toy group. For
2013/14 there has been a
slight increase to 10.8%.
Lowchens, which had the
highest figure of 14.5% have
increased to 18.6%. Italian
Greyhounds have moved
from 9.6% to 10.9%
overtaking bichons which are
now in 5th place.

Bichon Frisé Health Website

Last year we launched the Bichon Frise Health website featuring several articles, past health newsletters etc. Currently the website is hosted free of charge however we need to register a domain name 'Bichon Frise Health UK' so that we are easier to find and will appear in search engines. This will mean paying for hosting and domain name registration so I am hopeful that the Clubs will agree to share the cost (approximately £25 per annum for each club).

The plan for the website in 2015 is to develop an international section with news or articles from other countries. I am also expecting to publish the health survey, which is due this year, on the site so that we reach a much larger audience.

2015 HEALTH SURVEY

It hardly seems like two years since the last Health Survey but in line with Kennel Club requirements we need to carry out a survey in 2015. In the past we have struggled to get a good response to the hundred of forms that are printed out and posted to all Club members. I have heard people say 'there was nothing wrong with any of my bichons which is why I did not fill it in'. I need to emphasise how incredibly important it is to know about each and every healthy dog. Without this information we cannot determine how many healthy dogs we have compared to those that have experienced problems. If we have 150 returns of bichons who only have problems it could be deemed that there are no healthy ones around! This year I will put the survey on the Bichon Health website so that more people have access to it. I will also promote the survey on the various Bichon Groups on Facebook. I know that the Bichon Frise Owners UK & Ireland Group run by Lynda Byrne responded wonderfully to a survey that I helped with concerning liver shunts in Bichons.

David Walklate has kindly agreed to organise the survey again this year. It is quite a mission and involves a lot of work so thank you David. We will put our heads together to see what format we use and will look at some of the templates offered by the Kennel Club.

If you have any suggestions about any issues you would like to see in the survey please email either David or myself. The more input the better.

Eye Testing

In 2014 there were 134 eye tests carried out, a healthy increase of 35% since 2013. Unfortunately there was one case of hereditary cataracts registered. Whilst this is only one case it demonstrates the need for us all to keep testing.

This year the Northern & Midland Bichon Frisé Club will again be putting on an eye testing session. It will take place at their Championship Show on Sunday 18th October at The Civic Hall, Market Square, Nantwich. All dogs must be microchipped and owners must remember to bring their KC registration. Testing is scheduled to be hosted by the Southern Bichon Frisé Breeders Association in 2016.



Autoimmune Haemolytic Anaemia (AIHA)

In the 2012 newsletter I reported two cases of AIHA, both dogs passing away at a young age. Since then another 4 cases have been brought to my attention, all dogs dying under the age of 6. So what is AIHA? In short it is an immune system disease in which the body attacks and destroys its own red blood cells.

The most commonly affected breeds include Irish setters, poodles, English springers, cocker spaniels, collies, and doberman pinschers, but this condition can develop in any breed.

According to the traditional veterinary community no “statistically significant association” has been proven between vaccines and AIHA however some vets believe there is a direct and prevalent link between vaccines and autoimmune haemolytic anaemia. Dr Karen Becker writes ‘As a holistic vet working in a large traditional vaccine clinic early in my career, I saw a lot of cases of AIHA - one or two a month. However, for the last 11 years since I’ve been in private practice, I’ve not seen a single case in my own patients. I believe this is because in my own practice, we titre rather than automatically give traditional vaccines’.

Interestingly in all the cases of AIHA reported to me the bichons had regular annual vaccinations. In 2004, MSD Animal Health obtained a licence for a dog vaccine with a three year duration of immunity against parvovirus, hepatitis and distemper. Vets using this vaccine - Nobivac® DHPPi - are now able to protect dogs using far fewer vaccine components. Leptospirosis is considered a core vaccine in the UK but needs to be given annually.

The best way to minimise vaccinations but to know that your dog is protected is to carry out titre tests. There are titre kits available but they can only be purchased by vets in quantity so few vets carry them.

The recommendation of The World Small Animal Veterinary Association is for initial vaccination at 8-9 weeks of age followed by a second vaccination 3-4 weeks later, and a third vaccination given at 14-16 weeks of age. Puppies should then have a booster one year after the completion of the initial course. Thereafter, if a titre test is not available, core vaccines should be given every third year.

Non core vaccines such as for kennel cough and canine herpes virus are optional. Kennel cough vaccine is recommended where dogs attend boarding kennels, training classes, shows and in any circumstances where dogs are in regular contact with other dogs. Canine herpes vaccination is recommended for breeding bitches.

FEEDING YOUNG PUPPIES

Traditionally very young puppies have been fed with a dropper or, if their suck is strong enough, from a bottle. As many of you will have experienced, getting the right flow from a teat is quite tricky and should the flow be too fast there is a risk of milk going into the lungs.

There is now a new way to feed young puppies more safely using small triangular makeup sponges.



You can see how easy this method of feeding is by going to YouTube

<http://www.marleymutts.org/feeding-7-day-old-yorkie-puppies-with-a-make-up-sponge/>

With this method puppies tend to get less wind or colic and are able to extract milk even with a weak suck.

Fit for Function

This is a familiar saying so what is the function of the Bichon Frisé?

Whilst it was thought that Bichons were originally water spaniels there is no doubt that over the past several centuries they have been simply companion dogs. They do not need hunting or retrieving instincts, nor do their bodies need to be a certain shape for ratting, chasing, swimming or speed. What they must have is a temperament suitable for the companionship they are expected to give to humans. This should always be remembered when breeding as their temperament is what makes them ‘Fit For Function’