

## ITSWP MEETING – 4 JULY 2008 HAGELSBY, SWEDEN

First, the Committee would like to thank all of the attendees for their interest in the ITSWP work and thank them for taking the time out of a busy weekend to come to the meeting. All the names of the attendees will not be put down here, because this was informal and no roll was taken. However, we had representatives present from: Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

The meeting was opened by Tony Moran from Ireland, who welcomed everyone and gave introductions of himself, as moderator, Anya Hansson from Sweden, who would translate if it was required, and Lucy Abbott from United States, who would take minutes.

Recognition was made of Margaretha Hagglund and Agneta Reis, who had the major task of putting this meeting and attending dinner together, and everyone acknowledged their efforts were well done.

A brief overview of the agenda was given by Tony to start the discussion. The discussion followed as put forth below:

**PRA Project (Animal Health Trust, England)** – Handouts of the April 2008 report were provided for the taking, if attendees had not seen the report, and email copies can be obtained from Lucy Abbott at [lucee-too@prodigy.net](mailto:lucee-too@prodigy.net) if needed. Since this report, there is a new one dated July 2008 that can also be given by email if desired, no copies were available at the meeting. The hope is that within 18 months we will have at least the first test available, this is not a time period given by AHT, but an educated guess based on the progress that is being made. With the large grant, 250,000 pounds, and the money first given by breeders/kennel clubs, it appears that there are sufficient funds available for their work. Openness of the Tibetan Spaniel community has been most helpful in making progress on the project and complements go to everyone from AHT.

**Liver Shunt Project (Cornell University, USA)** – This is a new project funded by the America Kennel Club for the research into Liver Portosystemic Vascular Anomaly (PSVA) and Microvascular Dyplasia (MVD). The leader of the project is Dr. Sharon Center, of Cornell University. A full write-up of the project and how to test for these conditions was provided in hard copy for those that have not seen it previously but can also be obtained by email from Lucy Abbott at the email address given under the PRA Project write-up. These conditions are present in a number of breeds and have been found in a sufficient number of Tibetan Spaniels that a number of United States breeders are performing the bile acid tests on their puppies. ITSWP will continue to monitor the project and keep members informed, so they can pass the information on to breeders in other countries.

**PNP Kidney Condition (Renal Dysplasia)** – This subject was briefly discussed as it is monitored in Sweden, where there are 30 or 40 cases. ITSWP will work on finding out more information and getting it to the members so that we can determine if we should include this as a condition to monitor more closely for all countries.

**Herpes Vaccinations for breeding bitches** – A discussion centered around the current thoughts on giving herpes vaccinations to bitches (set of two) prior to breeding and whelping. A number of breeders present, including a veterinary, had mixed reviews on the success or need for this since outcomes were mixed – some losing puppies anyway. It was recommended by the veterinary that the best option is to test the male before breeding. However, the virus must be active at the time of the test in order to get a valid result. There is a certain test recommended (but we will have to obtain the name of this test) ITSWP will look into finding some actual research done on this situation.

**Representative Responsibilities** – ITSWP will be working on a checklist for all country representatives. Although we have always been rather informal, we have been getting complaints that some representatives are not sending out the information on new cases to all the country breeders but only some of them, or that they are not in contact with people in general.

**Future Condition of Interest** – ITSWP is looking forward and with the possibility of a PRA test, we can begin to put our efforts into keeping the breed as healthy as it currently is. This means we must monitor small things now, so they do not become large things. The following items were discussed to determine what conditions, if any, the members thought were of concern to us:

***Distichiasis*** – A very uncomfortable condition for our dogs and can be damaging to the eye. Discussion generally held that we can't confirm they are truly hereditary but we should have something on the website that cautions breeders to not breed two dogs together that have this condition. We will see how to incorporate this into the website.

***Coughing-Choking*** – Members were asked if they had seen cases or had recommendations for a dog that is always coughing and choking when on lead. The situation was rather different than the usual pulling that tibbies do and it was recommended that an x-ray be done. No other members had comments on seeing this as a general problem.

***Patella Checking*** – Lively discussion regarding the different requirements of many countries but in the end it appears that everyone agreed that this is a good test to perform on all of our dogs even though your country does not require it. It is not seen as a major problem but if not monitored and breeding is not done wisely; it could develop into a problem in the future. A number of countries do have rules regarding what patella grade can be bred to what patella grade, very interesting discussion. Two attendees had knowledge of informal research groups for patella's and one showed we had more per capita problems than Shih-Tzu's and the other showed that we were much better than the breeds within that test group. ITSWP needs to discuss how we can assist with providing information on this through our website.

***Hip Examination*** – It was brought up that due to our dogs all coming from the wild (eons ago) that the general nature of dogs includes hip dysplasia being present in all dogs to some degree. Also a very valid point was made on the difference of large dog hip structure versus the hip structure of small breeds. Most of the countries represented at the meeting do not require hip examinations prior to breeding.

**Heart Problems** – Case from Iceland was discussed of Arrhythmia in a very young bitch which disappeared at 18 months. No one else had a problem of this nature so we had to assume this was a spontaneous condition that resolved itself and was isolated.

**Cancer** – Members were asked if they felt that the percentage of dogs with cancer was increasing, or a certain type of cancer was more prevalent than in the past. General agreement was that due to better nutrition and medical care, our dogs are living longer and that cancer is a general part of the aging process. No concern was expressed with cancer as a time.

**ITSWP Formation** – It was brought up that with all the new members, kennels, etc that many people do not know how or why ITSWP was founded. Many do not know that it was an informal group of concerned breeders that saw the need to develop a health information network for the international community that was not affiliated with any kennel club, that had no elected officials, that had no dues or fees, and all information was free. It was suggested that the ITSWP front page could be updated and include this information.

**Pedigree Website** - The new changes on the pedigree website at tibbies.net was the subject of discussion since it was pointed out that sometimes all the notations about “Produced a PRA Carrier” and “Dam is PRA Carrier, 50% PRA Carrier” are confusing and intimidating to new people. This is true if you are not educated about how PRA comes through the lines, and know how to make judgements based on the information provided. It was pointed out that although the information is accurate, you must know that producing a carrier doesn’t mean the dog is a carrier itself. The current probability chart on the ITSWP site does give some assistance in educating but it falls to the breeders who have been in the breed, to educate the new people coming in. A pedigree without the markings can be obtained if you do a pedigree “without the links”. ITSWP will look into doing a write-up to help people use these markings.

**Eye Exams and litter registration** – Discussion regarding the identity of dogs being examined, and in Sweden you must have either a tattoo or a microchip that goes on the exam form to identify the dog is actually the correct dog. The tattoo and microchip is registered with the kennel club. Also, all puppies in a litter must be reported. In Ireland, all puppies must be micro chipped.

**Puppy Mill Warning** – Kennels that are known to be large operations were discussed in general and also the need for breeders to get recommendations from kennels in the country where a puppy is being sold to. Much sharing of information is already being done but the commercial breeders are getting smarter about how to answer questions. Example: One large American operation has a separate website for each breed, using different names and looks like a small breeder. Members present are aware of this but a good point was made that not everyone in the breed is getting this information and how do we get it to them. ITSWP needs to look into ways to get more contact points to reach as many people in the breed as possible.

The meeting was closed.

Note: Tentative next meeting would be in 2012, in conjunction with the World Show in Salzburg, Austria, May 18 to 20.

Respectfully submitted by Lucy M Abbott

“It is never a shame to breed a dog that ends up with PRA, it is only a shame if you do not share the information with others”