



SPRING 2019

Patron: Trudie Sumner

IWHG Newsletter



Welcome

Well the spring has definitely sprung and arrived with a flourish of warm weather, sunshine and daffodils – who'd have thought that this time last year we were all battling the Beast-from-the-East!

And with the spring comes the start of the showing season, the AGM season and the allergies season! As we said in our last newsletter, our Breed Health Survey highlighted that the most common complaints we take our dogs to the vets for is the same across the canine population - namely chronic ear infections, chronic tummy upsets/diarrhoea and skin allergies!

So we have decided to lead on this in our next **Breed Health Seminar on Saturday 9th November 2019** and are delighted to be going 'Skin Deep and Beyond' with Rosario Cerundolo, a renowned specialist Veterinary Dermatologist, who will be joining us to discuss all things skin and allergies and take questions from the floor. Rosario is a very entertaining speaker and the Seminar is suitable for all Wolfhound owners – so if you've ever experienced skin or ear problems with any of your dogs, this is for you! Check it out [HERE](#)!

In February, Nottingham University's School of Veterinary Medicine & Science hosted the third Breed Health Open day for Irish Wolfhounds and Deerhounds and there's a report of what was a very packed day [HERE](#).

March brought us Crufts, which is always a highlight in the calendar and Wolfhounds are always well represented on the Discover Dogs Stand – we help by providing health information, the free breed booklet 'Introducing Your Irish Wolfhound' and our 'Puppy Buyer's Guide' Leaflets. New this year, we produced the Guide on a fabulous roll down banner that really stood out.

Also in March we were very pleased to welcome our new Secretary, Wendy Reeves; we're sure Wendy will be a huge asset to the Group and we're looking forward to working with her. Maura Lyons has been managing both the Secretary's role and her Research Co-ordinator's role since last Summer, which

is a very heavy workload and a very big ask of one person – so I'm sure she'll be very happy to hand over the secretary's reins to Wendy now.

Another Group member managing a demanding workload is Caroline Sheppard, whose Dentition Study is really taking off now. She is also responsible for the FCE/Puppy Paralysis project, the Veteran Study and the Longevity Recognition Programme (LRP), rather a lot for one person! So we've enlisted an extra pair of hands to help Caroline with the LRP and are welcoming back Sheena Evans as its administrator. The LRP is to celebrate our golden oldies, so if you haven't signed up for this yet, find out more [HERE](#)

There's been a lot of talk about the updated announcement that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued earlier in the year about the possible link between certain diets and DCM in dogs. Dr W. Jean Dodds, DVM, of Hemopet has written a very interesting critique of this and we have been given permission to reprint it for you [HERE](#).

As always, there's a lot to read in this issue, so get that cup of coffee and a hot cross bun and settle down for a good read. Happy Easter!

IWHG

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Introducing Our New Secretary *Wendy Reeves*

My introduction to Irish Wolfhounds was back in January 2004 when we took on a rescue dog we called Kaelan.

He was my couch buddy and, not surprisingly, I was hooked on the breed from the first day we got him.

We have shared our home with many other Irish Wolfhounds over the years, some rescue and some we have had from pups. It's been a pleasure to share our lives with them.

My background is in Finance management covering all aspects of Payroll, Banking, Supplier and Customer transactions.

When I retired in October 2017 we decided to move to somewhere where we would have more space outside for our pack.

We moved in July 2018 to our new home on Anglesey where we now share it with our dogs, Fergus, Kitty and Angus and two rescue donkeys called Pippin and Parsley.

I am very pleased to have been asked to join the IWHG as Secretary and I look forward to assisting the Group with all things Admin.



Introducing *Sheena Evans*...Longevity Research

Sheena Evans, a former member of the Group, has been in Wolfhounds since 2001 and is a small scale breeder with the kennel name Braewisan. She is also the founder of Dogcentrics, designing bedding and accessories for the comfort of your hound.

Many people know Sheena for her fabulous Wolfhound dog beds, but many more know her for her wonderful, bespoke tail guards that can be attached to a harness to help the healing process when a tail has been damaged.



£66 by Bed, size 3, in SoftDog and MarDog



Sheena is passionate about longevity in the breed and is looking forward to being part of the LRP and working with Caroline.'

It's that busy time in the calendar again when the Year End accounts are being produced and made available for our auditor. As always we will be publishing the accounts as soon as they have been approved and will report on them in the next newsletter as well.

In the meantime, the first quarter figures are beginning to take shape with heart testing sessions getting underway, fundraising activity starting and the November Seminar bookings already coming in.

In the Winter Newsletter we were delighted to be able to look back on 2018 and thank so many people for their wonderful fundraising efforts throughout the year. So we're totally amazed and very thankful to be kicking off the first quarter of 2019 with an amazing boost to our funds from Mandy Addington's Irish Wolfhound Community Raffle.

Mandy ran her online raffle in February in aid of the IWHG, the Irish Wolfhound Rescue Trust and PAWS and it was drawn at Crufts after judging. She had a fantastic selection of wonderful

prizes, all very generous donations, but her stunning first prize, a sculpture, custom made for the raffle by Dagmar Dierick, was the real star and the tickets sold like the proverbial hotcakes! The Raffle raised an initial total of £2,162, split between the three organisations, so the £720.00 landing in our account was a fantastic start to the year.

Easyfundraising also generated £268 from the end of last year and we collected half a dozen Loose Change tins in the first few months that are still waiting to be opened and counted – Rebecca Peek and Denise Pateman are standing by with their can openers!

We'd like to thank each and every one of you who contributes to the group in any way, be that by giving money, providing prizes or giving your time and expertise for fundraising activities - every penny counts and we sincerely appreciate all of you.

Steven Ritchie, IWHG Treasurer

The Longevity Recognition Programme

We introduced the Longevity Recognition Programme to celebrate all our golden-oldies and as a way of starting to keep track of the number of Wolfhounds making it to grand ages.

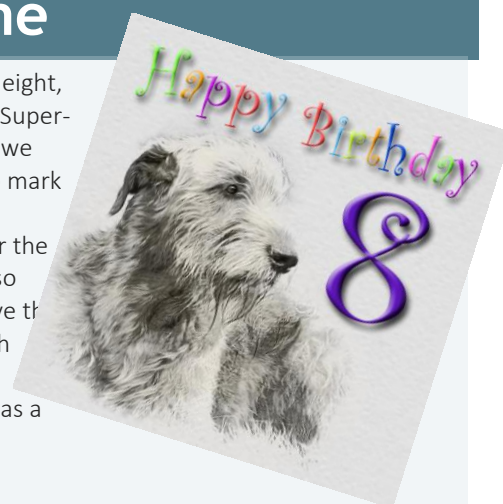
As we all know, the Irish Wolfhound is a breed that is often represented as having a shorter lifespan than most breeds, with an expectation of 6-7 years. Whilst this may be true in some cases, many Wolfhound owners have had hounds that well exceed this.

The IWHG has for some time been trying to establish a more realistic and reliable picture, but to do that we need some hard evidence. Whilst we may have personal records that many Irish Wolfhounds live beyond this age, it is only anecdotal and not factual and doesn't provide us with scientific data.

So, the LRP is not only a way of celebrating these wonderful super-veterans, but it is also establishing a register of veteran hounds that is verifiable and therefore producing more measurable and meaningful data.

All Wolfhounds that are seven years old or more and are registered with the Kennel Club are eligible – they need to be registered so that they are already traceable with a recorded pedigree and date of birth. At seven they're placed on the Veterans' Register and if you send a photo they will be added to the Roll of Honour hall of fame!

When the dog reaches eight, he/she is added to the Super-Veterans' Register and we send a birthday card to mark the occasion. This is a wonderful reminder for the owners – and we've also found that the dogs love the cards as well – although quite a few seem to appreciate them more as a new chew than something to cherish!



When the time finally comes that we have to say goodbye to our super-vets, the owner will receive a beautiful certificate to commemorate such a long life, and the dog is added to the Certificate Holders' Register.

Though a very painful time for the owner, this is a very important part of the programme; recording the date of death provides verifiable evidence of the true lifespan of the dog.



That is the data that is measurable and meaningful. And so these wonderful oldies continue to live on, making a very important contribution to the breed and its research.

We'd like to invite everyone with a veteran hound to join the scheme so we can make a fuss of them with you and start

adding them to the more realistic picture of lifespan in the breed.

Someone who has joined the programme and is proud to have two of their golden oldies registered with us and in the Roll of Honour gallery are Barbora and Simon Bridges. We're so pleased to be able to share in celebrating their wonderful girls, we'd like you to meet them too...

Welcome to our Barrassy Veterans.

We have **Amy** (Amelie Z Luciaku over Barrassy) born 28th August 2009. She is the Matriarch of the pack and the alarm, as when anything moves outside or upstairs she wakes up the whole household, this is also the case if one of the young ones are being naughty.

Amy is very placid, friendly and curious, she isn't a big fan of loud noises unless it's her making them. Amy enjoyed Lure Coursing and a Show Career but with moving to the UK she didn't complete her Show title.

Amy didn't have an easy start to life as she had Pneumonia early on, and again as a senior which brought on a mild form of DCM.

Originating from Czech Republic, she is one of 12 and many of the litter have, and previous generations reached Veteran age.

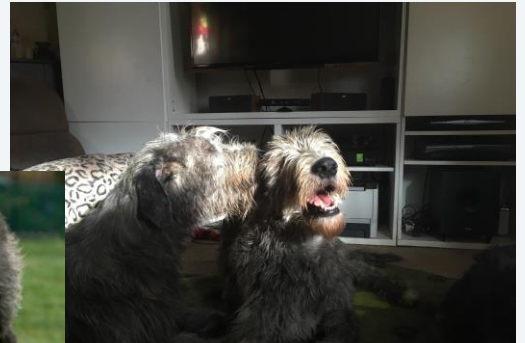
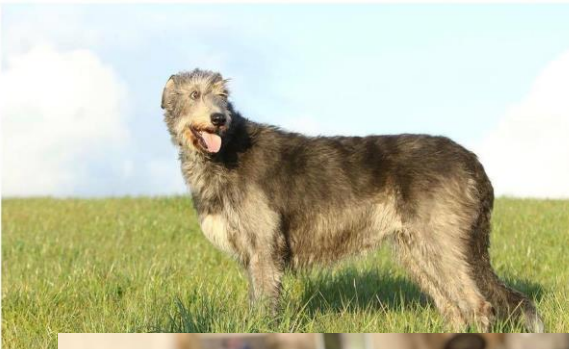
Amy is rather lazy, she enjoys the sofa but is equally at home mingling with other dogs whilst out, she has a singleton daughter named Jessie who is now 4. If you was to define Amy into character, picture the Tortoise from the Hare & the Tortoise, not so quick off the mark but an intelligent head on her shoulders.

Rainy (Bribiba's Lycoris Black over Barrassy) was born 27th May 2010, one of eight puppies, she is the General in our pack and puts the hounds in their place, a true Scot is this girl.

Rainy has a very loving nature with humans and is a "leaner!" She will jump over furniture and dogs to be the first to greet you when you come through the door. Rainy is as fit as a fiddle and never had an unscheduled Vet visit in her life.

In the Show Ring her graceful movement is eye catching and she has never lost her beautiful gait over the years, showing everyone at Crufts this year that she still has it with all four off the floor! She won Best Veteran in Show (IWC Champ Show 2018) and finalist in Veteran Wolfhound of the Year 2017 and 2018.

Both girls are best of friends, they walk together and often sleep cuddled up together, and we hope they continue to do so in the years ahead. '



The IWHG Longevity Recognition Programme (LRP) is part of an overall programme to try to learn more about the true picture of longevity in the breed.

In addition to the LRP, we support two studies that are trying to gather data to establish what might influence a good lifespan.

So, if you're living with veterans we'd like to hear about it. We'd be very grateful if you could complete the surveys and share all you know about them with the two studies.

We'd like to begin by saying a big 'THANK YOU!' to Nottingham University's School of Veterinary Medicine & Science, (NVS), for hosting the third combined Breed Health Open Day for Irish Wolfhounds and Deerhounds at the end of February. We are extremely lucky to have such a close working relationship with them and access to some of the best minds in their areas of expertise – it is not something to be taken for granted.

Organising the day is a major undertaking for them, it's not easy to get all the various key people together at the same time, plus support researchers to help on the day as well. It's an expensive exercise for them both in terms of funding and manpower and we're very grateful they make it possible.

The event is open to everyone, breeders and owners alike, and although the number that turned out for both breeds was lower than expected, it was a very busy and successful day with plenty of opportunity to talk directly to the experts.

The focus is very much on consulting with the owners/breeders to see what issues might be concerning them at the grass roots level and looking at what projects might be most beneficial to both the University in terms of attracting PhD students and additional funding and to the breed in terms of generating some meaningful results.

As the last open day was three years ago in 2016, much of the day was spent catching up on where we are with some of the ongoing studies we have with them, where we might be going with them and what might be on the agenda next.

The updates were very interesting with some exciting developments in some areas. However, as this is current and unpublished work at the moment, we are not allowed to share the details with you just yet, so what follows is just a basic summary. As soon as we receive either the published work from NVS or an interim update that they have approved, we will make it available through the website and social media as usual.

Osteosarcoma – Nigel Mongan of the Canine Genomic Health Group, (CGHG), is a Professor of Oncology focussing on studies that can help inform research in human cancer. He is an enthusiastic speaker and it's very infectious! He told us about some very exciting developments in his work and we are hoping that he will share a summary with us that we can post soon. The scientific world is now discovering that the role of AI technology in research is opening new doors to modelling that hadn't been considered before. This could allow research to advance more quickly and in different ways than has previously been imagined.

As far as Osteosarcoma research specific to Wolfhounds is concerned, we now have 800 samples in the freezer and this is a sufficient number to make a study worthwhile. However, at the moment NVS are still trying to find a PhD student who will be able to take this research on, and this could take time.

At the moment, NVS are not taking in any further cheek swab samples, but **they do still need bone biopsy samples**. This needs to follow a strict protocol and although this is not something

Wolfhound owners usually consider doing, whether at the time of diagnosis or post mortem, it is an essential part of the research that is currently missing. We will be posting about this further very soon and explaining what has to happen to take a sample, but we would like to ask owners to consider looking into this before dismissing it.

Osteosarcoma Treatment Survey – Emily Holdsworth gave a very interesting summary of her work so far and will be providing a report later that we will share. This is another study where they really need a larger pool of data so she will be accepting surveys until the summer now and will review again then. The study focuses on attitudes towards amputation: does this vary between breeds? Is it different if not cancer related? Does amputation improve lifespan? Or quality of life? Does it offer a cure for cancer? Is age a factor in deciding not to amputate? Emily is hoping her work will result in a Gold Standard for Treatment that will help inform treatment decisions in both vets and owners. **If you have had experience of a hound with bone cancer, or of amputation for any reason, please take part by completing her survey – you haven't got long to do it!**

Atrial Fibrillation Study - Lowri Heseltine was unable to make the day, but her initial findings were reported on and she will be producing a paper later in the year. The overall conclusion is that there was insufficient evidence to support her hypothesis just yet. **Lowri is still taking in surveys if you would like to take part.**

Pneumonia/Acute Respiratory Disease – As we already know Drs Mark Dunning and Angela Bodey are working together on this ongoing project, and we are hopeful that the latest drive for surveys will result in some more meaningful information. As always, we know this condition is a concern in the breed, but we still need more surveys to give us a fuller picture. Mark and Angela will be updating us again later in the year and we will be reporting on it at our Seminar in November. **In the meantime, please keep those surveys coming in.**

GDV/Bloat Study – This latest study that we launched at the end of 2018 has had an amazing response of 220 surveys returned at the time of the Open Day. This is extremely encouraging as the greater the number, the more meaningful the results will hopefully be. Interestingly there was discussion as to whether or not this indicates there is more of a problem with bloat than we think there is in the breed, but it was also pointed out that this was a global response, not just UK specific, it invited information on dogs that hadn't experienced bloat, as a control, and also the appeal online was made directly by the researcher and this may have encouraged a more immediate response. So there are several potential compounding factors involved and we will have to wait for Matthew Keane, the researcher's, results to know for sure. **The survey is aiming for 500 responses and will remain open till this is reached, so do take a look and see if you can help.**

FCE/Puppy Paralysis – At the moment, NVS are closing this project as there are insufficient surveys from which to draw any meaningful data; the statistical significance would be too low to make a worthwhile study. However, that data is not lost and we

would like to stress that the IWHG will continue to run the survey and requests that anyone who has experienced this problem in a puppy sends in a survey. Once we have sufficient samples we may then be able to look into reopening a study.

Dentition –Caroline Sheppard, who is leading on the IWHG Dentition study, gave an excellent presentation on the development of dentition in Irish Wolfhounds and how that is notably different from many other breeds. She highlighted the difference in skull structure between different types of dogs and the implication this has in influencing the development of the rate of growth in the jaw and the 'bite' of the dog. This can vary enormously in a young Wolfhound puppy and time is needed before conclusions can be made as to whether or not a seemingly imperfect bite, or malocclusion, in a puppy, will ultimately develop into a malocclusion in the adult. She had some fascinating photos of puppies whose mouths did not look correct as babies and as the jaws were developing, (the upper and lower jaws grow at different rates initially), but as adults they had perfect bites. She also presented a case study, which clearly highlighted that vets are apparently unfamiliar with this breed specific growth pattern and can sometimes advise seemingly extreme corrections at very young ages when the puppy's mouth still has a long way to go before it finishes

growing. She was able to demonstrate that breed specific dentition and developmental patterns is an area that we should be focussing on creating awareness of within the veterinary profession. Don't worry if you missed this talk, Caroline will be presenting again at the Irish Wolfhound Society AGM and will be updating us on her study at our Breed Health Seminar in November as well. See [HERE](#) for more information.

At the end of the afternoon we discussed a hot topic that we all agreed is worth developing as a potential new study -

Vaccinations. An investigation into why people are or are not vaccinating their dogs and if they are not vaccinating what are they doing? Are they doing nothing at all? What risks does that pose? Are they titre testing? If so, how are they doing this? Are they doing any form of Vaccinating that isn't covered by Titre Testing?

I think we all know that this is a constant discussion in social media and we all have differing views on it, so we think a future study – yes, starting with another survey, we're sure! – may well get a very good response. We'll keep you posted.

Dentition Study

Caroline is working on pulling together all the information and photographs that have so far been submitted for the Dentition Study.

She recently presented a short talk on Irish Wolfhound puppy dentition at the Nottingham Vet School Wolfhound/Deerhound breed day and for those who missed it, will be presenting it again after the forthcoming IWS AGM on Sunday 14th April.

The purpose of this talk is to raise awareness amongst vets, breeders and owners about an increasing trend for veterinary dental referrals for puppies as young as 10 weeks.

We are already aware that the Kennel Club has included "misplaced lower canines" as the only Breed Watch point for

judges of Irish Wolfhounds to report on. The IWHG intend to discuss with the K.C. whether young Wolfhounds should be excluded from this, since their teeth and jaws may still be growing and a conclusive assessment of their bite can therefore not always be made when judging.

Caroline is keen to gather as much information as possible in order to present a robust case to the K.C. If you have a young Wolfhound (under 18 months) who currently has a bite abnormality, please contact Caroline at goldswift.sighthounds@gmail.com

A further presentation, with an update on our approach to the K.C. is planned for the IWHG Seminar in November.

IWHG Heart Testing Update

Heart testing is well underway and we already have a very full schedule of sessions taking place throughout the year, and you can also find them on the website. If you can't see one that you usually attend yet, don't panic, we will be running all the same sessions as last year, we will just be finalising dates.

Spaces are always limited and on a first-come-first-served basis, so don't leave it too long before checking. Now we have booking online, it's easy and you can also sign up for email updates of sessions as they're open for booking - you have to opt in to this

service so go to the website and click on the link on the home page to sign up for website updates.

The Regional Heart Testing Scheme is exceptional value at only £50.00 per dog for the three stage screening, (auscultation, ECG and Echo scan), with a veterinary cardiologist experienced in the breed's specific details - and the super veterans, (8+ years), and the IWRT Rescue hounds are subsidised, so free of charge. Where else can you get such fantastic value to help keep your hound heart healthy?!

The website has more information about the scheme and explains how the sessions not only offer non-invasive screening on a regular basis, but also continue to contribute to the breed's long standing heart research that Dr Serena Brownlie-Sykes has been running for well over 30 years now. This is a wealth of data that is constantly being reviewed and updated and is invaluable in the ongoing search to help prevent heart disease in the breed.

The Regional Heart Testing Scheme is open to all Irish Wolfhound Owners. Its three stage screening is the breed Code of Conduct's recommended best practice for breeders to follow; this ensures that breeders are checking their hounds before breeding with them. But it's also recommended for all owners to monitor their dogs heart health so that any changes can be checked quickly and if a dog does develop any heart problems it is caught early; for many dogs prompt medication can help give the dog the chance of having a normal lifespan.

Whilst no screening can guarantee a dog might not develop AF or DCM at a later stage in their lives, the current three stage screening is the most reliable and accurate method we have of measuring a Wolfhound's heart health at the moment. Obviously there are other methods available, but they should be considered in the context of the extensive data and research already available on heart disease in the Irish Wolfhound.

We are aware that there is discussion again about the role that the NT-ProBNP blood test might have in helping to diagnose DCM and whether or not it can be used as a standalone diagnostic tool. There has been some research into this with Dobermans, which indicates it might have a role to play, but it is important to remember that DCM presents differently in different breeds, so research into Dobermans and say, Newfoundlands, whilst informative and helpful, would not necessarily be relevant to an Irish Wolfhound – it would need further research specific to the breed to be able to reach a meaningful conclusion.

We covered this topic in the June 2017 Newsletter, (see our website library), and consulted with Serena at the time, so we asked her to revisit this and let us know if her thoughts had changed since then. In summary, her answer is 'no', this test is only one in an armoury of diagnostic tools available to a

cardiologist – and importantly it is designed for dogs already presenting with heart failure, not for healthy, asymptomatic dogs as the results can be misleading, it can present false-positive and false-negative results. It is also a test that a general practice vet can do, but any irregularity would require onward referral to a cardiologist who would still need to use Echo and ECG, amongst other diagnostic tools, to confirm a diagnosis. Whilst we appreciate that the test may have a role to play in the overall diagnosis of heart disease, so far there appears to be no evidence to support that it should be used as a standalone to test healthy dogs. We will be keeping a close watch on any new developments and it may be that we should consider running a future, controlled trial to determine its usefulness to the breed. DCM has also been the topic of discussion in relation to a recent statement made by the FDA suggesting a link between diet as causation for DCM. The following article from Hemopet gives a critique of this.

HEART TESTING DATES SO FAR – 2019

Sunday, 10 March	South East	Milford, Surrey	SM
Sunday, 17 March	West Midlands	Great Witley, Worcestershire	DF
Saturday, 30 March	North East	Snaith, East Yorkshire	AB
Saturday, 13 April	Midlands	Nottingham University	AB
Sunday, 14 April	Wales	Bridgend	AB
Sunday, 5 May	Scotland West	Maybole, Ayrshire	SBS
Sunday, 19 May	South East	Milford, Surrey	SM
Saturday, 15 June	Midlands	Nottingham University	AB
Sunday, 16 June	East Anglia	Wisbech, Cambs	AB
Sunday, 16 June	Scotland East	Forfar	SR
Sunday, 25 August	North/Borders	Morpeth	AB
Sunday, 15 September	Welsh borders	Hereford	DF
Sunday, 6 October	South West	Holsworthy, Devon	SBS

[Check for updates here](#)

Discover Dogs 2019

Thank you to Noel and Pat Box for organising and all the volunteers. The Health Group provided a new banner this year with the Puppy Buyer's Guide information which was more easily accessed and read by the visiting public



Lin Colbert with her two boys

By **W. Jean Dodds, DVM** on February 24, 2019

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an updated announcement on February 19, 2019 about the possible link between certain diets and dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM; a form of heart disease) in dogs.

DCM can be associated with a deficiency of the amino acid, taurine. At this time, it is believed that dogs do not need to be given additional taurine, beyond what is provided in a balanced meat-based diet, because dogs synthesize two other amino acids, cystine and methionine, which are precursors of taurine. Certain dog breeds are predisposed to DCM, and if the condition progresses, it could result in congestive heart failure. Hemopet reviews those findings here in comparison to what was initially hypothesized, provides insights into the causes of the initial uproar, and offers suggestions.
FDA Announcement on July 12, 2018

“The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is alerting pet owners and veterinary professionals about reports of canine dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) in dogs eating certain pet foods containing peas, lentils, other legume seeds, or potatoes as main ingredients. These reports are unusual because DCM is occurring in breeds not typically genetically prone to the disease.

The underlying cause of DCM is not truly known, but is thought to have a genetic component. Breeds that are typically more frequently affected by DCM include large and giant breed dogs, such as Great Danes, Boxers, Newfoundlands, Irish Wolfhounds, Saint Bernards and Doberman Pinschers. It is less common in small and medium breed dogs, except American and English Cocker Spaniels. However, the cases that have been reported to the FDA have included Golden and Labrador Retrievers, Whippets, a Shih Tzu, a Bulldog and Miniature Schnauzers, as well as mixed breeds.”

FDA Updates on February 19, 2019

We summarized the statements below taken straight from the FDA’s latest announcement and have added a few notations.

- Based on the data collected and analyzed thus far, the agency believes that the potential association between diet and DCM in dogs is a complex scientific issue that may involve multiple factors.

Author’s Note: The FDA does not know the cause of DCM in dogs after collecting evidence, and admits more is going on than meets the eye.

- Between January 1, 2014 and November 30, 2018, the FDA received 300 reports of DCM (294 canine reports, 6 feline reports). Approximately 276 of these were reported after the July public notification about FDA’s investigation.

Author’s Note: Only 24 cases were reported during four and

one-half years, or 54 months, compared to 276 cases reported during the last six months.

- Past publications and research suggest that Golden Retrievers may be genetically predisposed to taurine deficiency, which is well-documented as potentially leading to DCM.

Author’s Note: In the FDA report, Golden Retrievers were disproportionately represented: 61 Golden Retrievers out of the approximately 294 dogs with breeds identified.

- Based on analysis of the 196 DCM reports sent to FDA in which dogs were fed only a single, primary diet (i.e., didn’t eat multiple food products, excluding treats), approximately 90 percent of the foods were reported to be labelled “grain-free” (or labelled as zero-grain) and approximately 10 percent ate diets containing grains, some of which were vegan or vegetarian. A large proportion of the reported diets in DCM cases contained peas and/or lentils. Author’s Note: 269 out of the 294 foods were dry (kibble) diets.

- Animal protein sources in the reported diets varied widely. Of the 191 reports with a single primary diet that contained animal protein (rather than being vegan/vegetarian), 31 percent contained more than one animal protein source. The majority of diets containing animal protein included fish, eggs, lamb or chicken. No one animal protein source was predominant.

- The average percent protein and fat, as well as total taurine, cystine, methionine, and methionine-cystine, and the resistant starch content on a dry matter basis (in other words, after removing all moisture content), were similar for both grain-free labelled and grain-containing products.

- Nearly all of the grain-free products had methionine-cystine values above the minimum nutritional requirement of 0.65 percent for adult maintenance dog foods published in the Association of American Feed Control Officers (AAFCO) Official Publication.

- Past publications and research suggested that Golden Retrievers may be genetically predisposed to taurine deficiency, which is well-documented as potentially leading to DCM.

Author’s Note: DCM in Golden Retrievers has been studied since 1995. Please note that the initial FDA announcement intimated that cases of DCM in Golden Retrievers were novel.

- Veterinary cardiologist Dr. Joshua Stern from the University of California at Davis and his colleagues have been studying the rise in cases of DCM in Golden Retrievers, including a potential dietary link. Many cases of DCM occur in Golden Retrievers that are taurine-deficient. Pet owners who suspect their Golden Retrievers may be affected may wish to consult their veterinarian to discuss checking taurine levels or conducting an echocardiogram.

Hemopet's Views

Dr. Dodds and Hemopet have always urged caution about jumping to conclusions, when preliminary information is released and then spreads over social and other media to create a frenzy of misleading assumptions. We referenced previous studies that demonstrated lower taurine concentrations in the blood from dogs eating formulations that contained combinations of grains and proteins such as barley and turkey or lamb and rice, and one that showed beet pulp as a possible contributor by binding taurine.

One reason in particular is the presence of food sensitivities or intolerances to specific grains. According to the FDA DCM report, "104 dogs and 2 cats were DCM cases with heart changes characteristic of DCM on cardiac ultrasound – including decreased ventricular systolic function and dilation...Approximately 42% (n=45) of dogs with DCM had a history of allergies or sensitivities to an environmental allergen and/or food that was manifested as dermatitis, otitis, or gastrointestinal disease."

Commentary

The framing of a possible connection between grain-free diets and DCM in dogs was premature and set off alarm bells across the veterinary and dog world communities.

The veterinary group mentioned above have now veered away from their initial opinions to speculating that the animal protein source is to blame. Specifically, they point to "exotic" animal protein sources such as kangaroo, duck, buffalo, salmon, rabbit, venison, lamb and bison.

Even though this group of researchers acknowledges prior research, lack of knowledge, the complexity of food interaction, that processing and heat can affect amino acids, that bioavailability varies between animal muscle proteins, that taurine deficiency may be related to cardiotoxic ingredients in the diet, and a host of other potential causes, they remain focused on what they have coined as boutique-exotic-grain-free (aka "BEG") diets.

The FDA's reports are not in line with this hypothesis as 31% contained more than one animal protein source. The majority of diets containing animal protein included fish, eggs, lamb or chicken. No one animal protein source was predominant.

Hypotheses About the Cause of DCM in Dogs

At this point in time, we have ideas about the causes of and contributors to DCM in dogs, and you likely do too. However, speculation on such a serious disease may cause radical shifts in feeding practices that are not based on scientific evidence and may do more harm than good. As the FDA said, "DCM in dogs is a complex scientific issue that may involve multiple factors."



Hemopet

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for more info go to <https://www.hemopet.org/education/w-jean-dodds/> '

References

- Dodds, W. Jean. "Dilated Cardiomyopathy (Heart Disease) in Dogs and Why Some Dogs Eat "Exotic" Ingredients." Hemopet, 6 Jan. 2019, <http://www.hemopet.org/dcm-heart-disease-dogs-exotic-ingredients/>.
- Dodds, W. Jean. "Dodds Responds to FDA Statement on Canine Heart Disease, Taurine Deficiency and Potential Dietary Causes." Hemopet, 29 July 2018, <http://www.hemopet.org/fda-dog-heart-disease/>.
- "FDA Investigating Potential Connection Between Diet and Cases of Canine Heart Disease." U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Centre for Biologics Evaluation and Research, 12 July 2018, <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/NewsEvents/CVMUpdates/ucm613305.htm>.

Dates for your Diary in 2019

IWHG Breed Health Seminar – Saturday 9th November

Irish Wolfhound Club AGM - April 7th

Irish Wolfhound Society AGM – April 14th

The IWHG Table will be present at most Breed Shows and Events throughout the year and we look forward to seeing you all there

Dr Maura Lyons, PhD, IWHG Research Co-ordinator March 2019

The IWHG are involved with or coordinating various different research projects in Irish Wolfhounds, many are still ongoing and need your help. Take a read through the following list and see if you and your hound can help contribute to research helping to maintain and improve the health status of the breed.

- 1) **Nottingham University Osteosarcoma longitudinal project** – Dr Mark Dunning. We have around 900 wolfhounds recruited for this study and currently NVS have said they don't need any further swabs. For those dogs already swabbed for this project please remember to complete the health update surveys annually.

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/nottingham-university.html>

For anyone who has experienced bone cancer in their dogs in the past, whether the dog was swabbed or not, there is a **Treatment Survey** to determine which treatments are offered by primary care vets and which are most successful. There are also two further surveys, one for wolfhound owners who have decided to amputate for reasons other than osteosarcoma and also owners who have never experienced either amputation or osteosarcoma.

Survey 1 – please complete this survey if you have **experience of amputation in your wolfhound** but it was for a reason other than bone cancer:

<http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IW-amputation>

Survey 2 – Please complete this survey if you have **never experienced either bone cancer/osteosarcoma or amputation** in your wolfhound:

http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/canine_amputation1

If your swabbed wolfhound gets a confirmed diagnosis of bone cancer - Whilst it is hoped that no wolfhound ever suffers from bone cancer again, if your dog is swabbed and gets a confirmed diagnosis of bone cancer, please get in touch with Mark to see how you can help. This is a large project with many angles and full details can be found on the webpage link above.

- 2) **Nottingham University Heart disease research** – Prof Malcolm Cobb and Dr Serena Brownlie-Sykes. By taking part in the IWHG Regional Heart Testing scheme you are contributing to this ongoing project, possibly the longest running veterinary research project ever! The results of your wolfhounds heart test are recorded in the database and used by the team at Nottingham University to unravel the specifics of wolfhound heart disease. To book a slot and contribute to this valuable research whilst also looking after your own dogs heart please find a session closest to you and get in touch with Anne Vaudin.
<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dates-and-locations-.html>

- 3) **Angela Bodey and NVS Pneumonia research** – Dr Angela Bodey and Dr Mark Dunning. If your wolfhound has ever experienced pneumonia or any other type of respiratory disease or any type of nasal disease (snotty nose) we are collecting case studies so that our researchers may evaluate the most effective treatments and devise a recommended treatment protocol. We had another push for this project during December 2018, and collected around 25 more case studies for Angela to analyse during the early part of 2019. We are very aware that wolfhounds are still dying of pneumonia, so please do all you can to help out, if you experience pneumonia with your wolfhound fill out the survey and let Angela know what treatment your dog received and what the outcome was. Please see all details and fill out the survey on the webpage here;
<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/pneumonia.html>

- 4) **Animal Health Trust (AHT) – Give a Dog a Genome/Osteosarcoma research** – Dr Mike Starkey. Thanks to your support and donations, the IWHG have been able to fund participation in the ambitious Give a Dog a Genome project, as well as funding the whole genome sequencing of 5 wolfhounds. This has allowed Mike and his team at AHT to study in depth the differences between affected and unaffected dogs' genomes; this has led to identifying several areas of the genome which may play a part in influencing the development of bone cancer in wolfhounds. An in depth report was published in the last newsletter and more details can be found here
<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/animal-health-trust.html> and here <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/give-a-dog-a-genome.html>

- 5) **IWHG FCE research** – Mrs Caroline Sheppard. There is a slight update here; as NVS have had very little uptake on this survey they feel that it is not an issue that deserves further investigation. As such, the IWHG have decided to take back ownership of this project. If you have already filled out a survey and returned it to NVS we now need you to fill it out again so that we can hold the information until there is enough uptake to interest another research institution, at which point we can share the surveys we have collected. Irish Wolfhounds appear to suffer from a unique form of FCE, one which affects them in puppyhood, which is why this condition is also known as puppy paralysis. It is hoped that by studying the experience of wolfhounds affected by FCE, this research could determine what causes it and the most appropriate treatment for a favourable outcome. Ellen Kroll has written a comprehensive article about FCE which is available on our webpage. If your wolfhound has experienced any form of puppy paralysis or FCE please fill out the survey and return it to fce@iwhealthgroup.co.uk.
<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/puppy-paralysis.html>

- 6) **University of Utrecht Liver Shunt project** – Dr Frank van Steenbeek. Dr Steenbeek started his research project into liver shunt in Irish Wolfhounds as a PhD student studying for his doctorate. Since gaining his doctorate he is continuing to investigate the causes of liver shunt in wolfhounds. He is still collecting DNA samples from affected dogs and their parents – if you can help his research by providing a sample then please do so. Details of how to help are here; <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/liver-shunt-1.html>
- 7) **AHT DNA Repository Scheme** – Emma Hales. The DNA storage program is still available at the AHT. The easiest way to provide samples for this is for a breeder to collect an extra 1ml of blood from each puppy at liver shunt testing time. Thereafter each new owner should be informed to update the AHT with any health issues the puppy may encounter throughout its life. Full details, sample submission forms and health status updates forms can be found at the webpage; <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dna-storage-programme.html>
- 8) **Nottingham University Atrial Fibrillation and blood clots in giant breed dogs** – Lowri Heseltine. Now closed, results were communicated at NVS Breed Seminar day in February 2019. This research is looking at the effects and outcomes of atrial fibrillation in giant breed dogs, and in particular whether there is an increased likelihood of suffering a blood clot event associated with a diagnosis of AF. Results will be reported as the IWHG receive them from the NVS.
- 9) **IWHG Liver shunt/ Epilepsy and PRA reporting survey** – Dr Maura Lyons. This is a simple form to record incidences of Liver shunt, Epilepsy and PRA. This enables the IWHG to monitor the prevalence of these diseases within the IW population. If you have experienced these conditions in your wolfhound, please fill out the survey with your

experiences. <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/health-survey.html>

- 10) **IWHG Dentition survey** – Mrs Caroline Sheppard. Caroline has been collecting examples of jaw growth in wolfhound puppies in order to provide evidence concerning the eventual alignment of teeth in the adult wolfhound. The IW is on the KC Breed Watch list for instances of misaligned canines, the IWHG feel that if this is seen in a growing puppy there is every chance the condition could correct itself – either if left or with some targeted therapy. If you have experienced puppies with teeth issues, please contact Caroline to share your experiences. <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/about-the-study.html>
- 11) **IWHG Veteran survey** – Mrs Caroline Sheppard. The IWHG would like to hear about your veteran wolfhounds. If you have a wolfhound that has lived to over 7 years then please fill out the questionnaire. It includes details about lifestyle and environment in order to see if there is a correlation between any of these factors and longevity in wolfhounds. You can find the details and a link to the survey on the webpage: <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/veteran-study.html>
- 12) **NVS Bloat Incidence Survey** – Matthew Keane. Study investigating the factors influencing bloating and the development and outcome of GDV in Irish Wolfhounds in the UK. This project is based on owner reported incidences of bloat and GDV in their wolfhounds and comparison to dogs unaffected by bloating. Please complete the survey here... https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IWH_GDV_Survey?fbclid=IwAR1o8XkAENiM0iwojG52EAnF41StixCY7CSS20P5kv0TKhyDbx4SHXPRneM

Please sign up for notifications of announcements on our website here, <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/home.html>

The Pneumonia Study Update...

Over the Christmas period the Health Group put out a call for more cases of pneumonia to be recorded on our survey as Angela Bodey anticipated working on the study at the end of March. Thank you to everyone who participated, we had 27 additional cases recorded and these will be added to the existing information Angela holds.

This doesn't mean we are not collecting data any more, please, if you have had or should you have a hound with pneumonia, complete the survey form on the Health Group website, it's easy to do online. It is important that you include the treatment schedule your vet used, which most vets are happy to provide and this can be uploaded with your survey as an attached file. We also need to hear about the progress of your hound, were there any relapses, how long after the initial bout of pneumonia did this happen, was it pneumonia again or more

bronchial/upper respiratory? How was it treated and over what period of time? All this will help the research into this condition which now ranks joint third with bloat in the most common conditions affecting Irish Wolfhounds. As ever the Health Group thanks you for your support and the time you take providing this valuable information on your hounds. The Pneumonia survey can be found [HERE](#)

[A video showing the early stages of pneumonia in a wolfhound](#) – the time when you need to get to your vet fast.

Here are the current guidelines for [Owners](#) and for [Vets](#). We suggest all owners take the Guide for Veterinary Surgeons to their own vets and talk about the research programme so that they are aware of this condition, rather than if it becomes an emergency.



BREED HEALTH SEMINAR 2019! SAT 9TH NOVEMBER

Getting Under Your Skin

This year we're tackling a tickly subject – skin disorders and allergies. Our Breed Health Survey told us that, as with all breeds, the most common complaints we see the vets for are skin and ear irritations. So is it genetic, hormonal, environmental, or food related?

To find out, join us as we go skin deep and beyond with Rosario Cerundolo, European & RCVS Specialist in Veterinary Dermatology, who will be trying to answer some of these questions with us.

Don't miss it – we're itching to see you!

Key Speaker!

**Dr Rosario Cerundolo
DVM, Cert VD, Dipl
ECVD, MRCVS, Hon Ass
Prof Vet Dermatology
Uni of Notts**

Plus Updates On:

**Pneumonia
Bone Cancer
Breed Health Survey
Breed Health &
Conservation Plan
Dentition Study**

**St Peter's Church Hall,
Holly Lane, Balsall
Common, CV7 7EA
Start: 09.30
Finish: 4.00**

Tickets £22.00

**MUST BE BOOKED IN
ADVANCE AND INCLUDES
LUNCH AND REFRESHMENTS**

TO BOOK:

secretary@iwhealthgroup.co.uk
www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk

Publications - All **Free** to Download

13

[Heart Testing Sessions Current Dates and Locations Available here](#)

[Heart Test Booking Form to book a session – click here](#)

[Guide to Buying an Irish Wolfhound Puppy](#)

[Down load the **FREE** Breed Guide](#)

[Livershunt Testing Forms](#)

[Guide to Neutering Your Hound](#)

[Find All Our Other Breed Health Guidelines Here](#)

Ongoing Surveys

PNEUMONIA

PUPPY PARALYSIS - Fibrocartilaginous embolism (FCE)

BONE CANCER TREATMENT – (Osteosarcoma)

BLOAT - Gastric Dilatation/Volvulus (GDV)

ALL SURVEYS CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND CAN BE
FOUND HERE



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