

HEART TESTING

It was only at the beginning of the year that we heard about 3 ACDs that had tragically lost their lives suddenly at young ages. It did raise concerns for us personally as these dogs were all closely related to our Tirri. Whilst Tirri had only sired the one litter we had great hopes for his daughter Taco (the result of an outcross, as her mother is an import) and planned to breed with her later in the year. Then in the Spring Taco's sister, Cat Rush's precious Lola, also died suddenly and within 3 months their brother Dexter was also lost. In the light of these heartbreaking events we obviously decided we could not breed with our two lovely dogs, and our line should end.

However, we decided to have our dogs heart tested by a cardiologist just to see if we could shed any light on the problem. Cat also brought Bobby, Taco's other brother, who I have to say was the star of the proceedings. Our two were slightly more naughty, but it was a long, restrictive process so we can't really blame them too much! We were well aware that the tests were more likely rule out what they did not have than show what they did have, but it was a start. The three dogs all proved to have structurally sound hearts.

Although Tirri has a leaking left mitral valve that may cause problems in future and Bob has a very minor right leaking mitral valve this is not likely to be connected to the sudden loss of the other dogs. The cardiologist suggested that a possible cause is arrhythmia, which would not show up in a PM, unless a specialist performed it. He also told us about a simple, non-invasive heart test that can be performed using a special attachment for an iPhone. The Society is planning to obtain one of these gadgets and hopes to have it available for all ACD gatherings next year. Everyone with an ACD will be welcome to come along and use it on their dogs.

We have a generally very fit, healthy and long-lived breed. Acknowledging and being open about problems within the breed is the best way to keep it so. As for us, well we couldn't give up so we decided to import Chilli, but that really is another story...

Denise Cartwright