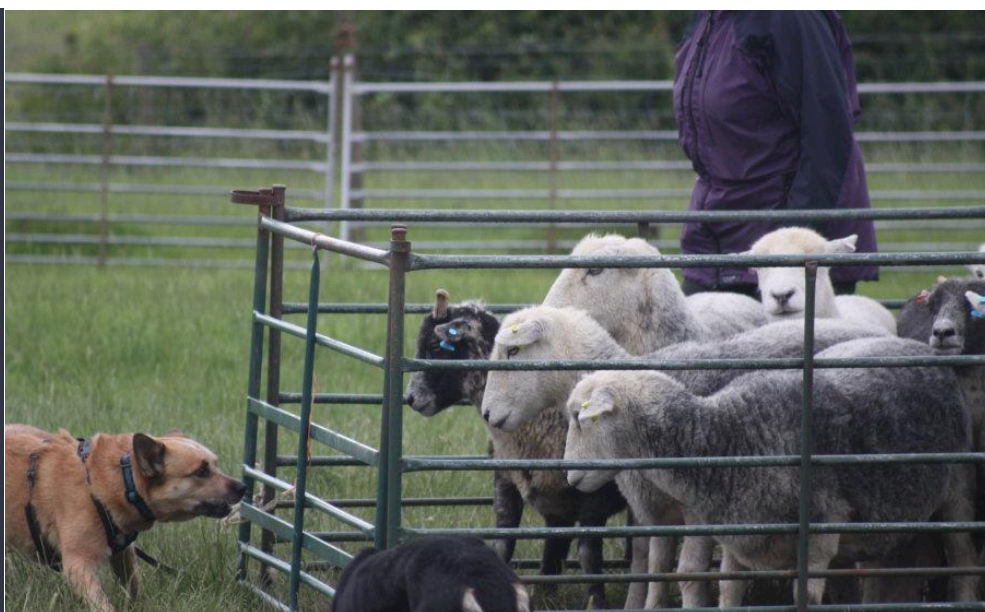


Health Survey 2014

australiancattledogsociety.co.uk/health



Participants	2	Findings	3	Strategy	5
Kennel Club registration numbers 1981-2013; Demographics of responses from the 2014 Health Survey		Main Findings; Hip Dysplasia Elbow Dysplasia Eye Conditions Deafness		Recommended priorities for breed health improvement; Suggested actions; Breed Health Strategy	

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The Australian Cattle Dog Society of Great Britain

Health & Welfare Sub Committee

Chair: Mrs. A. Skipper MA Vet MB Cert VR MRCVS



The Australian Cattle Dog Society Health & Welfare Sub Committee was formed with the main purpose of developing policy on the health and welfare of the breed, including the prevention of ill-health, the promotion of fit and healthy lifestyles and the reduction of health problems; and to make recommendations as necessary to the Breed Society.

A Breed Health Plan was developed to fulfill this purpose. The Sub Committee took on board the comments about the breed within the Karlton Index framework.

"The Society is to be applauded for having a very strong Code of Ethics that has unequivocal guidance for breeders.

Statistics on the actual participation levels are difficult to find. The health report on the website is, for instance dated 2008 so the only available data is for hip scoring. A total of 93 Cattle Dogs are listed as hip scored. Consequently the marks reflect the available data rather than the true participation levels."

Philippa Robinson, 2013.
www.thekarltonindex.com

Development Points

- Establishing and communicating the ways in which the Society undertakes health surveillance.
- Updating the published health report. 2008 is now [six] years ago.
- Making it clear on the website how owners can report health issues and to whom they should report.
- Report on the participation levels currently within the breed for all the relevant testing protocols.



Participants

The Australian Cattle Dog Society of Great Britain formed a Health & Welfare Sub-committee in July 2013. The first objective was to update our knowledge since the last Breed Health Survey in 2008 and develop a Breed Health Strategy.

The 2013 survey collected 208 responses, of which 177 were completed online and 31 were completed on paper.

The Health & Welfare Sub-committee, using The Kennel Club Breed Health Surveys Toolkit, created a new Breed Health Survey. It was launched in September 2013 and responses were collected until the 31st December 2013.

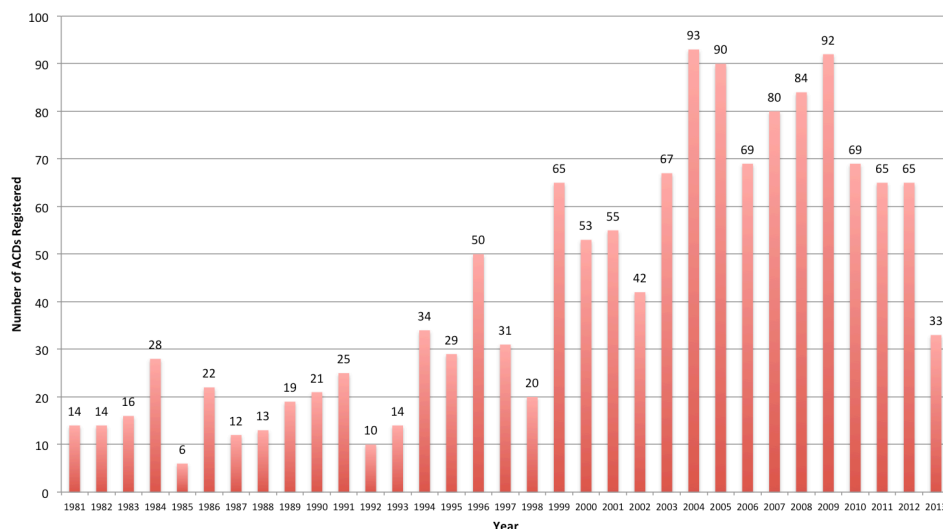
The Breed Health Survey was first available at the ACD Championship Show on 29th September 2013 and was subsequently mailed to all Society members.

The survey was also available for completion online, which was publicised through the ACD Society website and the Cattle Dog UK facebook page (which has over 400 members). In addition, the Kennel Club sent the survey to all registered ACD owners. The survey was also advertised through the Dog World Breed Notes.

The survey received widespread publicity, including being featured in Dogs Monthly magazine's online forum; Marc Abraham's online blog (Marc the vet) and on the website smallholder.co.uk

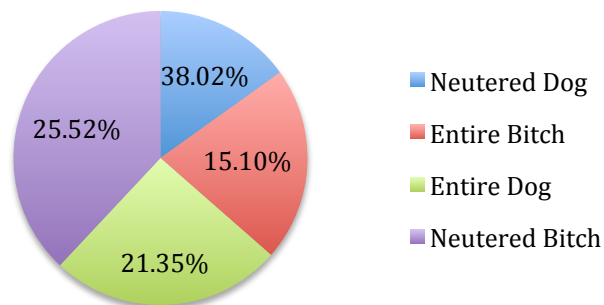
The response rate represents 26% of the ACDs registered within the past decade.

Kennel Club Registration Numbers



**Fig. 1 (above):
KC Registration
Numbers,
1981-2013**

**Fig. 2 (right):
Demographics of
dogs described by
respondents to 2013
Health Survey**

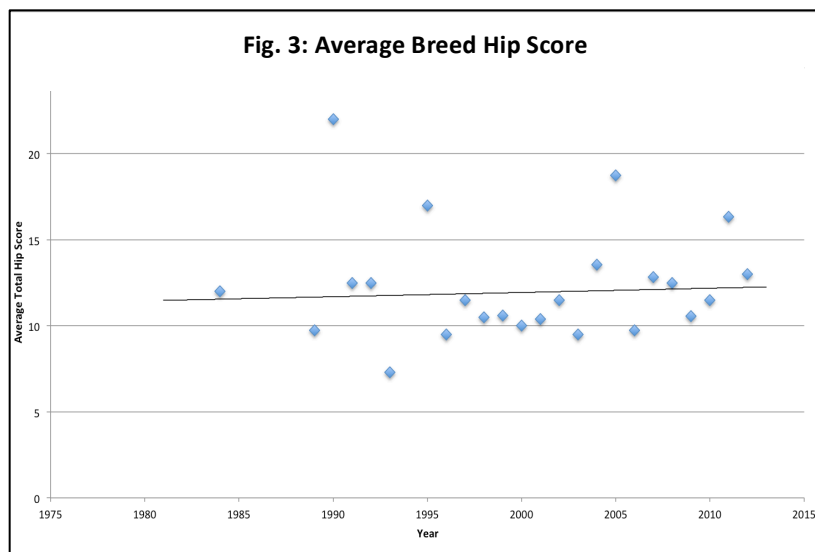




Summary Findings

Fig. 4: (below) ranking of health conditions reported in the Health Survey. Percentages based on total response.

The results for hip scores indicate no improvement in the breed average since the ACD first arrived in the country (data only exists for 24 of the 33 years since 1981). In the last Health Report (Skipper, 2008) the breed average was quoted at 11 based on the records of 36 dogs. The results from this survey put the breed average at 12 based on 101 dogs, with a range of 5 to 56. The BVA website also reports the 5-year trends. This shows the ACD breed average has risen to 13 based on the scores from the last 5 years to 2011 (BVA, 2011).



Rank	Condition	Count	% of Population
1	Arthritis	18	9
2=	Mammary Cancer	14	7
2=	Various Oncological	14	7
4	Pyometra	12	6
5	Various Spinal	10	5
6=	Death from Old Age	8	4
6=	Deafness (one ear)	8	4
8=	False Pregnancy	6	3
8=	Cataracts	6	3
8=	Various Cardiovascular	6	3
8=	Colitis	6	3
8=	Deafness (both ears)	6	3

(Continued)

Of the 1400 ACDs registered since 1981, only 7% have been hip scored. The data for elbow scores is even more scant, with only 6% of dogs registered since 1993 (when elbow scoring became available) having been scored. From the scores available, the picture appears good. However, this represents such a small portion of the population that it is impossible to draw conclusions.

Animals that have been bred from are significantly more likely to have been hip and elbow scored.

Fig. 5: Elbow Scores

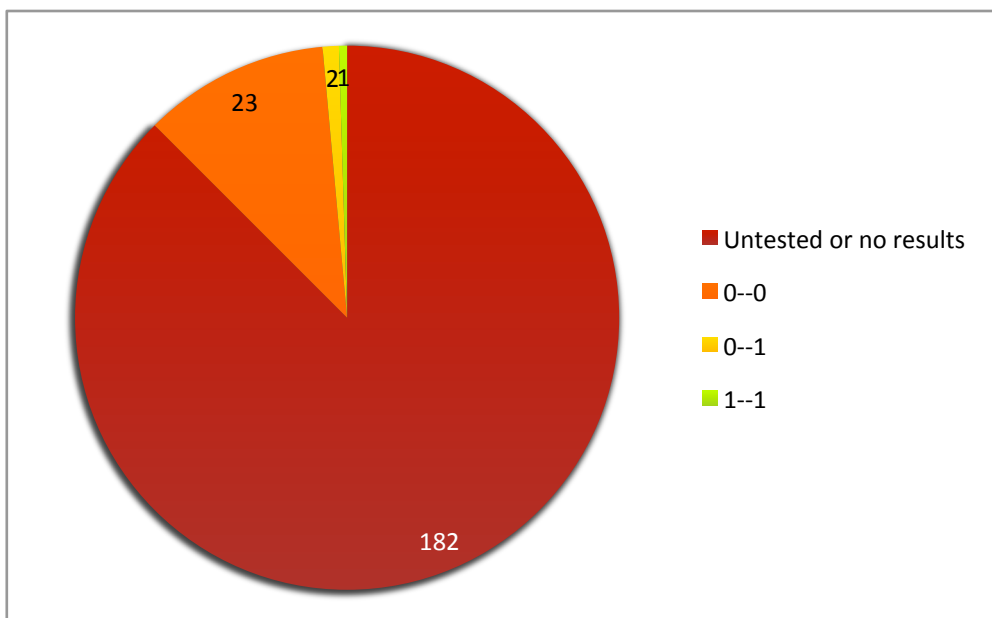


Fig. 6: Percentage of Respondents Elbow Scoring

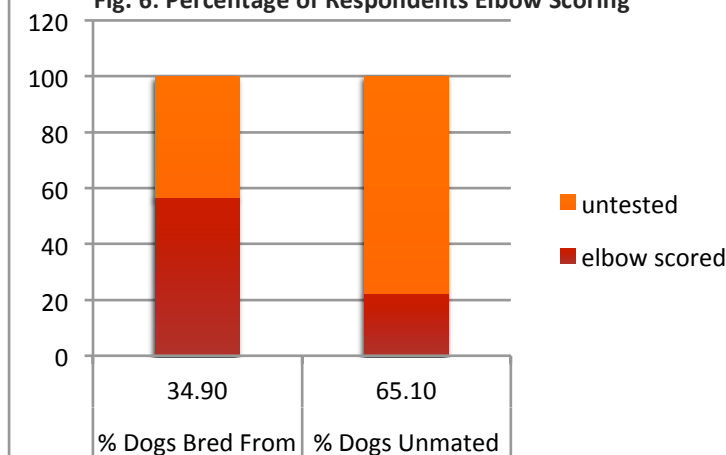
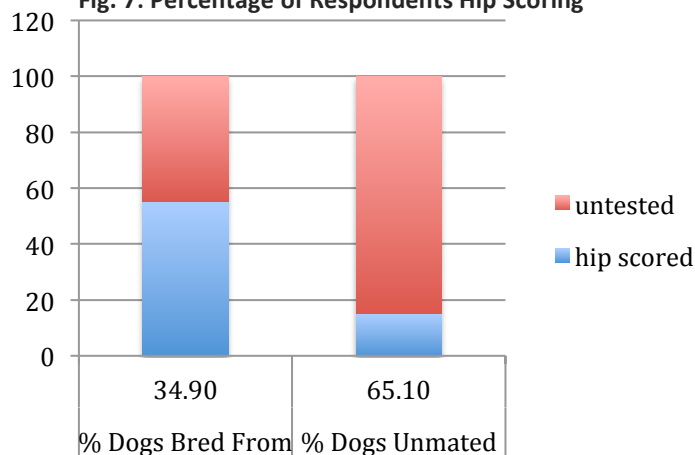


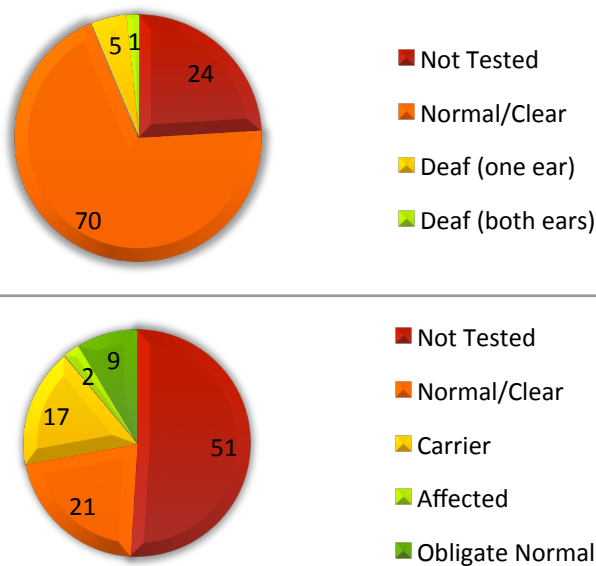
Fig. 7: Percentage of Respondents Hip Scoring



Over three quarters of dogs are being hearing tested using the brainstem auditory evoked response (BAER) system. This in itself is an excellent rate of participation, but also allows careful monitoring of the incidence of deafness within the breed. In the past decade, the incidence of unilaterally deaf dogs appears to have more than halved, whilst the incidence of bilaterally deaf dogs has remained constant at around 1%. The testing for eye conditions is not as common, with over half of dogs going untested either through the BVA scheme or prcd gene screening. However, of the dogs tested the results show a dramatic decrease in affected dogs coupled with an increase in dogs clear of the Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) compared to the data in the 2008 Health Report.

Fig. 8: (right, top) Percentage of respondents hearing tested, with results

Fig. 9: (right, bottom) Percentage of respondents PRA tested, with results





"I think the ACD community has considerable awareness of these problems, but has some way to go in fully screening all stock for all the significant problems in the breed."

- A. Skipper, 2008

Recommendations for a Breed Health Strategy

- Hip and Elbow testing should be an essential requirement of the Kennel Club Assured Breeder Scheme
- The ACD community should receive information regarding the increased incidence of pyometra in breeding bitches on retirement, and should be encouraged to spay
- The Society should canvas the KC and BVA in order to set up a central register for BAER hearing test results
- The Society should offer PRA and PLL testing at Society events

Recommendations

Hips and Elbows

The scoring results show that hip and elbow testing still needs to be a priority within the breed. Despite considerable publicity within the ACD community, the number of dogs being tested is tiny compared to the total population.

This lack of testing means there is a lack of data upon which to base any conclusions. However, given that the highest-ranking health condition reported in the current survey was arthritis, affecting nearly a tenth of the ACD population, there is an obvious need for greater scoring within ACDs in the UK. It is worth noting that 90% of those dogs that had developed arthritis were not hip scored; yet 28% had been bred from.

The Groenendael Belgian Shepherd was quoted in the last Health Report as a breed with a similar number of registrations and a similar average breed hip score. However, there have been nearly 5 times as many Groenendael's scored, revealing a range of 0 to 104. It is noteworthy that the Groenendael 5-year mean hip score has dropped to 9 whilst the ACD's has risen to 13 (BVA, 2011).

The Sub Committee strongly recommend that increased focus is put upon the importance of hip and elbow scoring and that this becomes the main focus of educational events and online resources. Further, the Society are recommended to lobby the Kennel Club to change the requirements to hip and elbow scoring from "strongly recommended" to "essential" in line with the Society's own Code of Ethics.

Pyometra

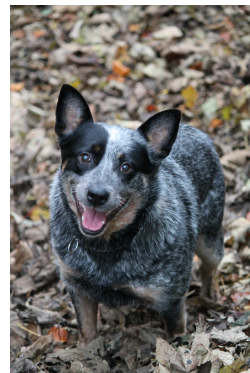
The Sub Committee would also like to draw the Society's attention to the high incidence of pyometra in breeding bitches when they are retired. It is recommended that the ACD community is educated about this worrying trend and encouraged to spay bitches on retirement.

Deafness

In order to dramatically reduce inherited deafness in the ACD, the breed standard would need to be altered to allow body patches. This would increase the level of head and body patches within the breed and possibly decrease the incidence of deaf puppies, because on average dogs would be born with more solid pigment. However, the results indicate that the incidence of deafness within the breed has plateaued at the lowest level that can be genetically expected. The Sub Committee congratulates the ACD community for their efforts in reducing the incidence of deafness and encourages them to keep up the hard work. The Sub Committee recommends that the Society canvas the KC and BVA to set up a central register of BAER hearing test results.

Eye Conditions

According to the data presented here, over half the dogs of known status are either normal or obligate normal, which is a big shift from the position in 2008 and is good evidence that the policy of gene testing for prcd-PRA is having a direct impact on the proportion of dogs that are going to end up blind. However, despite DNA testing being a requirement for breeding under the KC Assured Breeder Scheme, 50% of dogs remain untested. There is also anecdotal evidence of an increasing incidence of Primary Lens Luxation (PLL) which should be monitored in as part of the Breed Health Strategy. The Sub Committee suggests the Society organises testing for PRA and PLL at Society arranged events.



The last report on breed health was published as the "Australian Cattle Dog Health Status Report" in 2008. It was compiled by Alison Skipper MA Vet MB Cert VR MRCVS.





Health & Welfare Sub-Committee

The Australian Cattle Dog Society of Great Britain Health & Welfare Sub Committee is made up of breed specialists, veterinary health professionals and experts in canine health and welfare.

Chair: Mrs. A. Skipper MA Vet MB Cert VR MRCVS (KC Breed Health Coordinator)

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Alison has owned five Australian Cattle Dogs, obtaining the first within a week of qualifying as a veterinary surgeon twenty five years ago. Previously an active committee member for nine years, Alison has been a vice-president of the Society for some time. Alison has a Cambridge MA in physical anthropology, which included training in genetics of individuals and populations, and has a long history of advising the Society on genetics issues. In 1996, she was instrumental in coordinating the sample collection which led to the development of the gene test for prcd-PRA in ACDs. She works as a small animal vet in practice in Surrey and is currently one of the duty vets on the team at Crufts.

Stella Smyth Oakwood Park Kennels Peacock Lane Wokingham Berks RG40 3YZ

Tel: 0118 979 3399 Email: Morrow.ACD@btinternet.com

Stella was one of the first to own an ACD in the UK and was one of the founding members of the Society in 1985. Stella is widely regarded as the leading authority on Australian Cattle Dogs in the UK. Stella has owned many ACDs over the past thirty years and has bred occasional litters under the Morrow affix. She is a keen dog trainer, earning the first Kennel Club Stud Book Number for an ACD with her dog Smoky (Morrow Blue Aborigine CDx-TDx). She has since repeated this with Mulga (Morrow Red Chakola CDx-TDx). Stella has always championed the ACD as a working dog and won Best Bitch at Crufts in 1993 with her dog, Pippa (Bryblue Diamond at Morrow CDx-TD) who also qualified in Working Trials.

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Tel: 07739 460 012 Email: ACDSecretary@gmail.com

Adam has been a committee member for seven years and has been Secretary of the Society for the last two. He holds a Masters degree in Clinical Animal Behaviour and is a full member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors as well as an ABTC registered practitioner. He is Head of Animal Studies at Nescot College in Surrey and teaches a range of subjects including Animal Welfare, Anatomy & Physiology and Breeding & Genetics. Adam has been a contributing author for two books on dog care published by Dorling Kindersley and is a regular contributor for publications such as Dogs Monthly magazine. He has two rescue dogs, an Australian Kelpie and an Australian Cattle Dog.

Kylie Birch BVSc MRCVS 24 Leith View North Holmwood Dorking Surrey RH5 4TG

Tel: 07918 939 154 Email: kjbirch5@gmail.com

Kylie has been surrounded by ACDs her entire life, having grown up with them in Australia. She was actively involved in breed showing and various dog sports before moving to the UK in 2008. She continues to compete with her two ACDs in obedience, agility and herding. She is a small animal veterinarian currently practicing in Surrey.



The Australian Cattle Dog Society of Great Britain was founded in 1985 with the ambition of creating a Society focused on the betterment of the breed and working towards sharing the ACD's special qualities with the people of the United Kingdom and beyond. The Society's main objective is the improvement of the breed.

