THE KENNEL CLUB

Making a difference for dogs

THE KENNEL CLUB

BREED HEALTH SURVEYS TOOLKIT

INTRODUCTION

During 2010 and 2011 the Kennel Club held two seminars for Breed Health Coordinators. On each occasion there were presentations from people who had conducted surveys in their breed and who had been able to use the results to help them focus on health improvement plans.

Without a Health Survey, you are left with only anecdotal evidence regarding the health of your breed and no way of knowing how things are changing.

This toolkit has been written primarily for Breed Health Coordinators, but is expected to be widely shared with, and used by, Health and Welfare Sub-committees, as well as Breed Clubs and Councils.

The content of the toolkit has been developed to help you get started; it is meant to be practical and realistic. It is not prescriptive and you will need to develop an appropriate approach to running health surveys that works in your breed and meets your breed's needs.

The toolkit has been developed *by Health Coordinators, for Health Coordinators*. We hope you find it useful.

CONTENTS

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1. WHY DO A BREED SURVEY?

The challenge facing all Breed Health Coordinators and their Clubs/Councils is to bring about a continuous improvement in breed health. Knowing how to achieve this can be difficult. Health problems will vary from breed to breed and to make progress it is essential to define where your breed is now.

Can you answer the following questions?

- What are the main health concerns in your breed?
- Can you rank them in order of incidence or priority?
- What proportion of the breed is affected by each problem?
- Are these problems getting better or worse since the KC/BSAVA survey of 2004?

If you do not have the answers to these questions, or can only make anecdotal responses, then the best way to move forward in your breed's health improvement is to undertake a Breed Health Survey.

A Breed Health Survey will help:

- To gauge the health of your breed
- To resolve anecdotal evidence of specific conditions
- To pinpoint problems and to monitor progress with improvement
- To create a baseline of health in the breed so as to be able to repeat the same survey and compare at a later date
- To give evidence-based guidance and recommendations for health tests to members so as to improve the health of the breed

Breed Health Surveys do not need to be complicated and this guide will explain the different types and ways of undertaking a survey and analysing the results. Breed health is not static, so a Breed Health Survey needs to be repeated, or revised, as required.

TIP: It's a good idea to start with a basic survey to get a quick idea of any health problems in your breed.
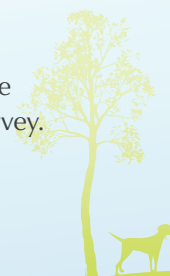
DECIDING ON THE SCOPE OF YOUR SURVEY

Once you have decided to do a survey, the potential value of its results will depend on its objectives and the areas in which you gather data. In Section 4 of this toolkit, we describe the survey process, from start to finish. Setting your objectives is the first step. Your survey could cover any, or all, of the following areas:

Your survey could cover any, or all, of the following areas:

Survey area	To find out about:
Health	Specific diseases that may occur in your breed
Mortality	Age and cause of death
Breeding	Dogs that have been bred from, any breeding issues, how many puppies were reared, or if a dog has been neutered
Feeding	The type of diet fed and how often it is fed
Exercise	How much and what type of exercise a dog gets
Housing	Where a dog is kept: in the house, or in kennels, on its own or with other dogs
Inoculations	Whether a dog is regularly inoculated by a vet
Alternative therapies	Any use of alternative or "natural" treatments
Temperament	How easy is a dog to live with and does it have the right temperament to do what it was bred to do
Activities	If a dog is involved in showing, working, Obedience, Agility or any other canine activities
Health testing	Any screening tests a dog has had and the results

A Breed Health Survey could therefore get the answers to a wide range of questions and you need to be clear why you need to do a survey in the first place.

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2. WHAT TYPES OF SURVEY ARE THERE?

Surveys are a good way to collect facts and perception data from people (breeders, exhibitors, pet owners etc.), particularly if there are large numbers of people whose views it would be useful to know. Participants may be put off by long lists of questions and, often, a short survey with carefully thought out questions will get high response rates and provide good quality data.

There is no single "right way" to conduct a Health Survey and therefore it can be rather daunting to a Breed Health Coordinator when deciding how to get started.

There are four fundamental choices you will have to make about the type of survey you wish to carry out:

- Will it be paper-based, or an online survey (or a combination of the two)?
- Will you have one survey form per dog, or one survey per owner (who fills in data for multiple dogs on the same form)?
- Will you collect data only on dogs with health problems, or on all dogs: with or without health problems?
- Will the survey responses be anonymous, or will you ask for names of owners and dogs?

PAPER OR ONLINE?

In order to carry out a survey, you will need to decide whether your questionnaire will be available to be completed online, or as a paper-based survey, or a combination of both.

Online survey tools have the advantage of being easier to analyse the data, as the information is entered by the respondent. You may have to check the quality of the data first though. Online surveys also potentially mean that people without Internet access cannot take part. However, it is possible to conduct online surveys at zero cost to your Breed Club. Section 6 of this toolkit explains some of the IT tools available to help you with your survey.

TIP: Don't have your survey for download as an Adobe pdf file unless you're able to save it in an editable form; otherwise, most people won't be able to complete it electronically.

TIP: Using a combination of paper and on-line surveys will probably increase the chances of getting a good response to your first survey.

Paper-based surveys can be sent directly to a large number of people, but there are print and postage costs to be considered. The response data also then have to be keyed into some form of software to permit analysis to be carried out.

If you don't want to set up an online survey, you can still make your survey available online as a Word document for people to download. Alternatively, you could e-mail the survey out to potential respondents. They can then make their own choice about whether to print it out and post the response back, or to send it back electronically.

ONE FORM PER DOG OR ONE PER OWNER?

The Kennel Club's 2004 Health Survey allowed each owner to provide information on up to ten dogs which, for a paper-based survey, reduces the number of copies that have to be sent out.

Surveys "per owner" can also be quicker and less repetitive for respondents to complete. Each dog has to be identified with a code number and health issues are then recorded against that code, as in this example:

Example: *Dogs 2, 3 & 8 have suffered from digestive system conditions with dog 8 having suffered from two conditions.*

1. Have any of the dogs that you currently own ever suffered from a serious or persistent digestive system (including the mouth and teeth) condition? Symptoms might include regurgitation, vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea, weight loss or a change in apetite.

☐ No → If **No**, go to question 2.
☒ Yes   If **Yes**, please complete the section below for each affected dog.
          See the Appendix list for some example digestive sistem conditions.

Dog code no.	Age at time of diagnosis		Name/description of digestive system condition
2	2 years &	months	PANCREATITIS
3	3 years &	months	CHRONIC VOMITING (not on a list)
8	years &	6 months	RETAINED PUPPY TEETH
8	8 years &	months	CANCER – STOMACH CARCINOMA

Surveys "per dog" are easier to design because you do not have to allow space in each question to identify different dogs. For example, in the KC's 2004 Survey, each question allocated space for up to six dogs. Forms "per dog" (as with this example) can be easier on the eye for the respondent because there aren't so many boxes for them to fill in.

Age of hound now ☐   Sex   Male / Female

If deceased in the last 15 years age at death ☐

CONDITION	TICK IF YES	DETAILS eg. Age at onset or death, euthanized due to condition etc.
EYES – Glaucoma		
Dry		
Prolapse of Nictitans Gland (Cherry Eye)		
Entropion		
Ectropion		
Dermoid Cyst		
Juvenile Cataracts		
SKIN – Malassezia		
Pachydermis		
Dermodectic Mange		

TIP: If you've not carried out a survey before, a "per dog" questionnaire will probably be the best way to start.

TIP: If you are using an online survey tools, you may find it easier to design a survey that is on a "per dog" basis.

DOGS WITH HEALTH PROBLEMS OR ALL DOGS?

One decision you will need to make is whether you would like responses from owners of dogs that have suffered some form of ill-health, or if you also would like owners to report on their healthy dogs.

Collecting responses on healthy dogs, as well as those that have suffered health problems, will enable you to draw some conclusions about the prevalence of each condition. For example, it is more useful to know that 15 dogs had been affected by Hip Dysplasia and 85 had not been affected (15% prevalence), than simply having 15 reports of the condition.

TIP: If you can encourage owners to submit reports on all their dogs, whether or not they have any particular health condition, you will be able to get much more useful data.

ANONYMOUS OR NAMED?

If you have not carried out a Health Survey before, there may be worries among breeders and owners about what will happen to the information they provide. Some people may be reluctant to provide the registered names of dogs that have health problems, or may not be happy to give their own name when returning a survey.

Once you can guarantee anonymity then it may be appropriate to ask for the respondent's name, or e-mail address, particularly if you will be targeting people for any follow-up investigations.

If you wish to perform analysis of pedigrees, you will need the names and/or KC numbers of the registered dogs collected in your survey.

In the example on the right, some questions are mandatory, while some are optional to encourage people to submit a health report.

Is your Dachshund a Dog or a Bitch? *
Mandatory
  ◯ **Dog**
  ◯ **Bitch**

Has your Dachshund been bred from? *
Mandatory
  ◯ **Yes**
  ◯ **No**

In which year was your Dachshund born? *
Mandatory: Choose from list of years
[1995 or earlier ▾]

What is your Dachshund's pet (call) name?
Optional
[   ]

What is your Dachshund's Kennel Club Registered name?
Optional
[   ]

[« Back]   [Continue »]

Once you have built up trust about how surveys are used in your breed community, you can move towards future surveys asking for more specific information to identify individual dogs.

TIP: For your first survey, make it optional whether people give their name and the names of their dogs.

THREE "LEVELS" OF SURVEY

For the purposes of this toolkit, three different levels of survey have been identified that you could carry out: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced.

1   **BASIC**
- •For breeds that have not done a survey before
- •Help identify the main health issues quickly
- •Easy for owners/breeders to complete

2   **INTERMEDIATE**
- •For breeds with experience
- •Identify specific conditions and their prevalence
- •Identify individual dogs

3   **ADVANCED**
- •For breeds that need detailed health data, e.g. for research
- •More extensive and robust data gathering
- •Suitable for "global" health surveys

BASIC SURVEY

A basic survey is likely to gather information in a way that is easy for the respondent to complete; for example by allowing for free-form answers and yes-no questions. Typically, it will be laid out with lots of "white space" on the page so that it does not look intimidating to the person completing it. The example below has only three pages and seven questions.

An example Word template for this survey is available with this toolkit.

TIP: If you are running a Breed Seminar, consider handing out a basic Survey to gather some quick, basic, or general information from your audience.

The example below was used at a Breed Conference to gather information to help design an online survey and to decide what conditions to include.

Disease Condition	Examples	Smooth	Min. Smooth	Long	Min. Long	Wire	Min. Wire	Your comments or your specific examples/experience
Aural (Ears)	Otitis Externa, Deafness							
Behaviour	Aggression, Nervousness							
Cancer/ Tumours	Skin, Mammary, Testicular, Lung							
Cardiac (Heart)	Heart Murmer, Mitral Valve Disease, Heart Rhythm Disorder							
Cerebral Vascular	Stroke							
Dental	Dental Disease, Retained Puppy Teeth							
Dermatologic (Skin)	Alopecia, Dermatitis, Pyoderma							
Endocrine	Cushings, Diabetes, Hypothyroidism, Hyperthyroidism, Pancreatitis							
Gastrointestinal	Colitis, Irritable Bowel Disease							
Hepatic (Liver)	Hepatitis, Chronic Liver Disease							
Immune System	Atopy, Flea Allergy, Gluten-sensitive Enteropathy							
Musculo-skeletal	Arthritis, Lameness, Patellar Luxation, Hip Dysplasia							
Neurologic (spinal)	Inter-vertebral Disc Disease (IVDD)							
Neurologic (non-spinal)	Epilepsy, Lafora's Disease							
Ocular (Eyes)	Blindness, PRA, Distichiasis, Cataracts, Blocked Tear Ducts, Entropian							
Reproductive (Female)	Dystochia (uterine inertia), False Pregnancy, Eclampsia, Infertility							
Reproductive (Male)	Infertility, Chryptorchidism (Monorchid)							
Respiratory	Kennel Cough, Bronchitis, Pneumonia							
Urologic	Cyctitis, Cystouroliths (stones), Kidney Failure, Incontinence							

Analysis of your basic survey will enable you to progress to outcomes and actions which will need to be confirmed by a Level 2 Intermediate Survey or possibly a Level 3 Advanced Survey. Ultimately, you will want to have a rolling survey, either repeated annually, or available online continuously. Intermediate and advanced level surveys should change from "owner" to "dog" orientated so you can build more specific information.

INTERMEDIATE SURVEY

If you have already carried out a basic survey and have a database of information on some of your breed health issues, you may wish to start with an intermediate survey or even progress straight to an advanced survey.

An intermediate level survey will ask for more detailed information about individual health conditions, for example, age of diagnosis, age of death, treatment given. It is likely to cover more of the subject areas listed in Section 1 ("Decide on the scope of your survey").

The example on the following page is for Eye Disease and is one section in a ten page survey (in a Word document).

Section 3: Eyes				
a) Cataracts		Yes/No		
If yes:	Type			
	Age diagnosed			
Additional info				
b) Entropion/Ectropion		Yes/No		
If yes:	Type		Age diagnosed	
Additional info				
c) Glaucoma		Yes/No		
If yes:	Type		Age diagnosed	
Additional info				
d) Any other diagnosed eye problems not covered above?			Yes/No	
Additional info				

The example on the right is taken from an online survey which shows multiple choices for a range of health conditions.

The respondent can select more than one condition from each category of disease, if necessary.

This survey also allows the respondent to add free-text details of health conditions not included in the standard lists.

TIP: Where possible, data on healthy dogs should also be gathered in order to allow you to determine how common specific health conditions are.

Aural (Ears):
☐ Deafness   ☐ Otitis Externa

Cancers/Tumours:
☐ Lung ☐ Mammary ☐ Ovarian ☐ Skin   ☐ Stomach ☐ Testicular ☐ Prostate

Cardiac:
☐ Heart Murmur ☐ Heart Rhythm Disorder ☐ Mitral Valve Disease ☐ Sick Sinus Synd

Cerebral Vascular:
☐ Stroke

Dental:
☐ Dental Disease   ☐ Retained Puppy Teeth ☐ Overshot   ☐ Undershot

Dermatologic:
☐ Alopecia   ☐ Dermatitis   ☐ Interdigital Cysts ☐ Pyoderma

Endocrine:
☐ Addison's ☐ Cushing's ☐ Diabetes   ☐ Hyperthyroidism ☐ Hypothyroidism

Gastrointestinal:
☐ Colitis ☐ Gastric Torsion (Bloat) ☐ Hernias (Umbilical/Inguinal) ☐ Irritable Bowel Di

Hepatic (Liver):
☐ Chronic Liver Disease   ☐ Hepatitis   ☐ Pacreatitis

With an intermediate level survey, you may need a more structured approach to categorise health conditions and diseases.

TIP: It will help your survey respondents if you write a Glossary of Health Conditions that they can refer to for clarification on what the various conditions are, particularly where some have colloquial or alternative names (e.g. Gastric Torsion = Bloat).

Some category examples are shown below. Note this is not meant to be a definitive list, nor is it a complete list of health conditions.

Category	Example conditions/diseases
Aural (ears)	Deafness, Otitis, Ear Mites
Cancers/Tumours	Bone, Lung, Mammary, Ovarian, Skin, Stomach, Testicular
Cardiac (heart)	Dilated Cardiomyopathy, Heart Murmur, Mitral Valve Disease
Cerebral Vascular	Stroke
Dental (teeth)	Dental disease, Retained puppy teeth
Dermatological (skin)	Alopecia, Dermatitis, Demodex, Inter-digital Cysts, Pyoderma
Endocrine (hormone system)	Addison's, Cushing's, Diabetes, Hyperthyroidism
Gastrointestinal (digestive system)	Colitis, Gastric Torsion (bloat), Irritable Bowel Disease
Haematology (blood)	Platelet Abnormalities, Von Willebrand's Disease
Hepatic (liver)	Chronic Liver Disease, Hepatitis, Pancreatitis
Immune System	Atopy, Auto-immune Disease
Musculo-skeletal (bones, muscles, joints)	Arthritis, Elbow Dysplasia, Hip Dysplasia, Patella Luxation
Neurological	Epilepsy, Intervertebral Disc Disease, Wobbler's Syndrome
Ocular (eyes)	Blocked Tear Ducts, Cataracts, Distichiasis, Glaucoma, PRA
Reproductive – female	Difficulty Whelping, False Pregnancy, Failure to conceive
Reproductive – male	Cryptorchidism, Infertility
Respiratory	Bronchitis, Kennel Cough, Pneumonia
Urological	Cystitis, Cystouroliths, Incontinence, Urinary Tract Disorder

TIP: It's worth taking time to decide on the most appropriate way to categorise your health data as it will affect the design of your survey and the structure of the questions.

Template examples of intermediate level surveys are included with this toolkit.

ADVANCED SURVEY

Advanced level surveys are typically used for major breed health research, for example when collecting information about the breed worldwide, or specific epidemiological studies where the data must be robust and statistically valid. The survey will need to be designed so that the results can be analysed using dedicated survey software and therefore the form will largely be made up of "tick-box" type questions for ease of data processing.

An advanced survey will enable you to gather large quantities of data to give detailed insight into the breed's health and welfare. This inevitably means the data processing job is large and the analysis task can be very time-consuming and may require a statistician.

In some breeds, especially at intermediate and advanced levels, you may find your returns improve dramatically if you have an independent analyst. This could prove to be particularly beneficial if you are looking to create a world health survey of your breed, where respondents will definitely react better to a respected independent analyst.

An example of a Global Health Survey is shown below.

TIP: If you think your breed needs to carry out an advanced survey, discuss your plans with the Kennel Club's Health Team at an early stage. They will be able to offer advice on the specialists who can help you.

3: ORGANISING TO CARRY OUT A SURVEY

This section of the toolkit is intended to give you some simple ideas on ways to organise carrying out a survey. It will outline what jobs/roles are needed. It will also look at:

1. What skills are needed?
2. Where might you find these skills?

JOBS/ROLES

Carrying out a survey requires the undertaking of several different jobs, so it would be useful to have a small team involved. Most Breeds will have sufficient members on their Club/Council committees to manage the administration and research needed to deliver a good survey to its members and pet owners.

However, some jobs may need specific skills, such as IT, and this may necessitate identifying people from outside your committees, but who may be members of Clubs, and can help with managing and reporting data.

Jobs	Roles
Designing the Survey Form	Compile the questions Create an easy to follow sequential format
Create an introductory letter	Print sufficient letters to accompany a mail-out
Distribution	Decide where/how the forms will be accessed (Mail-out/Download) Decide how many to be printed and arrange printing/mailing/distribution
Data Capture	Dealing with returns, spreadsheets or online software ready to capture data input; set up in line with the Survey Form design
Analysis and Reporting	Analysing the returns and creating clear, meaningful reports to publish

SKILLS

There are three main sets of skill required:

- Leadership/Project Management
- Communication
- IT Skills and Knowledge

As well as specific technical skills related to survey design and analysis, effective communication, co-ordination and leadership skills are needed throughout.

LEADERSHIP/PROJECT MANAGEMENT

It is essential to have someone who has the energy, drive, and good leadership skills to head up organising any survey(s) you decide to undertake. Excellent organisational skills, ability to provide a timetable of events and organise resources, both material and human, are essential to ensure a well-managed team effort. Effective meeting skills are important and presentation skills are desirable, as you will see below, for effective communication.

COMMUNICATION

Having an individual on the team whose "people" and communication skills are well-honed will be a great asset for both face-to-face and written communication.

Designing the questionnaire itself is an exercise in effective communication. Compiling the questions, for instance, will need effective questioning techniques, which are important in gaining the information you want and how much detail is needed. A mixture of open and closed questions is needed to be effective in this respect.

TIP: Closed questions are useful for when you require a yes/no or short, confirmation answer.

Examples:

Do you own a Stud Dog? Or: Do your dogs have annual vaccinations?

Questions starting with the words Do you?, Have you? Did you? Will you?, are used to gain short answers.

TIP: Open questions will generally gain a fuller response, but can be more difficult to analyse.

Examples:

What illnesses have your dogs experienced? Or: What treatments have you used with your dogs?

A full explanation of the different types of question you can use in your survey is given in Section 4.

Communication skills to share and distribute results, whether written or by personal presentation, must also be considered. Those who take part in the survey will wish to see/hear the results and will expect them to be user friendly.

IT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

In Section 2 of this toolkit you will have read about the types of surveys and the different media used to capture information. You will probably appreciate that compiling some surveys will require specific IT skills and knowledge, and you will have to find out if there is someone in your Breed Club Committees or within your Membership who may possess these skills. If you are able to find someone with the correct skills, will they have the time to dedicate to setting up an electronic survey that can be completed on your website? You may have to budget for an external expert in this field to help you set up the IT system and train a suitable person to input and maintain the database and provide survey reports.

Knowledge of the computer software available that can be used on your website to create the survey itself, record the returns and analyse the results is essential. Section 6 has more information on IT tools to support your survey.

IN SUMMARY

There is much to consider in organising a survey and it is hoped that the points above will assist you in finding the right people, with the right skills, to help make your survey a success.

TIP: Conducting a Breed Health Survey is not a one-off exercise, you will need to identify a team of helpers who are prepared to improve and repeat the survey process at regular intervals.

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4: THE SURVEY PROCESS

Once you have decided on the type of Breed Health Survey you will use, there are four essential steps that you will need to follow.

PLAN	Set your objectives Design the survey
ISSUE	Communicate and motivate Gather responses
ANALYSE	Analyse the responses Publicise the results
IMPROVE	Implement your priority actions Review and repeat the survey

This section of the toolkit will take you through each of these steps and give you practical advice on how to carry out a survey.

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STEP 1: PLAN

DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

Start with the end in mind! You need to be clear what information you are trying to obtain and how you will use the data from your survey. Thinking about the questions is only part of the design process. You also need to consider how you want to analyse and display the results.

No. of Reports by Condition Category
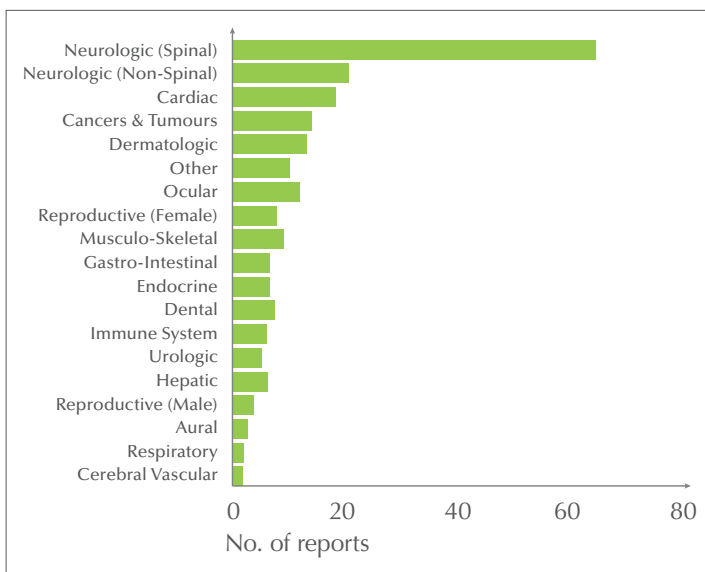
TIP: Try to identify the types of graph/chart you'll want to present in your final report, so that it's clear in your mind what questions you need to ask.

TIP: Create these identifier categories as lists of options rather than allowing free-form answers, to ensure consistency.

You may want to analyse the results for different categories of response e.g. dog/bitch, entire/neutered, bred from/not bred from, Standard/Miniature, or age.

To achieve this you will need to include an "Identifier" page of questions, usually at the beginning of the survey.

This also raises the question of whether or not the survey should allow anonymous responses. If you can guarantee anonymity, then it may be appropriate to ask for the respondent's name, or e-mail address, particularly if you need to target people for any follow-up investigations.

You may decide that you need to be able to identify the registered names of the dogs whose data are being collected. This will enable you to carry out any subsequent analysis of pedigrees, but it may put some people off responding to your survey.

SURVEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Keep the survey focussed on your objectives and be concise (avoid asking too many questions about too many topics)
- Make it easy for people to answer the questions (they need to be clear and unambiguous)
- Ask the right types of question (avoid leading and multiple questions – see later)

Every question should add value and move you closer to meeting your objective. For each question, ask yourself "what would I do if I knew the answer to this question?".

TIP: The shorter your survey, the more likely you are to get a high response rate. High response rates will give you more confidence in the validity of the answers.

TIP: Try to avoid mixing too many different types of question. Respondents will find the survey hard to follow and may get confused by the different types of response expected of them. Think about the logical flow of questions; don't jump around from topic to topic.

Types of Question

The main types of question you may wish to use are:

- Multiple Choice
- Rating
- Ranking
- Open
- Closed

Multiple Choice questions:

The respondent chooses one or more options from a list; e.g.

> **Example:**
>
> *Which of the following eye conditions has your dog been diagnosed with?*
>
> 1. *Entropion*
> 2. *Ectropion*
> 3. *Distichiasis*
> 4. *Progressive Retinal Atrophy*
> 5. *Other; please specify*

Make it clear if people are allowed to select more than one option and give them the choice of adding an alternative to those on your list. If you only want people to select one item, ensure the list contains mutually exclusive choices.

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RATING QUESTIONS:

The respondent is asked to select one point on a rating scale (e.g. from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). It is good practice to allow "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable" responses.

	To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree, nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1	This dog has a bold, outgoing temperament						
2	The Breed Club does a good job in communicating health priorities						
3	I am able to explain, with confidence, to pet buyers what the main health conditions are in our breed						

Tick one box for each behaviours	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Outgoing/friendly				
Excitable/active				
Excessive/persistent barking				
House-training problems				
Submissive urination (piddling)				
Separation anxiety				
Noise/thunderstorm fear				
Aggressive with people				
Aggressive with other dogs				
Nervous/fearful of people				

There is endless debate about whether rating scales should have even or odd numbers of choices and there's probably no right answer!

The middle option of a rating scale often attracts a substantial number of respondents who are unsure of their opinion, or who want to "sit on the fence".

A variation on this type of Rating Scale is to use a question that has two opposite statements at the ends of a rating scale, and the respondent is asked to choose from a numerical scale between the two ends.

TIP: Make sure that you create statements that are truly "opposites".

For example:

This dog's temperament is nervous	1	2	3	4	5	This dog's temperament is outgoing
This dog is fearful when meeting new people	1	2	3	4	5	This dog is confident when meeting new people

RANKING QUESTIONS:

Respondents are asked to place a number of options in their order of preference; e.g.

TIP: Don't make a Ranking list too long – no more than 5 or 6 items.

Please put the following methods of communication used by the Breed Club to disseminate health information in order of its effectiveness (1 = most effective; 5 = least effective):

E-mail Newsletters
Club Facebook page
Breed seminars
Club website
Club Newsletter (paper)

Bear in mind that ranking questions can be quite difficult to analyse and present results. You'll probably end up with something along the lines of: *"80% of respondents rated e-mail Newsletters as the least effective method".*

OPEN QUESTIONS:

These are free-form questions asking for a text response; e.g.

TIP: Leave plenty of space for responses to Open Questions.

"Please tell us what you think is the most significant health issue we need to address in the breed at the moment."

Remember, these types of answers are difficult to analyse, but they can give some useful insights into reasons behind responses to the other types of question. Don't have too many of them otherwise you'll spend a considerable amount of time trying to get any meaningful data. It's usually a good idea to have a single, final open question to allow respondents to provide you with any other information that they feel would be helpful.

TIP: If these Closed Questions are clearly defined, you may not need to give people a "Don't Know" option.

CLOSED QUESTIONS:

These questions are used to get "Yes" or "No" answers; e.g.

Has this dog been bred from?	Yes	No
Has this dog been spayed/neutered?	Yes	No
Has this dog suffered from Kennel Cough in the past 12 months?	Yes	No

WORDING OF QUESTIONS

It's very easy for words and instructions to be misunderstood and this is particularly the case in surveys because there is no opportunity for the respondent to ask questions.

Make sure that your instructions are absolutely clear. Keep sentences short, use lots of white space on the page and avoid jargon or words that may not be understood by everyone. You may also need to provide a separate glossary of health conditions where you explain briefly what each condition is and its symptoms.

TIP: Ask somebody with a fresh pair of eyes to read your draft survey to check for errors and make sure it's all clear and easy to understand.

If you are able to run a pilot (trial) of your survey, this can help you identify aspects of its design that might cause problems for respondents and therefore you can then make changes where necessary. A pilot might highlight questions that respondents are misinterpreting, or where you have missed possible answer options. It will also give you an idea of how long the survey will take for people to complete and you can get their reactions to the overall design and approach of the survey.

TIP: If you want to pilot your survey, take it to a Club/Council Committee meeting and get people to try it out. If you're holding a Health Testing day, or a Seminar, these can also be good places to get initial reactions.

OTHER THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

Multiple questions should be avoided:

For example, the following should actually be two different questions. One is about exercise and one is about grooming.

How often does your dog get exercised and groomed?

Or: this one, which should also be two questions

Does your dog have an outgoing temperament and is it good with children?

Leading questions should be avoided:

For example:
Do you prefer to give your dog Food X or Food Y?

The respondent may prefer neither of these options!

One small word can alter the meaning of a question radically:

For example:

"My dogs are vaccinated" may get a very different response to *"My dogs are vaccinated annually".*

TIP: Begin with easy/safe questions. If your survey is going to touch on sensitive issues such as inherited conditions that have occurred in the respondent's dogs, start with questions that are "safer" (e.g. Has this dog been bred from?) and build towards the more difficult ones. You don't want to put people off right at the start.

TIP: Check spelling, punctuation and grammar. If you're not confident in your spelling, punctuation or grammar, ask someone to help, who is. Always get your survey proof-read before it is issued.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Recipients will need to know:

- The purpose of the survey (what incentive is there for people to respond?)

- Specific instructions for completing the survey (how to fill it in and how long it is likely to take them)

- What you plan to do with the results (including whether they will get to see them)

- How you will deal with confidentiality

- Where, when and who to return paper-based surveys to (you may want provide a reply-paid envelope for paper-based surveys)

- How to access and complete the survey, if it's being done on-line

- Who to contact for help, or to answer queries

Generally, you will need to allow people two to three weeks to respond (which makes allowances for holidays). Any longer and they may forget. Try to avoid issuing surveys around major holiday periods (Summer/Christmas).

Finally, don't forget to include a "thank you" at the end of the survey to let people know that their time and effort is appreciated.

TIP: Include a covering letter or statement from your Breed's Health Sub-committee Chairman explaining why the survey is important, how it will be used and how it is endorsed by all your breed's clubs.

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STEP 2: ISSUE

The focus of this section of the toolkit is to offer ideas on how to improve your survey's response rate. This applies during the period leading up to the survey and while responses are coming in before the closing date.

COMMUNICATE AND MOTIVATE

Unless you can get a good response rate to your survey, the results you collect may not be of much use. A communication campaign using multiple channels (e.g. e-mail, website, newsletters) over the weeks and months before and during the survey will greatly increase your chance of having a good response rate.

1. Produce a user friendly questionnaire

Make sure the questions you ask are kept simple, concise and easy to complete. Create a logical flow throughout your survey and do not ask too many questions. Respondents may be overwhelmed by the sight of a long or complicated survey and may be less likely to complete it.

2. Perform a pilot test

Test your survey with a small group of friends or colleagues before finally distributing it. Ask them to read through the questionnaire, or to try and answer the questions themselves. Getting a second opinion gives you the reassurance that all of the questions are short and well phrased. People are less likely to respond if the questions do not make sense or are confusing.

3. Give pre-notification

Let people know that you will be carrying out a questionnaire well in advance. Make sure you publicise when you will be carrying it out and why it's so important. People who have already heard about the questionnaire and are aware of why you would like them to respond, will be more likely to complete one of your surveys. Make sure to tell as many different people in as many different ways as you can think of.

4. Personalise any communications

If respondents feel that the questionnaire, or any communication regarding the questionnaire, has been directed towards them, they will be more likely to respond. If possible, try writing any envelopes by hand, addressing any letters or e-mails to the intended recipient (i.e. "Dear Mr Smith") or hand signing any letters. Unfortunately, if you are sending out large numbers of questionnaires this may not be possible or practical.

5. Distribute your questionnaire to a number of different people

Assuming that you would like health information from a wide range of owners (not just Breed Club members) your communication campaign will need to use as many different approaches as possible. First of all, think about all the types of owners you need to make aware of the survey; for example:

- Club and Council Committee Officers/members
- Breed Club members
- Pet owners
- Owners who work their dog(s), or who take part in non-show activities

6. Distribute your questionnaire in a number of different ways

To increase the number of responses to your survey, try increasing the number of ways in which people hear about, or access, your questionnaire. You may wish your questionnaire to be paper-based, electronic Or: to gain maximum coverage, you could use both.

TIP: If you can brief people face-to-face, for example at a Breed Seminar or show, you will be able to explain the survey's purpose and answer any questions.

Paper-based

Paper based questionnaires can be posted out to potential participants, or you could hand them out at: shows, trials, matches, seminars or Club/Council meetings. If you are distributing them by hand, make sure to include a return postal address.

Electronic

Regardless of whether your questionnaire is an electronic document (e.g. Word or PDF) or uses an online survey tool (e.g. Surveymonkey or Kwiksurveys), it can be made available to participants on your breed website(s) as a link or a download. Once you have an electronic link to the questionnaire, this can be distributed through many channels:

- on forums/discussion groups (e.g. Yahoo Groups, Champdogs, Our Dogs Forum)
- on social networking sites (e.g. Facebook and Twitter)
- in the canine press (e.g. Dog World, Our Dogs, Dogs Today, Dogs Monthly, and K9 Magazine)
- in electronic newsletters or via e-mails.

Alternatively, you could distribute leaflets at: shows, trials, matches, seminars or Club/Council meetings, which point people towards how they can access your questionnaire. The more places your survey is available, the more people are likely to see it.

TIP: If you think people may not respond because they are worried about confidentiality, consider appointing an independent person to receive and analyse the survey results for you.

7. Keep your initial email or letter short and to the point

The more information you have in your opening invitation to complete the questionnaire, the less likely your participants are to read it. Make sure you keep it short and to the point, but do include:

- Who you are
- Why you are carrying out the survey
- What you will do with the data
- How long the questionnaire is likely to take to complete
- What the deadline for completion is
- Your contact details (for returning completed surveys or any feedback or questions)

8. Ensure confidentiality

The types of questions you ask in a health survey may be of a sensitive nature. Some participants may therefore be hesitant about answering these questions. Giving reassurance that responses will be kept confidential, or that participants can opt out of identifying themselves, may make some people more open to completing your survey.

9. Consider offering incentives

The offer of gifts or prizes, no matter how small, may encourage people to complete your questionnaire. You may want to offer people the chance to enter into a prize draw when they complete your questionnaire or even offer to make a small donation to charity for every survey completed. Although this can be an effective way of improving your response rate, the size of the giveaway will be strongly dependent on availability of resources and funds.

TIP: The best incentive may be as simple as letting people know how the survey's results will contribute to improving the breed's health.

GATHER RESPONSES

Once your survey has been announced, make sure you continue to be proactive and do things to ensure people remember to complete the survey and get it back to you on time.

1. Send reminder e-mails or letters

Sending out reminder e-mails or letters is likely to be the most effective way of increasing your response rates.

Some people may be very good at responding to you straight away, but many people will quickly forget about the questionnaire, or may put it on their ever expanding "things to do" pile. A few gentle reminders will be useful in jogging their memory and motivating them into completing the questionnaire. Try not to send too many reminders and, if possible, try to send reminders only to those who have not yet replied. If you have used any forums, social media etc. to publicise your questionnaire, then don't forget to issue reminders via these tools as well.

2. Monitor your response rates

If collecting paper-based surveys, you'll probably only know near to the closing date what sort of response you're going to have, as most people will leave it to the last minute. In the worst case, if you have a low response rate, you can always announce an extension for latecomers and perhaps allow another one or two weeks. If you do announce an extension make sure there is lots of publicity to help get more replies.

If you are using an online survey tool, you will usually be able to see reports of how many surveys have been completed and take account of this information to trigger further publicity. These reports will sometimes also show you if people are fully completing the survey, or if they are giving up part way through, or missing particular questions. Again, this information can help you identify further communications to improve response rates.

TIP: If, for example, you allow people a three week period to complete the survey, it can be helpful to send weekly reminders by e-mail and through social networking sites (e.g. "Two weeks to go"; "Only one day left to complete your survey").

3. After the closing date

As soon as you have responses to your survey you can start recording them in whichever software tool you have chosen (e.g. MS Excel/MS Access, or one of the online services such as Kwiksurveys). Don't underestimate how much time all this data entry can take - another good reason to opt for an online survey where the respondent fills in the information and you don't have to.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON HOW TO INCREASE YOUR SURVEY'S RESPONSE RATE

People who responded to your questionnaire will want to see what the outcome of the questionnaire was and what your findings are. Make sure that you publish your results online and, if possible, send all those who completed the questionnaire a link to your findings. The sooner you can share some results with the people who completed the survey, the more they will feel their effort has been worthwhile.

TIP: Showing people how they helped will encourage them to complete any surveys that you carry out in the future.

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STEP 3: ANALYSE

ANALYSE THE RESPONSES

This is likely to be the most time-consuming part of any survey because you need to ensure that the results you eventually present are accurate and meaningful.

If you are using an online survey tool, this can save you some time because it may have an analysis and reporting function built in. If it doesn't, you will almost certainly have to download the data in a format that you can then analyse in a spreadsheet or database.

Section 5 of this toolkit explains more about Analysis and Reporting.

WHAT ARE THE SURVEY RESPONSES TELLING YOU?

Crunching the numbers and producing charts or tables of data are only part of your analysis. The next step is to make sense of them and draw conclusions about what actions your breed might need to take.

In a toolkit like this we can't tell you what conclusions to draw from your survey. However, you might find any of the following:

TIP: Find somebody in your breed that is confident about working with data and spreadsheets and get them to help with the analysis.

- Health concerns that you weren't previously aware of
- Health issues that are either more, or less, prevalent than you previously suspected
- Confirmation of anecdotal evidence of health problems
- Confirmation that the health plans you already have in place do reflect the real priorities
- Evidence that actions you have already taken with health plans are making a difference

TIP: Don't try to tackle every health issue at once! There is some value in starting with something that is do-able, so that you can gain support and confidence from a wide group of breeders and owners.

IDENTIFY ACTIONS TO TAKE

Three Golden Rules apply to health surveys:

1. No measurement without recording
2. No recording without analysis
3. No analysis without action

These rules also work in reverse: you shouldn't be taking action unless you have analysed data from a well-designed survey!

The actions you plan to take will depend on a number of factors:

- The severity and impact of any particular health condition in your breed
- Whether or not any clinical or DNA screening tests are available
- The prevalence of the condition in your breed
- The genetic diversity of your breed
- How quickly a condition can be tackled (without adversely affecting genetic diversity)
- How easy it is to educate and inform breeders about health issues and solutions

WRITING UP YOUR RESULTS

Once you have collected and analysed your results you will need to present your findings in a survey report. The purpose of this document is to tell readers, who may be unfamiliar with your survey, what you found, how you found it and what these findings mean. The report will need to follow a logical order, which you may want to organise into several well defined sections, such as:

- Executive summary (a condensed description of your work and its findings)
- Contents page
- Introduction (why you decided to carry out the survey and any relevant background information)
- Methodology (how you carried out your survey)
- Results (what you found)
- Discussion and conclusions (what you think your findings mean and what your next steps are)

TIP: If distributing a questionnaire report by e-mail, send it out in Adobe pdf format. If sent out in an editable version, people can change your results and e-mail this changed document on to others.

Executive summary

This may be one of the most important parts of your report. Some people may not have time to read the entire document (despite all your hard work) and so a brief summary can give them a clear idea of what the report is about. The executive summary should be short (no more than one page), but should cover the objectives of the survey, how and why you carried out your survey, the highlights of your results, your conclusions and recommendations.

TIP: Write the executive summary after you have written the rest of the report. Read through each section and highlight 2-3 key sentences that summarise that section, then combine these into a paragraph.

Contents page

This lists the major sections of the survey report and the page numbers for where in the report you can find them. Don't forget you can list any appendices, such as the survey itself, which have not been integrated into the body of the report.

Introduction

This provides readers with an overall background and should state the purpose, goals and objectives of the survey. You should mention what inspired the survey and what you hoped to learn. If you are investigating specific health problems you may want to describe the significance of the problem and its impact, if known, on your breed. You could also include any background data, for example if any similar surveys were carried out previously, and what was found.

Methodology

Here you should describe exactly how you carried out the survey and how you obtained your results. You may want to include information on the dates when you sent out your first survey and when the last one was collected. Which groups of people did you send the survey to and how did you do this? Was it sent out by post, e-mail or was it an electronic questionnaire? How did people find out about your survey? What did you do with the results once you had collected your responses and how did you analyse them?

Results

The purpose of this section is to present and illustrate your findings. Make sure this is done in an objective way and only present the facts – save your interpretation of the data for the discussion and conclusion. The results should be organised around the major sections of the questions asked. You may want to state each survey question and then give a summary of how people responded. Percentages are a great way to show the results obtained. It may be useful to say how many people responded to each question and then show a percentage for each response, for example, "355 people responded to the question 'How many dogs do you own?', of which 55% had one, 25% had two and 20% had three". You can also use graphs or tables to illustrate your findings.

TIP: Be careful not to present the same data more than once. If you give information in a table or as text, then you may not need to show it again in a graph.

Graphs can be a very useful tool for showing results, but remember that they can take up a lot of space, so do not overuse them in a report. If you include a graph, make sure everything is clearly labelled, including axis, units and values. Make sure to give the graph a heading that summarises what it shows.

If using a table you could write a brief summary which highlights the main points of the table. Don't overdo it: readers can always look at the details in the table if they want to.

TIP: The use of colour in graphs is helpful, but remember that your report may be printed in black and white, or photocopied, so you may want to use patterns or choose colours that can easily be distinguished when displayed in greyscale, for example light blue vs. dark red. If using a table you could write a brief summary which highlights the main points of the table. Don't overdo it: readers can always look at the details in the table if they want to.

If any of your questions required a free text response, then organise and summarise the respondent's views. For example, "501 people responded to the question 'What concerns you most about health of your breed?', 58% (252 respondents) said they were concerned about eye problems, 30% (149 respondents) hip conditions and 20% (100 respondents) heart conditions". You can quote directly from some of the survey responses, but only if they clearly illustrate a view representative of the respondents.

TIP: Report the data without any "spin". Surveys are meant to be objective, so present the information as it stands.

Discussion and conclusions

The objective of this section is to highlight your findings, interpret the results and draw a conclusion. In this section you can mention what was learned from the survey, supporting statements with data from your results section, for example "Most dogs (82%) were found to be healthy". State all of your major findings and what they mean. If your results differ from your expectations, explain why that may have occurred. If your results agree, then explain why this was. You may suggest future directions, such as questions you may ask in future surveys. Also, indicate if the overall goals and objectives were met and if there will be follow-up surveys in the future.

Appendices

It's good practice to include a copy of the blank questionnaire so that people can see how it was structured – even though you may have already given the wording of each question individually in the body of the report.

PUBLICISE THE RESULTS

No doubt, when you initially told people about your plans for a survey, you promised that the results would be published. If you want people to help you with future surveys you have to be open and honest with the results and make them freely available. You also need to tell people what your Club/Council intends to do to address any issues that have been identified in the survey.

The most obvious way to publicise the survey's results is through a report which you can make available as a document download from your Club/Council website health pages. You could also use the results to create specific web pages on individual health conditions where you explain the condition, its symptoms and what the survey tells you about the condition in your breed.

TIP: Think about opportunities to use the survey results as part of your breed's regular communication on health. For example, you could publish a sequence of articles monthly, based on survey results for different health conditions.

If you're using online social media, you can achieve much wider publicity for your survey results through Facebook, Twitter and Discussion Groups. Don't forget the specialist dog press (Dog World and Our Dogs) and monthly pet magazines (Dogs Today and Dogs Monthly); if you've got a good news story, send them a Press Release or a short article and ask if they will publish it.

TIP: Look for as many different online options for publicising your survey results as possible, as well as the more conventional paper-based options such as Breed Club Newsletters.

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STEP 4: IMPROVE

IMPLEMENT YOUR PRIORITY ACTIONS

The overall purpose of any survey is to enable a breed to achieve further health improvement, or to begin to address any emerging health issues. We all know that breed health improvement is not going to happen overnight and you do need to set realistic expectations about what you plan to do and how quickly you can do it.

REVIEW AND REPEAT THE SURVEY

A breed health survey will help provide a lasting benefit and will set the direction for continuous health improvement. To achieve this you will need to:

- Review progress to ensure your health action plans are being implemented
- Identify what you have learned about doing a survey and improve the way you do it next time
- Repeat your survey at regular intervals

TIP: Review the four steps in this survey process to identify what went well, what didn't go so well, and what you need to do differently next time.

The first time you carry out a survey, there may be lots of lessons to learn, so carrying out a review with your team who designed and implemented it will be a good way to make sure your next one is better and easier.

By carrying out a regular survey you will be able to compare trends over time. Ideally, annual surveys would be performed, but this does require a significant amount of time and effort and you may find that it is more practical to repeat your survey every two or three years. Alternatively, you may want to consider making a continuous survey available so that data can be gathered throughout the year.

TIP: If you implement a continuous on-line survey, you can publish a summary of the results in your breed's Annual Health Report.

5: ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

This section of the toolkit is intended to give you some ideas on ways to analyse your survey and make it useful for those to whom you present it.

You don't have to be 'good at maths' and certainly not a statistician to be able to turn your survey results into useful information. However, if you can find someone in your breed who is confident in handling data and presenting numerical results, that will probably be useful.

There are three main concepts you may need to use when analysing your survey data:

- Averages
- Variation
- Trends

AVERAGES

'What do we mean when we use the phrase "average"? The reason we should ask this is that there are several different types of 'average'.

The most commonly understood average is the Mean, which is calculated by adding up all the data values and dividing by the number of data points. So, for example, if 10 dogs die at the following ages we can calculate their average age of death:

Dog 1	Dog 2	Dog 3	Dog 4	Dog 5	Dog 6	Dog 7	Dog 8	Dog 9	Dog 10
6	6.5	7	7	7	7.5	8	8	10	13

The Mean age of death of these 10 dogs is 8 (add up all the dogs' ages and divide by 10).

A second type of average is called the Median and it is this value that has usually been quoted when the results of the 2004 KC/BSAVA health survey are reported. The Median is the <u>middle value</u> of all the data points when they are listed in order from smallest to biggest. So, in our example above, the median is half-way between the fifth and sixth dogs' ages, which in this case is 7.25.

A third type of average is the Mode, which is the <u>most commonly occurring value</u> in the set of data. In our example, the Mode is 7.

As you can see, it's possible to get different answers depending on which 'average' you calculate.

TIP: Most of the time, the Mean is perfectly fine and is what most of your readers would recognise as the 'average'.

Sometimes, if your data include some extreme values, for example puppy deaths, using the Mean would skew the average to a lower value and therefore the Median would be more meaningful.

VARIATION

In addition to knowing the average (e.g. Age of Death or Litter Size) it's often helpful to tell people something about how much variation there is in the data. The simplest measure of variation is the Range: the difference between the highest and lowest values. In our example above, the youngest dog died at 6 and the oldest at 13; a range of 7 years, albeit in a very small sample.

TIP: In the examples of how to present your data below, we will show you how you can draw a graph (Histogram) to show the variation in your data.

TRENDS

If you are in the fortunate position of having done several surveys over a number of years, you will be able to present the trends that exist. Trend data tells you whether something is getting better, getting worse, or not changing at all. For example, you might be interested in finding out if the number of people using a DNA test is increasing year on year, or if litter sizes (and fertility) are decreasing over time.

TIP: Information on trends is really important because it will tell you if you need to be taking action, or if the actions you are taking are working.

Below, we will show you some simple charts to display trends.

DATA PRESENTATION

Only two choices about how to present your survey results are available:

• Tables of data
• Graphs/charts

Some people like looking at the numbers (Tables), while for others prefer looking at an image.

TIPS FOR TABLES

Put the biggest numbers or the newest year's data at the top and use vertical lists, rather than horizontal ones, as these are easier for the eye to scan downwards and make comparisons.

For example, in this table:

Year	Registrations	Litters
2010	49,000	9,800
2009	44,000	8,800
2008	38,000	7,600
2007	26,000	5,200
2006	22,000	4,400

Very few people need absolutely accurate numbers, so it's usually easier to look at if you can present numbers in a rounded form. In the previous table, we have rounded the numbers. It's then easier for people to do mental arithmetic (e.g. it's quite easy to see that average litter sizes have remained around 5 over the five years).

No. of Reports received	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Avg. No. of Reports per Condition per Qtr.
Distichiasis	31	28	25	38	31
Entropion	26	24	21	24	24
Ectropion	15	14	14	17	15
PRA	7	7	7	9	7.5
Cataracts	3	3	3	3	3
PPM	3	3	3	3	3
Total No. of Reports per Qtr.	85	79	73	94	Avg. No. of Reports per Qtr. = 83

Provide row/column averages or totals to help focus attention and also include a verbal summary to help your readers. For example, you might summarise, from this table:

"On average we receive 83 reports on eye conditions each quarter. Of those, the most common are Distichiasis and Entropion, with an average of 31 and 24 reports per quarter each, respectively."

GRAPHS AND CHARTS

Here are some of the commonly used types of chart, all of which can be created easily using MS Excel, Mac Numbers or Google Spreadsheets.
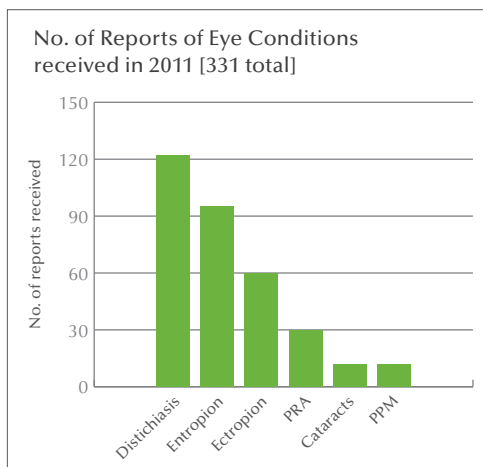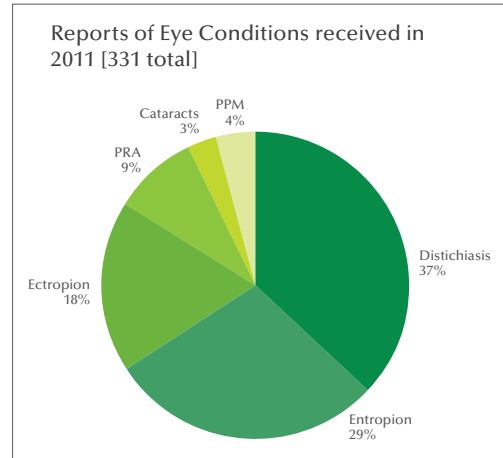
- Pie chart
- Bar chart
- Histogram
- Line graph

Pie Chart

The data points in a Pie chart are displayed as a percentage of the whole pie.

Good for: showing proportions, at a glance

Not good for: showing trends or comparisons over time

Reports of Eye Conditions received in 2011 [331 total]

No. of Reports of Eye Conditions received in 2011 [331 total]

Bar Chart

In Bar charts, categories are typically organised along the horizontal axis and values up the vertical axis.

Bar charts illustrate comparisons among individual items, but do not show proportions as in a Pie chart.

Good for: showing quantities of responses in different categories; often best when sorted into biggest to smallest

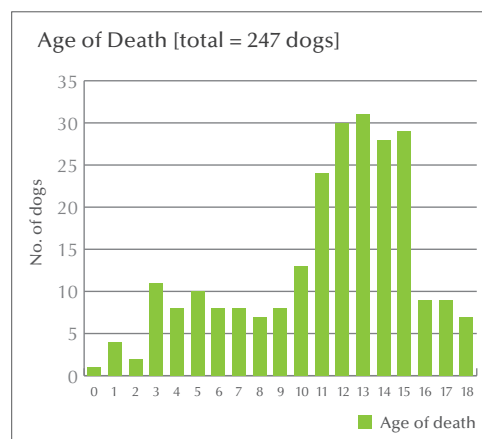*Not good for:* showing data over time (use a Line Graph instead)

Histogram

In Histograms, a variable (e.g. Age) is displayed along the horizontal axis and frequency up the vertical axis.

Good for: showing the variation in a set of data and to help decide if the Mean or Median are the best choice of average to quote

Not good for: showing variations over time

N.B. Excel also calls these "Bar Charts".

Age of Death [total = 247 dogs]

Line Graph

In a Line graph, time data are distributed evenly along the horizontal axis, and all value data are distributed up the vertical axis.

Good for: showing how results have changed over time (trends)

Not good for: comparing lots of different sets of results (too many lines make it hard to see what's going on)

Number of UK cord1 Tests by Variety
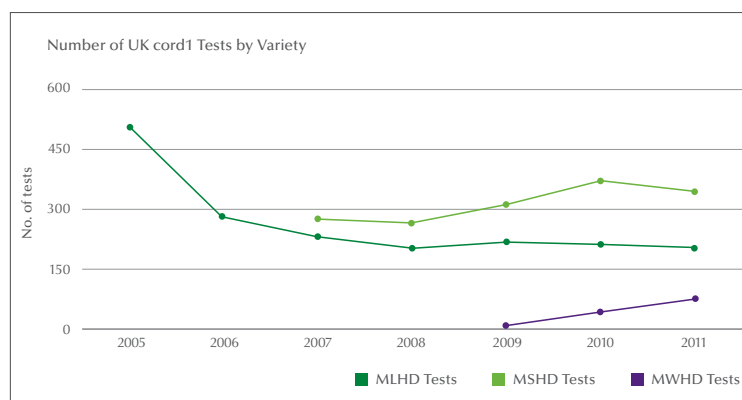
In this example, you'd need to explain that MSHD and MWHD testing had started in 2007 and 2009 respectively, otherwise people might wonder why there are no results for earlier years.

CONCLUSION

Tables and Graphs are the two main ways for you to present the results of your survey.

Use Tables when you have ten, or fewer data points, or if you need people to see the exact numerical values in your results.

Use Graphs when you have more than ten data points, or if you want to show people "the big picture", not detailed data. Don't clutter a graph with too many different sets of data; it's usually better to split the data into separate graphs.

TIP: Tables and Graphs should have clear titles and a written commentary to help your reader draw conclusions.

Remember, your data may be complex, but your presentation should be simple.

6: IT TOOLS TO SUPPORT YOUR SURVEY

In this toolkit we can't teach you how to use specific software, so if you're not able to create a survey yourself, or to analyse the results, you will need to find someone who is IT literate to help you.

Whatever type of survey you decide to conduct you are going to need some software to collate and help analyse the responses. Your options really fall into two groups of software:

- Desktop software that you have installed on your computer
- Online software that you access via the internet

DESKTOP SOFTWARE
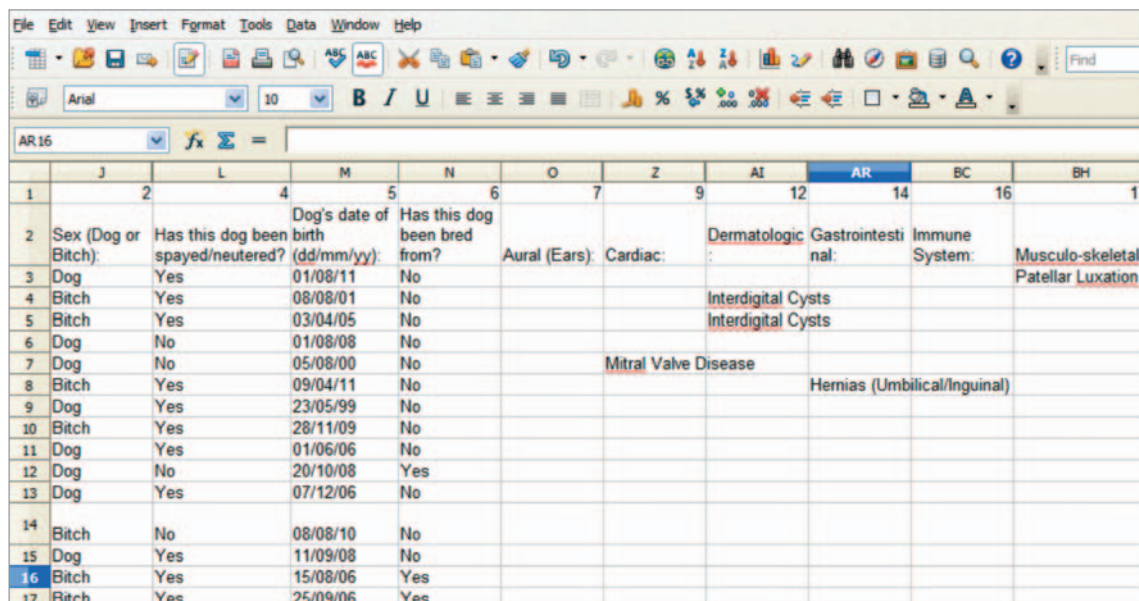
Most people with a PC or Mac will have access to either a Spreadsheet or a Database. While there is dedicated survey software available, for most people it will be too expensive or too specialised. The most commonly available desktop programs are:

	Windows PC	Apple Mac
Spreadsheet options	Microsoft Excel Open Office Calc	iWork Numbers Microsoft Excel Open Office Calc
Database options	Microsoft Access Open Office Base Filemaker Pro	Filemaker Pro Open Office Base

Most people will have one of the "Office" suites on their computer and, providing you are reasonably proficient, their spreadsheets can be used to carry out quite sophisticated analyses. Their databases are potentially more powerful in terms of the level of analysis that you can carry out, but the downside is that they can be more difficult to learn to use than a spreadsheet.

With your survey results in a spreadsheet it's easy to use the inbuilt data functions to produce summaries of, for example:

- How many dogs had a particular health condition
- How many dogs had no health issues reported
- How many dogs died
- What was the average age of death
- What proportion of dogs had been bred from
- Was there any difference between the health issues of dogs and bitches

	J	L	M	N	O	Z	AI	AR	BC	BH
1	2	4	5	6	7	9	12	14	16	17
2	Sex (Dog or Bitch):	Has this dog been spayed/neutered?	Dog's date of birth (dd/mm/yy):	Has this dog been bred from?	Aural (Ears):	Cardiac:	Dermatologic:	Gastrointestinal:	Immune System:	Musculo-skeletal
3	Dog	Yes	01/08/11	No						Patellar Luxation
4	Bitch	Yes	08/08/01	No			Interdigital Cysts			
5	Bitch	Yes	03/04/05	No			Interdigital Cysts			
6	Dog	No	01/08/08	No						
7	Dog	No	05/08/00	No		Mitral Valve Disease				
8	Bitch	Yes	09/04/11	No				Hernias (Umbilical/Inguinal)		
9	Dog	Yes	23/05/99	No						
10	Bitch	Yes	28/11/09	No						
11	Dog	Yes	01/06/06	No						
12	Dog	No	20/10/08	Yes						
13	Dog	Yes	07/12/06	No						
14	Bitch	No	08/08/10	No						
15	Dog	Yes	11/09/08	No						
16	Bitch	Yes	15/08/06	Yes						
17	Bitch	Yes	25/09/06	Yes						

TIP: For most people, a spreadsheet (above) will be the best tool to use for analysing a survey.

ONLINE SOFTWARE

Providing you have a reliable broadband internet connection, online software can often be used for analysing your survey responses AND to allow respondents to submit their survey responses. This gives you the potential to have your respondents do the data entry themselves, so all you have to worry about is analysing the results. However, you do have to remember that not everyone has internet access and you might deter people from responding if they don't have the option of sending you a paper survey response.

TIP: If you want to run a continuous health survey, rather than a one-off, you really need to use one of the online survey options.

If you do a Google Search for "online survey software" you will find lots of examples, but the most popular ones are probably:

www.kwiksurveys.com
www.surveymonkey.com
www.surveyconsole.com

These are dedicated survey tools that allow you to create your survey online and produce a variety of simple, standard reports quite easily. You do need to check out the limitations of any "free" options; for example, some tools only allow you to collect up to 100 responses.

Of these, we recommend you look at *www.kwiksurveys.com* which is completely free to use and has no limits on the number of surveys or responses you can create. Its main downside is that sometimes it embeds adverts in your surveys and this is obviously the supplier's way of generating income to help pay for the free service. You do have the option to pay for an advert-free service, but if you're only using the service to collate your survey results, rather than making it available to respondents, the free version is perfectly usable.

Most online services will enable you to design surveys with a variety of types of question, such as:

- Multiple choice with a single answer allowed
- Multiple choice with multiple answers allowed
- Ranking
- Star rating
- Text boxes

The example (from **kwiksurveys.com**) below shows a series of Multiple Choice questions where more than one option can be selected.

TIP: Don't get carried away by using too many different types of question; keep your survey simple for people to complete (see Section 4 for more survey design tips).

One alternative to the dedicated online survey software is Google Docs Spreadsheets, which has a Forms option that enables you to design a survey and store the results in a Google Spreadsheet.

TIP: You will need to sign-up for a free Google account in order to use Google Docs.

The example on the left was created using Google Docs and is used for continuous health reporting. It shows three different types of question, some of which are mandatory and some optional:

- Multiple choice "button" (with only one option allowed)
- Multiple Choice "pull-down menu" (with only one option allowed)
- Free text entry

Whichever online survey software you choose, you will have the option to send a link for the survey in an e-mail, or embed your survey in a website for people to submit their responses.

Most of the online survey tools have fairly limited reporting capabilities which means that you will have to download the survey responses as a spreadsheet and then do your detailed analysis off-line.

This is an example of the simple type of reporting that is available in kwiksurveys.com

TIP: For more information on how to analyse and present your survey results, see Section 5: Analysis and Reporting.

7: EXAMPLE SURVEYS

You can also find two examples of basic level surveys created using Kwiksurveys.com at the following links:

http://kwiksurveys.com?u=Basic_per_owner

http://kwiksurveys.com?u=Basic_per_dog

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The Royal Veterinary College's VetCompass project – *www.rvc.ac.uk/VetCompass*

Kwiksurveys – *www.kwiksurveys.com*

Survey Monkey – *www.surveymonkey.com*

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