

DOGS AND BITCHES OF UNKNOWN OR UNCLEAR VWD STATUS BEING USED FOR BREEDING

(For those who are not aware, von Willebrands disease (vWD) is a blood disorder similar to haemophilia in humans – MT`s can suffer from the mildest form of the disease Type 1)

The committee is becoming increasingly alarmed at the number of dogs and bitches being used for breeding where the vWD status appear to be unknown or unclear. Firstly, this is in breach of Club rules and secondly it does not bode well for the future of the breed and undermines all the work that the committee have put in place over the last ten years or so in an attempt to eradicate the disease from the breed.

There are only two 100% ways of knowing a dog`s vWD status:-

1. If it has been tested then the owner will have a copy of the test result and you should ask to see it as proof of the status. It may be included on the list of results on the KC website but in the early days of club testing it was optional for the owner to have the test result published; and if the owner had the dog tested privately then they may well not have passed the results to the KC.
2. If the dog is “Hereditarily clear” (clear by parentage) then this will be clearly stated on the official KC registration document and you should ask to see this as proof.

The committee will be writing to those persons, who they believe, are in breach of the club rules in this respect, whether knowingly or innocently believing what they have been told by their breeder.

If you are a stud dog owner, or you wish to breed with your bitch, please ask for proof of the vWD status and accept nothing less than one of the two options above. If you have already bred a litter from a dog/bitch whose status is unknown then you should notify all your puppy owners that should they wish to breed, they must get their dog tested to ascertain its status.

If your dog/bitch is a carrier then you can still breed with it but you must ensure that he/she is only mated to a Clear dog. And all the resulting pups should be tested so that the new owners are aware of the status of their dog.

It is good practice to put breeding restrictions on all the litter as these can be lifted upon request if you feel that the animal is good enough to breed and that the vWD status is known.

Also, if you have an account with MyKC online then you can look up the breeding, pedigree, health results of any dog registered with the KC.

Please find below a document produced by the Club some years ago, which newer members will not have seen. There is also further information about vWD in the Health section of the Club website.

von Willebrand’s Disease in the Manchester Terrier

In 2005 the BMTC Committee took the decision to initiate a programme to begin the eradication of the only major health issue of the Manchester Terrier, a mutant gene that affects the ability of an Affected dog to make the von Willebrand factor. This factor is a protein involved in the initiation of clotting of the blood at the site of injury. Despite the publicity given to this programme, untested stock continues to be used in breeding programmes, and not all puppies born to a Carrier or “status unknown” parent are currently tested. We therefore consider it prudent to once more bring the facts of this to the notice of BMTC members.

No one knows how or when this mutant gene entered the Manchester Terrier breed gene pool – it could have come from another breed introduced into the MT population, or it could have been a mutation in just one particular dog. We should stress that the mutation in the Manchester Terrier is only the Type 1 von Willebrand disease, which is the mildest form. Type II and Type III diseases result from totally different mutations of the gene and have not been identified in the Manchester Terrier. Even Affected dogs still produce a small amount of the clotting factor, 10-20% of the normal levels.

There is a straightforward, easily accessible, non-invasive and relatively inexpensive DNA test that provides us with the status of any dog. This test is available, although not exclusively, through the BMTC. The status of tested dogs can be viewed on the KC website, although again regrettably this information is currently incomplete, as in some cases breeders have only forwarded their Clear results.

Dogs have two copies (allele) of each gene, so as puppies inherit one from each parent there are 3 possible outcomes:

Clear/Normal. Two normal alleles of the gene have been inherited.

Carrier. One clear and one mutant allele have been inherited

Affected. The dog has inherited two mutant alleles.

If you breed Clear with a Carrier you have a 50/50 chance of breeding a Clear or Carrier puppy. If you mate a Carrier to another Carrier you have a one in four chance of the resultant puppy being Affected.

We feel it is of utmost importance that we continue to be vigilant in our efforts to improve the chance of a long and healthy life for future Manchester Terriers by doing everything we can to improve the status of the current breeding stock. There is no problem in using a Carrier in a breeding programme, as long as it is done responsibly and with full knowledge of the status of both parents and testing of all the resulting puppies.

Our gene pool is too small to try to go too quickly into breeding only with Clear dogs, although this is obviously a long term aim. We feel it is of the utmost importance that we continue to breed responsibly by doing everything we can to manage and improve the current status of breeding stock by DNA testing all puppies born when a Carrier has been used. The status of both parents must be confirmed prior to mating.

We stress that there is absolutely no stigma attached to a dog being a Carrier as this does not affect the dogs health or longevity but, should be taken into consideration should that dog be used for breeding purposes. Von Willebrand's Disease is a fact of the Breed to be accepted and the knowledge to be used responsibly in managing breeding programmes

We are therefore introducing new measures to try to encourage new and established breeders to put the vWD status of the prospective puppies to the forefront when considering a mate for their Bitch. The Stud Dog owner also has a responsibility to ensure his progeny are not at risk.

We are firmly of the belief that ALL puppies that are not born Clear by Parentage should be tested. It is not enough to only test one or two out of a litter – it will not tell you the status of the rest of the litter and all test results should be forwarded to the KC list if this is not done automatically. Last year 24% of puppies that should have been tested (at least one parent is a known Carrier) were untested.

Even if they are to be passed to homes that do not initially wish to breed, situations alter, so the only safe solution is to pass them on to their new homes with the status known.

Knowing the status of our dogs and making sure that prospective breeding partners are also known is the way forward towards eradicating this genetic mutation from the breed. Let us all work together to maintain and improve the overall health status of the breed we all value and love.

The measures we are implementing to further progress towards our aim are:

1. Anyone wishing to advertise their pups on the BMTC website will be required to provide evidence that their pups are either Clear of vWD by parentage or that they have or will be tested by DNA sample
2. A proposal will be put to the next AGM by the Committee to incorporate a new rule regarding the compulsory testing of puppies who have a Carrier parent (this has not yet happened)
3. By purchasing a subsidised test kit from the BMTC you are agreeing to allow your test results to be passed directly to the Kennel Club for inclusion on the publicised lists

NB There are other tests available to breeders which are KC approved but these are more expensive than the ones discounted through the BMTC scheme

Useful internet links

Description of VWD

<http://www.british-manchester-terrier-club.co.uk/vwd.htm>

Resume of Dr Jeff Sampson`s talk about vWD

<http://www.british-manchester-terrier-club.co.uk/vwd2.htm>

Kennel club information about health screening

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/glossary/screening-scheme.aspx?id=DNA+test+-+vWD&ReturnUrl=%2fservices%2fpublic%2fglossary%2fscreening-all.aspx>

Kennel Club literature about Breeding from your DNA tested dog

http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/324433/breeding_from_your_dna_tested_dog_web.pdf

Published lists of Clears, Carriers and Affected

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/234895/manchesterterriervwdclears.pdf>

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/234899/manchesterterriervwdcarriers.pdf>

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/234903/manchesterterriervwdaffecteds.pdf>