

CEREBELLAR ATAXIA 8

UPDATE January 10, 1999
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It is just over a year since the two puppy bitches from Christine Bennett's litter, out of Spice (Hochapepa Gladys All Fawp) by Monza (Nantiderri Naroi dei Monzamo), were diagnosed as suffering from CA, so now seems an appropriate time for an update of the situation.

Some of you will have read in Dog World that Dr. Simon Wheeler has left the Royal Veterinary College to take up a post in private industry. This came as a bit of a blow as he knew the case histories of the affected puppies and, the last time I spoke to him, was quite optimistic about the progress of the research. His successor, Dr. Mike Target, has offered to continue the research for us, as and when he has some spare time, and we should be grateful for the continuing support from the RVC. (Don't forget that we can help the charity wing of the RVC, the Animal Care Trust, to raise funds by collecting used stamps, postcards, telephone cards, unwanted foreign coins and notes, etc. My last appeal resulted in only one envelope of used stamps which is an appalling response, we need the support of all members so please try and help. The more funds that can be raised the better the chances of Dr. Target being able to continue with the research so come, it doesn't cost anything to collect these items, just a few minutes of your time, and you can pass on the items to me or to any Committee member)

Dr. Target is currently arranging for tissue samples from the affected puppies to be sent to Dr. Matthew Binns, at the Animal Health Trust, for DNA profiling. These will join the other sixty plus blood samples from related dogs and bitches, some of which have already been collected and some are in the process of being collected at the moment. If there are enough samples from the affected puppies, and these are in good condition, then we should have enough genetic material on which to base the research into identifying the mutant gene. If this is the case then I will be applying for funding from some of the large Trust Funds who are keen to donate money for medical research in the animal world. Dr. Binns has stated that the AHT would be very keen to do the research if we can come up with the funding. Hopefully we should know soon, one way or the other.

There have been no further reports of affected puppies since the last one was euthanised in June last year. He was from an accidental grandmother to grandson mating, Lanka Ernesto x Capricho Barona del Gaesten.

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In November I was very saddened to receive the news that a dog from the Spice x Monza litter had died suddenly in its sleep, aged 20 months. It may, or may not, have any connection with CA but fortunately the owner contacted Christine Bennett immediately and she was lucky enough to be able to speak to Dr. Mike Target, at the RVC, who arranged for tissue samples from the brain to be sent to him for examination. We are still waiting for the results but the actual post mortem carried out by the owner's vet showed no signs of disease anywhere in the body. This brings the total of puppies that have died from that litter to four, as one other puppy died in its sleep aged six months. Unfortunately the owners didn't want a post mortem and, at that time, we didn't know that the other two puppies were suffering from CA so we didn't pursue it. What we need now is for anyone who has had a young Spinone die in similar circumstances to report this to the Health Sub Committee as soon as possible, either by telephone but preferably in writing with a copy of the pedigree. All such reports should be sent to Chris Guest at Gilpins, Meaton Lane, Rock, Kidderminster, Worcs. DY14 8NT, Tel: 01299 841407. We also need brain tissue from any Spinone, aged approximately one year, that dies from any other cause, such as a road accident. This is required so that Dr. Target can make comparisons with the tissue from the affected puppies but the samples have to be collected within 12 hours of death. I know how distressing it is to lose a much loved Spinone but we need your help so please ring me straight away if you should be unfortunate enough to lose such a dog and are willing to help. My telephone number at home is 01522 792743 or at work 01522 547261.

It is vital that everyone is open and honest about reporting health problems in Spinoni, after all, what is the point of breeding beautiful dogs if they are plagued with health problems, which not only cause the dogs discomfort and pain, and sometimes premature death but cause heartache for the owners and a dim future for the breed in general. It costs nothing except the price of a stamp and a few minutes of your time to let the Health Committee know of any problem, no matter how small, so that we can collate the information and work together to eradicate some of the diseases which affect our lovely breed. With the recent completion of the Canine Genome Map it will be much easier to track down the hereditary diseases and wipe them out completely, but it's all down to us. We say we are the guardians of the breed, let's prove it.

Many of you with progeny of Wynsett Jumping Jack Flash have been asking whether he has been cleared of being a carrier of CA by Dr. Cattnach. The answer at the moment is no, he hasn't been cleared yet but Linda Collins, who owned Jack, has recently sent questionnaires out to

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all owners of bitches that were mated to Jack in order to collect information about the resulting litters. If you are one of those owners, please complete and return the questionnaire as soon as possible or, if you haven't received the questionnaire, please contact either Linda or myself and we will send you one. Once all the information has been collected it will be sent to Dr. Cattnach who will study it and let Linda and myself know the outcome.

Because Jack had such a large influence on the breed the result will be published in the Dog press as soon as it is available and I am sure that Linda will inform those people who used Jack on their bitches also.

If anyone needs any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number.

Below is a list of dogs and bitches that, despite being implicated by pedigree, have been cleared by Dr. Cattnach.

Pat Wilkinson
Health Sub Committee
The Italian Spinone Club of Great Britain

SPINONI IMPLICATED BY PEDIGREE BUT CLEARED OF CEREBELLAR ATAXIA FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE CA CONTROL SCHEME DOGS

REDRUE LEGATO	REDRUE RUBATO
REDRUE SOSTENUTO	REDRUE SPIRITOSO
REDRUE ALLEGRETTO	REDRUE FORTISSIMO
REDRUE SFORZANDO	

BITCHES

WYNSETT IT'SA KINDA MAGIC AT HOCHOPEPA
WYNSETT CONTESSA OF REDRUE
REDRUE ANDANTE
REDRUE AURORA
REDRUE VIVACE
REDRUE JUNO

Issued by Pat Wilkinson on behalf of the ISCGB