

Health report for the Border Terrier Clubs - Feb 2019

Twenty two (22) health reports were submitted during 2018. The diseases mentioned were as follows: 2 with Biliary (Gallbladder) Mucocoele; 1 CECS case; 1 report of Gallstones; 2 with skin allergy; 1 Keratoconjunctivitis ('dry eye'); 2 gastric conditions; 1 Cushings Disease; 1 ataxia; 1 patella luxation (slipping patella). Conditions requiring surgery included cruciate ligament damage (2); removal of foreign body (2); dental condition; mammary tumour; gallstone removal, gallbladder removal (2). Other reported concerns were: occasional shivering or shaking related to falling asleep and a bitch with urinary incontinence linked to neutering.

During 2018 ten (10) cases of CECS were reported using the CECS report form. Seven (7) reports were from the UK, two (2) from New Zealand and one (1) from Belgium. The age range when each dog first suffered an episode was between 1-6 years of age. Although the average age was 2.7 years, there were three dogs where the first instance was between 1-2 years of age. A research project has been commissioned through a collaboration between Mark Lowrie, a specialist in neurology, and the Animal Health Trust. The study intends to identify cases of CECS and compare their genomes with unaffected dogs through a Genome Wide Association Study. This research will take some time to make progress as the first phase is the collection of suitable dogs for sampling. This is unlikely to achieve more than identifying a number of possible genetic markers for further investigation.

Nine (9) case reports of gallbladder Mucocoele were received as a result of a specific request for information. A questionnaire was launched in the latter part of 2018, through Nottingham University Veterinary School, to gain further insight into the prevalence and characteristics of this condition. Work continues and further information, as it arises, will be posted on the Border Terrier Health website.

There were no reports of litters affected with Shaking Puppy Syndrome (SLEM) during the year. This is good news as a suitable gene test exists and this outcome tends to support the effectiveness and accuracy of the test (i.e. no identified errors in the test results). Tested dogs now exceed 1,200 with a carrier rate of approximately 15%. Note this estimate of the carrier rate does not take account of the rapidly increasing numbers of hereditarily clear dogs and thus is only a measure of carrier dogs in the tested population. As the number of hereditarily clear dogs increases the number of dogs submitted for testing can be expected to decline. The carrier rate will decline over time but is likely to remain at the current level as long as dog breeders use carriers in their breeding programme to maintain genetic diversity and characteristics specific to breed-lines.

Breed Health Conservation Plans - During the year the Health Group met with the Kennel Club Health team to discuss a Breed Health Conservation Plan. This is a Kennel Club initiative and their intent is to identify the diseases most likely to cause significant health and welfare issues in dogs. For the Border Terrier, SLEM, CECS and Biliary Mucocoele have been identified as priority diseases for the breed. However, Cushings Disease and Epilepsy are also listed as being of concern. It is likely both of these latter two diseases will be investigated in projects engaging a number of different breeds with higher than average prevalence.

Other diseases - Various other conditions have been reported during 2018. Cushing's disease continues to be sporadically reported and various data suggest we have an increased prevalence in the breed. This is a hormonal disease with a tumour in either the pituitary gland or an adrenal gland as the underlying cause. This condition affects dogs in general but some breeds seem to have a predisposition to the condition suggesting there are genetic risk factors. Perth's disease has generated a number of third party (anecdotal) reports and occasional factual report in the Health Survey. Perthes Disease has a traumatic element in its development but has been suspected in a number of small breeds to have an inherited basis. More reporting of these cases is needed before any further investigation can be considered.

Allergic skin conditions are also reported and this family of conditions affects dogs as a whole and is being investigated as a condition of dogs in general.

As health issues are constantly under review may I recommend that you visit the Border Terrier Breed Web site listed below on a regular basis to get the most up to date information and recommendations.

www.borderterrierhealth.org.uk

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Glossary

CECS - Canine Epileptoid Cramping Syndrome (Also Spikes Disease)
SLEM - Spongiform LeucoEncephaloMyelopathy