

Continuing the Health Survey Mk II

In 2000 the committee approved the running of an ongoing health survey and appointed a health co-ordinator namely myself Patricia Fieldhouse. The survey was started in January 2001, although it we have continued to collect forms, work on the analysis of the data was suspended for 2 years due to personal circumstances, it was then re-circulated in 2004/2005 before being again suspended again this work has now started again. Our aim is to identify and monitor health “problems” in the breed and then to work to make the lives of the Pyrenean Mountain Dog longer and healthier. Your help in filling this out will be an important part of assuring Pyrenean Mountain Dog owners of the future will have long living, healthy dogs. We need to hear about the healthy dogs as well as the dogs with problems so that we get a balanced view of the breed. We need a good cross section of rescue, breeding, show and pet dogs so that the survey is as representative of our breed as possible.

We will be publishing articles based on information from the health survey throughout the year. This will start to give people the idea of how the survey information may be used, note that it will take several more years of collecting information before firm conclusions can be made.

AT NO TIME WILL ANY INFORMATION REGARDING ANY CONDITION AFFECTING A PARTICULAR DOG BE PUBLISHED IN ANY FORM THAT MAKES THE DOG OR AFFIX OR BREEDER OR OWNER IDENTIFIABLE. The information in the survey will be kept strictly confidential basis. If anyone has reason to complain with the way the survey is being run please put it in writing to myself or the chairman of the club.

It is hoped that by having this health survey in place we will be able to achieve a number of things here are just few:

1. To help increase the longevity and health of the breed.
2. When we have one experienced breeder saying ‘I think we have a problem with...’ and another experienced breeder then say ‘No we don’t in all my x years of breeding I never had a case of that.’ There will be evidence that in fact out of y dogs’ z% of them had that condition and hopefully that percentage is small.
3. To help prove that we have one of the healthiest giant breeds and to help keep our breed that way.
4. To provide a reference for breeders so that if they come across something they can see how (un) common it is in the breed.
5. It will help the club provide support to breeders, if it becomes apparent that a condition is common in the breed. We can publish information on it or put on talks to help breeders and owners to minimise the problem. The survey is NOT about witch-hunts or telling breeders how to breed. It is aimed at providing valuable information to enable breeders to make informed decisions for themselves.
6. Should it become apparent that a condition in the breed needs researching it will hopefully provide a base for that research and help the club in interesting researchers and making a case for the breed.
7. To provide early warning if the rate of incidence of a condition starts to increase. We can raise awareness to the problem, so hopefully stopping a small problem becoming a larger problem.

It would be appreciated if you can fill in the enclosed survey form, 1 per dog. Any amount of information that you can give us would be appreciated. We do realise that the survey is a very detailed questionnaire, but hope that people will think it is worth while spending the time filling it in. Also, in the tables you only need to fill in the information if your dog has suffered from a condition otherwise just leave them blank. You will notice that we have listed in the tables many different conditions that MAY occur. If your dog has had any of them, put a tick or a cross or write “yes” next to it and then fill in the age of the dog when the condition first developed. If the dog DID NOT have a condition, please leave that line BLANK. **Remember a healthy dog is great news and we need to hear about it.** Please bear in mind that some information is better than none

at all. We would also encourage owners to provide as much additional information as possible. You can also fill in questionnaires on past dogs the more information we can collate the better. Unless your dog has suffered from a particular condition, we suggest that you wait until your puppy is at least 12 months old before doing a questionnaire. But please remember if your dog has had none of the problems listed, we would still like to have the questionnaire completed. **GOOD HEALTH IS GOOD NEWS! LET'S HEAR ABOUT IT.**

On the survey we are asking people to identify themselves and their dogs this is done for a number of reasons again here are a few of them:

- a) To enable dogs to be uniquely identified in the database. This will enable us to take updates on dogs with out distorting the statistics. For example, if survey form is submitted for a 3 year old male dog with condition A. Then 4 years later a questionnaire is submitted with the same dog with condition A and a second condition B. If we could not uniquely identify the dog then the static's would read for 2 dogs with 2 instances of condition A and 1 instance of condition B. Rather than, correctly reading 1 dog with 1 instance of condition of A and B. Over time the static's would become seriously distorted and under-mine what the survey is trying to achieve.
- b) If we need more information about a particular condition the health survey co-ordinator can target those people with follow up questionnaires.
- c) By asking for owners' names it helps us to identify between a rescue called spot owned by Mr. Smith and a rescue called spot owned by Mrs. Jones.
- d) With the pedigree information (where known) it will help to look at how conditions are inherited. However if you Pyrenean is not a pedigree dog please still submit a questionnaire.
- e) The pedigree information will also help us match up dogs which have changed ownership, so not to distorting the static's as mentioned in a) also matching up where medical information on conditions provided first hand rather than second hand where slight discrepancies may creep in.
- f) Once the survey has been running for a period of time and we have a reasonable sized database. The pedigree information will help to determine if a condition is likely to be caused by hereditary factors or environmental factors or both.

If you feel strongly against giving you name and your dogs name you can leave your details blank. **HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE FILLING IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE ANONYMOUSLY THE DOG MUST BE DECEASED.** Please only do this if you are the owner and keeper of that dog so we only have 1 copy of the record in the database. This is to protect the validity of the statistics in the bred a couple of examples are the following situations:

- a) An anonymous survey being submitted when a dog is young then another when the dog dies. There would be no way to match the information up so some of the information would be counted twice.
- b) A survey be submitted, then the dog changes home for some reason and the new owners does not realise a questionnaire has been submitted and submits a second one.

If your dog is no longer living, please fill out as much of the questionnaire as you can. The general health of the dog and the age and cause of death are important pieces of information.

Please note that we are happy to except surveys from 'Historical' dogs. We already have information on dogs born in the 60's and 70's.

As this is important I risk boring you by repeating my self we need to hear about the healthy dogs as well as the dogs with problems so that we get a balanced view of the breed. We need a good cross section of rescue, breeding, show and pet dogs. I am looking forward to receiving your questionnaire and your co-operation in doing this for the positive benefit of the breed. Hopefully we will also benefit in the years to come by having the pleasure of owning longer living, healthier dogs.

For further information regarding the health survey or more copies of the survey you can contact me evenings and week-ends on 01934-824213 or pmdcgbhs@pyrenvale.org.uk. Please submit your surveys to Miss. P. M. Fieldhouse, PMDC of GB Health Survey, 10 Trenchard Road, Locking, Weston-Super-Mare, N. Somerset. BS24 7AH

On behalf of the breed and the Pyrenean Mountain Dog Club of Great Britain, we thank you for your participation in this important project.

Patricia Fieldhouse.