

The Bearded Collie Breed Liaison Committee



Canine Addison's Research Project

Addison's disease (hypoadrenocorticism) is an autoimmune condition that occurs in dogs when the immune system attacks and destroys the adrenal gland. This leads to a deficiency of steroid hormones that are important for metabolism and regulating electrolyte levels in the blood. However the symptoms can be very general which makes it hard to diagnose quickly.

In June the Joint Breed Liaison Committee (JBLC) was contacted by Prof Brian Catchpole from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons regarding a research project he wanted to conduct on Addison's Disease. Prof Catchpole and his team have identified some of the genetic risk factors involved and are interested in carrying out further research to see if they can develop a diagnostic blood test which could potentially identify dogs that have an autoimmune reaction before they develop clinical signs.

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust awarded a grant of £25,000 to fund a veterinary graduate to undertake research training but the JBLC were tasked with raising an additional £5,000 to support the laboratory research costs to analyse the samples. And they had less than a month to raise the money! An online donation page was set up and launched via the Bearded Collie community Facebook pages. The JBLC kick-started the fund raising with a donation of £1,000 on behalf of all the UK Bearded Collie Clubs. In less than 14 days the target was not only reached but exceeded and now over £10,000 has been raised, helped by a generous donation of £1,000 from the UK Standard Poodle Club as this research will benefit all dogs, not just Beardies.

The additional funds raised will be used to support research into autoimmune disease in dogs in general and the JBLC will provide updates of the projects supported.

At the time of going to press, the RVC Ethics and Welfare Committee have approved the study and sample collection and Prof Catching is liaising with the RVC IT department to create a web link for downloading sample submission forms and information sheets etc. As soon as this is available we will put detail on our website and Facebook pages.

Samples from newly diagnosed are best because antibodies are more likely to be present but it is thought that samples from all Addisonian dogs will be collected. Until Prof Catchpole is able to take samples, if the owners of any newly diagnosed dogs could ask their vet to take an extra sample for the research project and store it until the project begins. The blood samples should be collected in a EDTA tube or clot in a plain tube.

For further information please contact Yvonne Fox (y.fox@bushbladesbeardies.co.uk), Jo Tucker (cimda@aslog.co.uk) or Sarah Ritchie (07739 981901 or email sarah.j.ritchie@hotmail.co.uk).