

Australian Terrier Club of America
Health Committee Report
August 2007

I. Committee Projects

The health incident and longevity forms are currently available for download on the ATCA and Aussie Health websites. The participation in these has dwindled, depending on the success of the health survey we are considering moving these to an internet format where all data could be entered on-line in real time and be kept on a secure database.

The Buyer's Database has had no participation over the last year. At this point we will scrap this project and try to contact pet owners through other avenues.

The health committee is moving the 2007 health survey to a website- surveymonkey.com. Owners and breeders can fill out the information on-line and submit automatically to a secure confidential database. We can send out electronic invitations, post banners which will link to the questionnaire, and post real time results for participants to see. We will still have downloadable paper forms available upon request.

II. Research

Dr. Rebecka Hess- Diabetes

Dr. Hess at the University of Pennsylvania is continuing work on grant 610 from CHF and AKC. ATCA was asked to help support this research financially as well as with Aussie DNA samples. Her research will search for genes associated with increased risk for diabetes. She states... "Early genetic identification of carriers and dogs that are likely to develop diabetes will enable breeders to determine which dogs are not fit for breeding with one another, years before clinical signs of diabetes develops"

We have gotten the word out to ATCA members and pet owners through the ATCA and Aussie Health websites, through Darlene Evans' yahoo aussieterrier group, through blast e-mailings to Angie Cross Bly's diabetes volunteer list, and through many kind referrals through ATCA members. As of August 2007 we have 22 affected samples and 94 unaffected samples, we are in dire need of diabetic samples at this point. Our financial obligation to this grant has been fulfilled.

Dr George Moore CHF Grant 759- AKC Canine Health Foundation has funded a 2-year study to investigate the causes for vaccination-induced allergic reactions in dogs.

Allergic reactions are the most common adverse event associated with vaccination in dogs. Recent research has demonstrated that small dogs are at higher risk for these reactions. Although the specific cause of allergic reactions in dogs remains unknown, vaccine components residual from the manufacturing process have been incriminated. This study will compare the serum antibody concentrations in Australian Terriers demonstrating allergic reactions versus antibody concentrations in other Australian

Terriers that don't have reactions, seeking to identify the vaccine components that stimulate allergic reactions.

From Dr Moore's letter to our club : "Our desire is to receive serum samples from at least 25 Australian Terriers with allergic reactions after vaccination and 25 Australian Terriers (their littermates, if possible) that did not experience reactions after vaccination. We are asking owners to have their veterinarian draw blood (3-5 ml) from each dog within 1 month of vaccination/reaction, and we will coordinate with the veterinarian to mail us the serum from the blood. We will analyze the samples for increases in antibodies against vaccine components that might have caused the allergic reaction. Owners may choose to receive the results of the tests for their dog(s) or may remain anonymous."

More information on this study can be found at <http://www.vet.purdue.edu/k9vaxrxn/>
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Dr Wayne Potts CHF Grant 305- at the University of Utah has recently completed working on research which focuses on finding specific alleles located in the Major Histocompatibility Complex that govern the immune system. This complex plays a role in diseases such as diabetes, autoimmune thyroiditis, and autoimmune hemolytic anemia. A dog cannot get diabetes without these alleles present. If they are present, the dog, even though it may not get diabetes due to lack of a trigger (such as steroids or obesity) is genetically predisposed for the disease. Dr Potts had previously filed for an extension to help him collect samples from the other breeds, however our club had already donated all of the samples requested from us. His final report has been submitted to CHF but no information has been released to the participating clubs yet about the outcomes of his research.

Canine Genome Project

At the end of 2005 our club was contacted by Dana Mosher of the Canine Genome Project at Ostrander Labs. Our club was asked to coordinate the donation of 20 samples of Australian Terrier DNA, obtained through blood samples, of dogs not related within 3 generations. These samples would be used to help study the morphological inheritance of the structure of Aussies, and to compare the Aussie genome to the already mapped breeds. At this time we have completed our requirements for this study and all samples have been submitted.

III. Web Access

Access to information about health is still a major priority of the committee. Sue Holsinger has graciously volunteered her time to maintain the health web site for us at www.australianterrierhealth.org which includes access to current projects and research, health information for our breed, and links to other helpful sites on a wide variety of topics. We have also reinstated an e-mail address aussiehealthquestion@gmail.com that health questions can be addressed to. We average approximately 10 e-mails a month.

IV. Financial

The committee has **\$4837.29 in its account as of 4/7/06**. In our CHF Donor Advised Fund we have \$869.62 as of 6/30/07. We have fulfilled our financial obligation to support Dr. Hess's Grant 610 in the total amount of \$5600 (this was made from our DAF account). We are requesting Board approval to continue to support our CHF DAF donation in the amount of \$250- this needs to be made by December 31, 2006. We have put forth a request for donations from the membership with the annual dues. We currently have a fundraising item available in the Aussie store- a limited edition Australian Terrier print signed and numbered by the artist- only 10 available. Pamela Levy has also proposed an "Australian Terrier Health Challenge" donor advised fund through CHF, details have not been received by the committee yet.

V. Summary for the Board

Overall we are requesting from the Board:

1. That they take a leadership role in the health of this breed, by encouraging members and owners to participate in club sponsored health initiatives, particularly the 2007 health survey and the research grants.
2. Board approval to donate our annual \$250 to the CHF Donor Advised Fund for Australian Terriers.
3. Board approval to recognize breeders who participate in the Buyer's Directory with an icon next to their name in the Breeder Directory.

Thank you for your consideration,
Michelle Bell
Teresa Schreeder