

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

CHRONIC HEPATITIS RESEARCH PROJECT

The UK Breed Clubs Joint Health Co-ordinators are delighted to announce that Nick Bexfield DSAM DipECVIM-CA MRCVS, part of the scientific research team at the Queen's Veterinary School Hospital, University of Cambridge, has been given funding by the Cambridge Infectious Disease Consortium (CIDC), enabling him to start a full-scale project researching Chronic Hepatitis in English Springer Spaniels. The project is aimed at investigating the disease, determining its causes, and ultimately carrying out studies to discover whether there is a genetic link that predisposes some dogs to this disease. Together with Nick Bexfield, the research team is being led by Penny Watson MA VetMB CertVR DSAM DipECVIM MRCVS.

The project is due to be completed over a three-year period, and it is important to stress that at this stage funding has been secured for the first year. Vitality, however, it allows the research to begin in earnest, and it is intended that the publication of preliminary data will have a favourable influence when further applications are made for the funding required to complete the remainder of the project.

Most of you will be aware from previous health news bulletins that during the last three or four years, data has been gathered by the Cambridge team from dogs reported to be suffering from Chronic Hepatitis. Preliminary work has already begun on the collation of data using blood samples and biopsies from affected dogs, and this work will continue until the full-scale project begins in April 2008.

Once again, therefore, we are appealing to anyone who is unfortunate enough to own an English Springer suffering from this devastating disease to contact Penny Watson at the Queen's Veterinary School Hospital (Telephone: 01223 337621 / Email: pjw36@cam.ac.uk) or Nick Bexfield (Email: nb289@cam.ac.uk), as it is vital to the success of the research project that they are able to use as many samples as possible from affected dogs.

Blood samples are requested and also, if your dog is to have a liver biopsy taken by your Vet, you are urged to contact Penny or Nick BEFORE then, if possible, so they can talk to your Vet about the optimal type of sample to obtain. It is also helpful in any case to put your Vet in touch with them to discuss treatment of your dog, although we would again stress that at this stage there is no cure for this disease: only control.

We would like to thank Penny Watson and Nick Bexfield, without whose talent, determination, commitment and enthusiasm this project would not have become a reality. Thanks also go to those owners of affected dogs who, having experienced the trauma and heartache of witnessing this dreadful disease, came forward to offer their support by allowing clinical information and samples from their dogs to be used, without which data could not be collated in the first place.

For further information, including the detailed Research Project Proposal written by Penny Watson, please visit the ESSC (www.englishspringer.org) & SESSS website (www.sesss.org) and follow the links.

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