

PROGRESSIVE RETINAL ATROPHY (PRA)

ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR BREEDERS

(APPROVED BY THE UK ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL BREED CLUBS)

In April 2007, a DNA test became available for one specific PRA mutation (known as Cord1). It is the intention to incorporate new Ethical Guidelines in respect of this known mutation, subject to consultation and agreement between the UK ESS Breed Clubs.

Other forms of PRA that may also exist in the Breed, and which are caused by a different genetic mutation, have yet to be genetically identified. It therefore remains the case that ophthalmologic examination should continue to be used to identify dogs clinically affected by any form of PRA. Breeders may, in addition, wish to use the available DNA test to determine the genetic status of their dog(s) for the Cord1 mutation.

Breeders should be extremely careful and responsible when deciding whether or not to use **known** carriers (i.e. those dogs that are known to have produced **affected** progeny, or are the sons or daughters of an **affected** parent, or have been genetically identified as carriers for the Cord1 mutation).

The clinicians advise us not to breed from such animals, and that is preferred. However, should breeders choose to place temperament, type and ability foremost, we are seeking to offer them guidelines on best practice.

Some breeders may choose not to use known carriers or the sons and daughters of known carriers. Others may feel it would be a serious loss to the breed if such dogs were totally excluded from their breeding programmes. They will be free to make such a decision, but all breeders must be seen to take responsibility for their own actions. Should they decide to go ahead, they should ensure that:

- Any dog/bitch mated to that carrier should carry an up to date, clinically clear Eye Certificate (valid at the time of mating).***
- Stud Dogs should continue to be screened until they are no longer used, or until at least the age of 8 years, whichever is the **later**.
- Brood Bitches should continue to be screened until at least 8 years of age (when progeny can no longer be registered with the Kennel Club).
- They are certain that the mating does not take place with another known carrier.
- Pedigrees are evaluated carefully to lessen the risk of doubling up on a carrier and potentially causing a situation that could produce affected dogs. (This might mean checking back further than 3 generations – possibly 5).
- Stud Dog owners should disclose to owners of bitches who wish to use their dog that the dog is a known carrier (by virtue of it being out of an affected parent or having itself sired affected offspring, or by virtue of it having been genetically identified as a carrier for the Cord1 mutation), even though the Stud Dog may himself have a current clinically clear eye certificate.
- Owners of Brood Bitches should disclose to owners of Stud Dogs whether she is a known carrier (by virtue of her being out of an affected parent or having herself produced affected offspring, or by virtue of her having been genetically identified as a carrier for the Cord1 mutation), even though the Brood Bitch may herself have a current clinically clear eye certificate.

*** It should be noted that, regardless of whether or not a **known** carrier is being used, breeders are strongly advised that **all** dogs/bitches being used for breeding should carry up to date clear eye certificates which are valid at the time of mating (i.e. they have been passed clinically clear no more than one year prior to the mating taking place).