

Summary of Berner IWG Meeting held Thursday 9th August 2007
Hotel Berchtold, Burgdorf, Switzerland

Persons present:

Bjoerg Andreassen NBSK (Norway)	Isabella Kraft VSSÖ (Austria)
Dr. Norbert Bachmann SSV (Germany)	Jan Kranenberg (Netherlands)
Laura Bernetti CIABS (Italy)	Simona Lissoni SIBB (Italy)
Inge Bibby DBSK (Denmark)	Pat Long Berner-Garde (USA)
Marion Brown (South Africa)	Ilona Lorenz SSV (Germany)
Mariangela Brunelli SIBB (Italy)	Christine Malherbe AFBS (France)
Martha Cehrs KBS (Switzerland)	Janelle May (visitor)
Maria Crifasi BMDCA (USA)	Joye Neff BMDCA, Berner-Garde (USA)
Birgitte Damsgaard (Denmark)	Ettore Menozzi Piacentini CIABS (Italy)
Tarja Ekman SSFS (Finland)	Joël van Haute BKZS (Belgium)
Steve Green BMDC of GB (UK)	Silvana Vogel Tedeschi CIABS (Italy)
Antonio Indrizzi SIBB (Italy)	Dr. Wolfgang Zörner VSSÖ (Austria)

1] Pat Long agreed to take the meeting minutes for today.

2] Dr Bachmann resigned as President.

Steve Green was proposed as president, and approved with no objections.

Dr. Bachmann was thanked for his four years of service.

Steve Green took the chair for the meeting.

3] Discussion of the Constitution

a. Part 1, which was the proposed Mission Statement - approved.

b. Part 2, officers and member clubs - approved.

c. Part 3, meetings - approved

d. Part 4, notice and agenda of meetings - approved with the following change:
- section c - the word "club" is to be removed.

e. Part 5, voting - approved with the following changes:

- add section e: 50% + 1 of the voting members (including proxy voters) shall form a quorum.

- add section f: Voting may occur in person or in writing within 21 days of the call for a vote.

f. Part 6, the constitution - approved

g. Part 7, jurisdiction - approved

h. Part 1, red highlights added, grey removed - approved

4] Pat Long was proposed as secretary, approved.

5] Birgitte Damsgaard was proposed to continue as webmaster, approved.

6] Website cost, there is no hosting cost, but the annual fee for the domain name is either 10 or 20€. Last year it was donated by Martha Cehrs, this year it was donated by Pat Long.

7] Discussion of website content. It was decided to include:

- Summary of health symposiums
 - 2007 Burgdorf - will be supplied
 - 2006 Como - is on the Berner-Garde website
 - 2005 Salzburg - CD to be supplied by Antonio Indrizzi
 - 2003 Hohenroda - Sylvana will translate from the German
 - 2002 Lenzburg - Martha will provide
 - 2000 Langenthal - Martha will provide
- Summary of IWG Meetings
 - 2007 - Martha
 - 2005 - Dr. Zörner
 - 2003 - Sylvana & Dr. Bachmann
 - 2002 - Martha
 - 2000 - Martha
- Links to health info and clubs
- Info or links to current studies
- Symposium notes or approved detail of presentations
- Articles about health, breeding, and club efforts
- Prefer to have content in English if available, with links to content in other languages, or to have the non-English content on the website, if it is not available elsewhere
- Submissions to be given to Birgitte, who will put it on the website
- Birgitte will put "last update date" on the website
- IWG president's email address will be put on the website as a contact

Short break

8] Clubs presented updates on what they are doing:

- SIBB - Antonio Indrizzi
 - o The club has a new website which includes health articles
 - o Supported Dr. André's research with sample submissions
 - Pre-paid shipping by the club for all Italian Berners
 - 24 hour shipping
 - Information about the samples goes only to Dr. André, not to the club
 - Had only 20 submissions since Jan 1, 2007
 - Can share information on shipping arrangements
 - o Alberto Vittone Award was created in honor of the deceased club president, the first award grants for research projects will be presented at the health symposium tomorrow
- DBSK - Inge Bibby
 - o Two PhD students are studying 200 dogs and will track them for three years with a scan and blood samples every three months - malignant histiocytosis study
 - o An oncologist is the newest member of their breeding committee
 - o Their 30 year anniversary is next year, and they would like to host next year's health symposium, a date to be established in the next 30 days or so, but in the September or October timeframe

- They were thanked for the offer, which was accepted
- CIABS - Silvana Vogel Tedeschi
 - Silvana had missed the last part of the prior presentation
 - Next year is their 20th anniversary, and they would like to host the health symposium; after some discussion it was decided that they would host it in 2009
 - Their club show will be April 19th & 20th 2008 in the Verona area, but it was decided that Autumn 2009 would be better for the health symposium and Berner-IWG meeting, and they agreed
 - They were thanked for the offer, which was accepted
 - Publishing data is difficult because of privacy rules. Data can be shared on a voluntary basis only
 - Breeding is controlled with rules, two types of pedigrees, normal, and "riproduzione selezionata" where the rules are proposed by CIABS to the national kennel club (ENCI/FCI)
 - CIABS are selecting healthy stud dogs over 7 years and encouraging their use at stud.
 - They have 950 BMDs in the stud book with information on 40-45% of them, but information cannot be shared without owners permission
 - Dr. Gallicchio is studying longevity and cause of death
 - Genetic index
 - Breeding animals, developed for Hip Dysplasia in Boxers
 - Not a breeding value
 - Being developed with the cooperation of ENCI, CeLeMaSche, and U of Padua
 - Could be used for longevity
- AFBS - Christine Malherbe
 - The club is working with Dr. André
 - Working on longevity ; collecting pedigrees, date and cause of death; they have a database of 30,000 Berners, but will only share it with clubs that will share their information with them
 - Promoting use of older stud dogs
- SSFS - Tarja Ekman
 - Collecting date and cause of death
 - Health fund to support necropsies and path exams, only assist if it is agreed the information will be shared openly
 - Collecting information on veterans, put more value on those lines
 - Lectures on longevity and Objective 10
 - Want to add death dates in Finnish Kennel Club website/database
 - Focus on collecting ages of breeding dogs and bitches
- SSV - Dr. Norbert Bachmann
 - Blood samples to University of Giessen
 - Transparency
 - Must know information on 10 of 14 dogs in the pedigree
 - DogBase has about 40,000 dogs, about 5000 with death data

- Require informed decisions
 - using a lot more foreign dogs for breeding, need to start collecting data
 - inheritability quotient is high for longevity
 - want a longevity index for breeding decisions
 - they can make the rules, since they give the pedigree
 - there is a separate database, but they are assisting Austria in developing one
 - DogBase is only for those dogs bred and registered in Germany
 - Sharing - they need rules for one database
- BGF - Pat Long
 - Berner-Garde has an open database, with about 50,000 dogs, about 8,000 with health information
 - There is information on many foreign dogs in the database
 - There are rules for how the data is collected and stored; health information is stored as anecdotal or diagnosed
 - There are litter reports
 - BG has started a DNA Repository to bank blood and tissue samples for future studies
 - Submission and storage cost for the repository is being paid for by BG and the BMDCA
 - Michigan State University also is doing pathology for tumor tissues
 - Samples will be available for research
- VSSÖ - Dr. Wolfgang Zörner
 - Club represents all four Swiss breeds
 - Isabella Kraft is the new BMD breeding supervisor, and the club's IWG representative
 - Changed the breeding rules, much stricter about inbreeding
 - A pedigree is given to the new owner showing ages of dogs
 - Kennel Club recommendation: dogs that work must be healthy
 - Encouraging people to do something with their dogs
 - Working with the SSV on a database program
- BKZS - Joël van Haute
 - Trying to collect data, but it's difficult
 - Using the same shipping methods as SIBB, only 15 samples were collected, none from any breeders
- NBSK - Bjoerg Andreassen
 - Sent forms to owners, collected by the breeding committee, will add data (even if it goes back years ago) - trying to get death information
 - Have a fund to use for pathology
- South Africa - Marion Brown (South Africa)
 - A study on tick born diseases being done at University
- KBS - Martha Cehrs
 - Have been working on organizing the show and the symposium
 - Have a health foundation with new people on board

- Sent one blood sample to Dr. André
- BMDCCB - Steve Green
 - Blood collecting ground to a halt from lack of interest
 - Free draw, but not much participation

Comments were added about the difficulty to get participation, clubs have to work through breeders, and it is difficult to get through to pet owners. In addition, veterinarians often push pet people not to x-ray.

Steve Green closed the meeting.

Appendices attached

- 1] Constitution, final version
- 2] List of Members to date

Respectfully submitted by Pat Long.

Appendix 1

Berner International Working Group

Berner International Working Group Constitution

(Approved in Burgdorf 2007)

1] NAME AND OBJECTIVES

The Berner International Working Group (BIWG) comprises of an informal and flexible group of individuals, some representing breed clubs and other independent, who have the common desire to improve the health and longevity of the Bernese Mountain Dog. We have a wish to make the average age at death of the breed at least 10 years, we refer to this as “Objective 10”.

We aim to reach this objective in many ways but including:

- *Collecting scientific studies / articles about health and breeding healthy BMDs
- *Encouraging the sharing of Bernese health information from our different countries (statistics etc)
- *Sharing experiences of projects relevant to the Bernese
- *Helping to establish international co-operation

We are not a club, association or organisation with any formal structure beyond that required to organise our activities. We have no bank account or membership fee and have no financial or other disposable assets. We do not have any interest or ambition to register puppies, organise shows, appoint or assess judges, grade dogs, authorise breeding or have influence in any area of dog activity organised by the FCI, National Kennel Clubs or Breed clubs.

Individuals or representatives of a club or any clubs joining the BIWG must only be involved with breeding of dogs with official FCI pedigrees or pedigrees issued by FCI affiliated clubs (such as the GB Kennel Club or American KC etc). Breeding out of FCI or FCI affiliated pedigrees is not possible for any BIWG member.

Most of our activity is via the internet and our meetings will be held no more than annually. These meetings will be held in a spirit of co-operation, education, friendliness and mutual aid and anyone who shares our “Objective 10” and can offer useful information to help the Bernese Mountain Dog is welcome.

2] OFFICERS AND MEMBER CLUBS

- a. The BIWG shall consist of as many bona fide registered Breed Clubs and Societies and other dedicated BMD organisations as wish to join AND are approved by a vote of the existing members.
- b. The Officers shall consist of a President and a Secretary. The President shall chair the meetings and encourage progress and activity in between meetings and adherence to our agreed procedures. The Secretary shall take minutes and act as a focal point for administration.
- c. The President shall serve for two years in the first instance and may seek re-election thereafter. The Secretary shall serve for two years in the first instance and may then seek re-election. Nominations for Officers shall be made via the group email at least 10 weeks prior to the meeting.
- d. Other positions shall be a webmaster to administer and update the web site and a web ring administrator to ensure circulation of messages.
- e. Individuals who have a specialist knowledge or interest agreed by the group to be beneficial to the group’s aims may become Special Members and entitled to attend and take part in all discussions, but these persons will not have any voting rights.
- f. Non specialist individuals with a relevant interest in the breed but without the backing of any approved club or other body who wish to attend meetings may do so with the approval of the group ideally in advance and by email vote but if attending without notice their attendance is subject to the approval of

those present at the meeting. Any such person not representing a **member** club or group will not have any voting rights.

3] MEETINGS

- a. The meetings of the BIWG shall be held approximately once per year. The date, time and place of each meeting being decided in reasonable time by the hosting club and notified to the other clubs. This time normally to be at least 6 months prior to the meeting.
- b. Any member of any member club or organisation attending with the support of that club shall be entitled to attend as well as those qualifying at 2d and 2e above. Notice of proposed numbers must be given in advance to the hosting club and in the event of too many persons for the venue the larger delegations will be reduced.
- c. The President will organise the meeting to make efficient use of the time. Depending on circumstances this may include allowing each club to speak just once in debate or asking only one person per club to speak.
- d. The President shall have a casting vote only, unless he or she is the sole delegate from his or her club. In this event he or she will be able to put forward his or her club's vote and in the event of a tied vote the President shall also have an extra deciding vote.

4] NOTICE AND AGENDAS OF MEETINGS

- a. The hosting club will forward a Notice of the meeting to all member clubs 6 months in advance.
- b. All clubs will then forward by email any items for the agenda to the Secretary at least 49 days before the meeting. The Secretary will then compile and circulate the agenda by email at least 42 days before the meeting. This gives member clubs a chance to discuss items and present a considered opinion at the meeting.
- c. Each member may propose items for the agenda or persons for officers but no item will be discussed at a meeting without a seconder. These may be seconded in advance or on the day at the discretion of the President.

5] VOTING

- a. Each member club shall have one vote only and each club will determine who will vote on its behalf.
- b. The election of Officers will be by a show of hands, one per club.
- c. Voting on proposals will be by a show of hands with a simple majority to decide.
- d. Proxy voting from absent clubs will be accepted provided the proxy is in writing and in the hands of the Secretary before the meeting. It is the responsibility of the voting club to effect and confirm this. Emails will be acceptable but the same responsibility applies.
- e. 50% plus 1 of the voting members shall form a quorum.
- f. Voting may occur in person or in writing within 21 days of the call for a vote.

6] THE CONSTITUTION

- a. The Constitution, once agreed, shall not be altered without the prior agreement of the constituent member clubs at a meeting. A simple majority to confirm changes.

7] JURISDICTION

The BIWG acknowledges the jurisdiction and authority of all its member clubs National Kennel Clubs and other governing bodies and the need of its members to comply with their regulations. Whilst the BIWG will always be as sympathetic as possible to any problems caused by unavoidable clashes, the opinion of the majority of members and need to focus on our objectives will always be a main priority.

Appendix 3 List of Members

Following this meeting the members of the Berner IWG are now as follows (Total 30 members)

Bjoerg Andreassen
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KBS - Switzerland

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BMDCA - USA

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Steve Green (Group President)
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