

Summary of Berner IWG Meeting held SunWednesday 23rd August 2023 Waterland Estate, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Club Representatives present:

Karoline Gsell VSSÖ (Austria)
Martina Kopecká KSSP (Czech Rep)
Inge Bibby DBSK (Denmark)
Steve Green BMDCCB (England)
Christine Malherbe AFBS (France)
Christian Schmid DCBS (Germany)
Kira Martin MBE (Hungary)
Isabella Tosti CIABS (Italy)
Jovita Piskunoviene ŠZMK (Lithuania)
Wendy van Dijk VBSH (Netherlands)

Björg Andreassen NBSK (Norway)
Gabriela Manu ACCCE (Romania)
Terézia Gargušová SKSSP (Slovakia)
Birgitte Damsgaard (Denmark), IWG website
manager
Toril Melangen SShK (Sweden)
Martha Cehrs KBS (Switzerland), IWG
President
Pat Long BMDCA (USA), IWG secretary

Individual Members present:

Gerhard Kunz (Austria)
Carla van Assche (Belgium)
Jens Utke Ramsing (Denmark)
Lisbet Utke Ramsing (Denmark)
Tanya Shields (Ireland)
Silvana Tedeschi (Italy)
Vigdis Løken (Norway)

Norbert Strahl (Spain)
Lori Jodar (USA), representing Berner-Garde
Gary Galunas (USA), representing BG
Bodil Ström Holst (Sweden), representing
Sweden University of Agricultural Sciences

Martha Cehrs, presiding
Pat Long, meeting minutes

IWG Meeting

1. Martha Cehrs welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Agenda has not changed
 - a. Berner-Garde Presentation
 - b. Presentations by the club representatives
 - c. Break
 - d. Presentation by Dr. Bodil Holst about fertility
 - e. End at 18:15
 - f. Dinner at 18:30
3. Berner-Garde presentation by Gary Galunas (he has provided the slides for the IWG website)
 - a. A chart of the top list of diagnosed health records for the last 10 years was provided
 - b. International submissions has increased over the last 3 or 4 months, probably due to the sale of Ingrus, and their new payment requirement
 - c. Questions were raised about the possibility of combining BG and Dogbase, but Dogbase is only available to members, and BG is open to the public
 - d. Christian Schmid will talk to Gary about adding their database to BG
 - e. Agria's database about cause of death (see <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1624818/> as an example)
4. **Country reports:** The meeting then gave a chance for the representatives from each country to contribute updates and news from their countries.
 - a. **Austria** (Karoline Gsell) – It's a small country and club. HS tests are required and required to be open in HSIMS, too few to date. Renal failure is said to be an issue, a questionnaire to breeders was answered by 1 breeder, who had 4 affected puppies – 2 each from 2 litters. Longevity is an issue. Education of new and small breeders is important. Big breeders are seen as a negative, but they have known lines for more than 2 generations. Suggestion from someone - Perhaps calling them long time vs short time breeders would help?
 - b. **Czech Republic** (Martina Kopecká) – DNA is taken from each breeding dog and stored. It costs €75. It's used for registration and to check parentage.
 - c. **Denmark** (Inge Bibby) – The club is holding Berner-Garde workshops and seminars, and mentors.
 - d. **France** (Christine Malherbe) – They have a new president, and are eager to see how responsive he is to health initiatives.
 - e. **Germany DCBS** (Christian Schmid) – 50% of pregnancies didn't take. They are looking for a research specialist. They think that bitches are losing the puppies when the progesterone level drops during pregnancy. HS is the biggest health problem.
 - f. **Great Britain** (Steve Green) – BVA stopped doing hip and elbow evaluations during the COVID lockdown, so breeders began using the Australian AVA system which was ¼ the price, a 2 day turnaround, so no one is going back to the BVA which makes the EVBs useless. BVA is trying to turn that around. The BMDCGB is also seeing fertility issues.
 - g. **Hungary** (Kira Martin) – numbers or litters and dogs dipped one year, they don't know why. They have about 25 breeders. It's hard to get answers, and difficult to get cause of death. They don't get information on matings. Suggestion was made about having an objective person to collect survey data to avoid suspicions, perhaps online? Gary Galunas made an offer to use the BG website.
 - h. **Italy** (Isabella Tosti) – They did an online survey of health, nutrition, and behavior, with more than 800 responses. Google analytical was used to help show results. The Univ of Milan is using the data, and a list of results will be provided to the IWG and shared. The most common age of death is 8-10 years.

- i. **Lithuania** (Jovita Piskunovas) – They have many clubs, so breeders may not be in the main club. Info is not always shared. They have overused males and a small gene pool. About 50 club members, 16 kennels, maybe 15 to 20 breeders outside of the club. They are trying to gather everyone, and starting a database, but not much information. The Kennel Club requires that all breeding males and females have a DNA profile, which may limit use of dogs outside the country if the owner doesn't wish to do a DNA profile.
 - j. **Holland** (Wendy van Dijk) – They have 2 clubs, and about 15% of puppies countrywide produced by club members. All puppies have to provide DNA, once only for parentage. Every mating has to be reported to the kennel club, breed club doesn't get the data.
 - k. **Norway** (Bjørge Andreassen) – no problem with parentage. Surveys don't get good results. This year they had a lot of litters with a lot of puppies. They are planning a seminar for new breeders to be run by the health committee and some experienced breeders. They have too few males from the same lines (about 15 males). They need to get more males but it's expensive. Too many people just use the top winning dogs.
 - l. **Romania** (Gabriela Manu) – They have the smallest club in the world. They worry about balance between having rules that are too severe or too permissive. They are urging the use of HS tests. They have no rules about notifying the club about matings, and breeders can get pedigrees from any of the regional all-breed clubs But no dysplasia test, then no pedigree.
 - m. **Slovakia** (Terézia Gargušová) – The number of litters and dogs is down. They have too many new breeders who breed a couple of litters and then stop, and the older breeders are retiring.
 - n. **Sweden** (Toril Melangen) – Fertility and reproduction issues is a big issues, and the Swedish University has been studying it. The club has information on their home page. Last week a new project began, a survey to study more specific details about whelping.
 - o. **Switzerland** (Martha Cehrs) – Long term health depends on long term breeders. They have too many short term breeders. Education is necessary. How can we help without too many rules? Where does regulation stop and education begin?
 - p. **United States** (Pat Long) – Pat proposed an international project for the IWG to do. She would like to work with a few of the IWG members to do a survey on female reproductive issues to get some data to find out how big a problem it is for the different countries, then use that to look for research. She plans to do a brief survey about sub-aortic stenosis for the USA and will work with BG to do the survey. This will give a good test of whether BG will be a good platform to host a survey about reproductive issues – we will need to assure people that the results will NOT be shared in the BG database, that would be for them to do voluntarily.
5. Martha
- a. Until now the IWG has been about exchanging information, and the response this year to the questionnaire was fantastic.
 - b. Instead of limiting the work to a bi-annual meeting, we can do things together.
 - c. The World Union pays for the meeting costs at the World Union event, and any research would have to be paid for by the clubs – not the IWG.
6. Short break
7. The **next meeting** and health symposium is being planned for 2025 in Helsinki.

Martha Cehrs thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Pat Long.

A presentation about Fertility was given:

Professor Bodil Ström Holst, associate professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences