

Berner-IWG-meeting Vantaa 6/8 2025

Present were:

Martha Cehrs, KBS, Switzerland, Resigning B-IWG President

Karoline Gsell, VSSÖ, Austria, Incoming B-IWG President

Birgitte Damsgaard, DBSK, Denmark, B-IWG Webmaster

Victoria Pinkas, BMDCA, United States

Lyn Brand, BMD CNSW, Australia

Ros Catt, BMDCV, Australia

Carla Van Assche, Belgium

Lori Jodar, Berner Garde Foundation, International

Gary Galunas, Berner Garde Foundation, International

Steve Green, BMDCGB, United Kingdom

Valerie Hughes, BMDCI, Ireland

Tanya Shields, Ireland

Angela Del Carro, CIABS, Italy

Inge Bibby, DBSK, Denmark

Christian Schmid, DCBS, Germany

Martina Kopecká, KSSP, Czech Republic

Kira Martin, MBE, Hungary

Helen Davenport-Willis, NBMDC, United Kingdom

Kjersti Olsen, NBSK, Norway

Hanna Grönlund, SSFS, Finland

Tuuli Rikama, SSFS, Finland

Norbert Strahl, Spain

Toril Melangen, SShK, Sweden

Wendy van Dijk, VBSH, The Netherlands

Minutes taken by Birgitte Damsgaard.

Martha Cehrs welcomes everybody to the meeting, presents Karoline Gsell as the new President, and hands over the meeting to her.

Karoline starts by presenting the old issues: Objective 10, which has still to be obtained, and introduces the new problems: Genetic diversity

All the clubs have already sent in an overview of their activities, so here they just mentioned their main projects

VSSÖ, Austria – every breeding dog sends DNA to FERAGEN. How can data from different genetic companies be shared among us?

Genetic markers for litter size.

Fertility problems.

Australia, both clubs – Numbers coming down. Partially because of import restrictions. Genetic diversity will suffer.

BernerGarde – BG collect and disseminate data, objective and fact based. Funding projects. Sample repository blood and tumors.

KSSP, Czech Republic – DNA studies, samples from older dogs.

DBSK, Denmark – new animal protection law. Not many people attend breeding activities.

Northern Club GB – same members as BMDCGB. Lifestyle survey. 10% response

BMDCGB, UK – Subsidized Antagene tests. 12 dogs. Immunity testings 20 dogs.

SSFS, Finland – Cancers, Life expectancy. Temperament. Lifestyle study. Temperament profile. Timid dogs. Struggling to get people to participate.

DCBS, Germany – No news this time

MBE, Hungary – Small club not many projects. Breeders go to serbian club, if the MBE has too many restrictions. Putting energy into Info-meetings instead.

BMDCI, Ireland – New committee New members are actually testing, but not good quality of dogs

VBSh, The Netherlands – Test results now go on the pedigree, but the kennel club is having a crisis now, so nothing is happening at the moment.

NBSK – Nothing now besides the BFF project.

SShK, Sweden – There has been a study on ovarian function, Will share publication.

KBS, Switzerland – Health committee has no president, so not much is happening. Study on ligament problems. Want foreign results. Steve may have some results.

BMDCA – Liquid biopsy sampling with B. Hedan. Results will go in BG. Subaortic stenosis.

Spain – New law for rules about breeding and keeping pets. Everybody need licenses and everybody is afraid. Before – no rules. Now – "Worse than Germany".

CIABS, Italy – Club can't implement rules, only give advice. Projects on genetic tests. Dog owners want health status. Breeders need the more technical info.

Communication

How can we communicate more effectively? We get too many group emails just before meetings, and then – nothing for 2 years.

Suggestion: TEAMS projects.

When we don't get much response from our club members, no communication system can help that.

Inviting other countries members to our projects.

Every country could have a month where they do their report. Maybe on an online meeting.

Announcing plans and asking for other countries help and knowledge.

Avoid sending "thank you" responses to every group mail.

Can we publish other clubs' webinars?

We can't have too many people at the physical IWG meetings and public online meetings. But webinars can have a huge audience.

Norwegian project. Berner For the Future (BFF)

Kjersti Olsen presented the Norwegian project.

Discussion – Type or temperament, Mixed experiences from Leonberger- and Lunde hund projects.

Maybe we could have an online meeting when the project has come a bit further, to hear what is going on. It will be a very long commitment. Taking many years.

Vitality project in USA. Try to contact them.

Good idea to combine with a frozen semen project. So you can breed back to the old dogs. Problem: Bernese semen does not freeze well. But maybe the crossbred bitches will conceive better. In Sweden they have problems getting AI pregnancies even with fresh semen. In Ireland results are getting better with one particular vet. Timing is of the essence. So is the issue in the semen or in the female? Or maybe in clinical routines. Maybe this Irish vet could do a webinar?

Going back to genetic diversity. Karoline Gsell will ask for ideas to collect diversity data. Which companies? Old lines? From far-away countries? The problem is not the new inbreeding – it is the old inbreeding. So, no matter where you import from, the same founders are there. BG study shows slightly decreasing COI. So maybe COI is not the only bad guy. But there is a difference between COI calculated from pedigrees and COI from DNA.

If you have a project, where BG can help, please let us know. Happy to help.

Even if the project does not succeed, we can all learn from it.

At this point the meeting kind of dissolved into small talk. No less important, but impossible to record, so the minutes stop here.

Just before the meeting was closed, Birgitte Damsgaard seized the opportunity to spread the word, that there now is a new possibility to send follow-up information on your HS-tested dogs to B. Hedan

<https://berner-iwg.org/index.php/test/>