

Statement on PRA in Bearded Collies 13th April 2019

In light of the recent highlighting of cases of progressive retinal atrophy (PRA) in Bearded Collies the JBLC has today considered all the evidence. This includes:

- results of eye tests carried out by board certified ophthalmologists in the USA which show 4 cases between 1991-1999, 4 cases between 2000-2009 and no cases since.
- British Veterinary Association (BVA) have provided results on 267 Bearded Collies between 2007-2017 and no reported cases.
- The Kennel Club (KC) have provide data on 436 Bearded Collies being eye tested from 1980 (Some of whom may overlap with the BVA data) and there are no cases of affected dogs.
- No references to cases in the Bearded Collie in the current scientific literature.
- Breed health surveys carried out in 2004, 2007-2011, 2014, 2018 and 2019 show no dogs with PRA.

This does not mean we do not have the disease but we cannot find any evidence for it in recent years in the UK. The Animal Health Trust (AHT) have no validated test for PRA in Bearded Collies. They recognise 35 different mutations causing the disease to date and there are often multiple mutations present in a breed. For instance in Tibetan Spaniels PRA3 is seen and represents 66% of cases but in the others the mutation is not known. In Tibetan terriers PRA3 and RCD4 account for over 50% of cases. So even if the prcd mutation is of significance in the Bearded Collie it does not necessarily represent all cases and therefore it would be very difficult at this stage of knowledge to predict the inheritance mode of the disease in the Bearded Collie.

The JBLC would therefore continue to encourage all owners to have their dogs BVA/KC eye tested, which has been in the breed recommendations for some time. This applies especially to the veteran dogs as in many breeds PRA is of later onset (5 years). If positive PRA dogs are found and the owners contact us, we can then discuss with the AHT sequencing the DNA of these dogs, but in light of the complexity of the disease in other breeds it may need several cases to establish the true picture. It is important to approach this in a scientific manner as given our low registration numbers we do not want to eliminate dogs unnecessarily from the gene pool.