ITALIAN GREYHOUND
ACTIVE HEALTH PROJECT

Bulletin

Winter 2018

Thank you to all owners of registered IGs who have participated in the Health Survey sent out with the Summer Bulletin, promoted via social media and The Kennel Club. We have had the tremendous response of 370 completed surveys. All six Assured Breeders (ABS) of Italian Greyhounds have been contacted to ensure they have participated in the survey, which is a requisite for all Kennel Club ABS members. The survey runs until the end of October when it will be analyzed to prioritize health issues currently affecting the breed. The full results will be available to view on the Italian Greyhound Active Health website which is under construction. It is interesting to note that the oldest IG from the survey is 16 years old, 54% of surveyed IGs have been neutered, and the survey includes dogs from the UK, Australia, USA, Canada, Russia, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway, South Africa, Bulgaria and France. This we felt would be useful information with so many imported IGs now in the UK.

IGs were represented at the Kennel Club's Breed Health Symposium in September. The first speaker Dr Mike Starkey, Head of Molecular Oncology at the Animal Health Trust, gave a presentation on cancer in dogs. Around 1 in 4 dogs will be affected by cancer (there are over 200 different types of cancers) and it is the number one cause of death in dogs over the age of 10 years. The second speaker, Dr Rosario Cerundolo a dermatology specialist from Dick White Referrals, spoke about skin problems in dogs. He stated that skin allergies, ear and skin infections are a top source of insurance claims for dog owners, yet there is little information to be found about common skin problems.

We have also been monitoring dubious IG registrations, published in the Breed Record Supplements. It had previously been reported to the Kennel Club that an advertised litter of 8 IG puppies, contained 3 puppies in the litter that had coat colours that were genetically not possible from the advertised sire and dam, and the litter registration was declined. A few months later it was noted that the same breeder had registered an identical litter of 8 puppies but with a different dam. There is now an ongoing investigation into this breeder.

Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations - implemented 1 October 2018

The implementation of new regulations applying to England only, although Scotland and Wales are reviewing their legislation, is welcomed and could represent an effective way of tackling the widespread unregulated puppy market. Around 850,000 puppies are needed to supply the demand from new pet owners in the UK, and currently, this need is largely provided by a combination of illegal imports and unlicensed breeders.

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Italian Greyhound breeders are no exception with regular breeders charging £1500 - £2000 per puppy, with 4 or 5 puppies in one litter they are receiving £6000 - £8000 per litter. The combination of compulsory microchipping of all dogs, plus the need for a license for those selling animals online, could be enough to finally deal with the serious animal welfare issue of poor-quality pedigree puppy production.

The new regulations address the changes in pet owner attitudes and lifestyles and take account different business models, which have sprung up in recent years and the rise of the internet.

There will be one generic licence for commercial pet businesses, which will cover dog breeding, dog/cat boarding including home boarding and day care, selling pets and hiring out horses for riding, regardless of how many licensable activities they undertake and, there will be standardised criteria on the various activities providing a framework of minimum standards which businesses must meet in order to gain a licence.

In addition, a star-rating system will be introduced for businesses, and there is a requirement within the legislation for trained Animal Welfare Inspectors, which in the past fell to licensing officers with little specific knowledge of animal welfare.

Regarding dog breeding the following criteria applies:

- It prohibits the sale of puppies at less than eight weeks old in all circumstances
- Anyone who breeds and sells three or more litters of puppies a year will have to apply for a formal licence.
- Or anyone who is deemed to be carrying out a business by selling few puppies at a high price. (HMRC business test is anyone making an annual profit in excess of £1000) This will affect many people breeding and selling Italian Greyhounds on line and who are currently unregulated.
- Anyone breeding dogs and advertising a business of selling dogs.
- A further change to the rules will mean that licensed sellers will be required to display their licence number when advertising, including advertising online. The aim is also to help responsible potential owners check that they are securing their dog from a properly licensed breeder.
- Other changes will see licences being issued for a fixed term, set at any point in the year, from one year, two years or the maximum length to three years.

The onus will be on breeders whether hobby or businesses to keep accurate records for each and every dog/puppy to show if they are making a profit or not. It is equally important to keep a record if a dog/puppy is given away with no money changing hands, as the licence criteria will not apply.