

A Two Tier Kennel Club Registration System through Kennel Club Breed Health Certification

PROPOSALS FOR THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG (GSD) BREED

by
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The German Shepherd Dog (GSD) breed, along with other breeds was tarnished by a recent TV programme. Whilst the bias and editor selectivity of the programme is debatable, the impact on the British public was immense. The key issue raised by the programme was the health of pedigree dogs, and the role of the Kennel Club and breeders/exhibitors in influencing this. The possibility of a follow up programme or similar programmes cannot be dismissed, and besides it is incumbent on the Kennel Club, Breed Clubs and Breeders of Pedigree Dogs to make further and continual efforts to address this issue.

The Kennel Club, various Breed Clubs and many responsible breeders have done much to improve the health of pedigree dogs over many years; however more can be done and, indeed, should be done. It is important that any National scheme to improve the health of pedigree dogs is wholly beneficial and a positive way forward. It must be open and available to all breeders of pedigree dogs (All GSD breeders if the GSD breed are to be used as a pilot scheme) that register their litters with the Kennel Club and fulfil the required criteria. It must also complement and underpin existing breed health screening schemes, breed surveys and breed standards.

It is also very important to persuade, encourage and attract breeders of pedigree dogs to participate in breed health improvement schemes. A National scheme to improve the health of pedigree dogs, should contain an incentive to participate and at the same time be applicable to all breeds, albeit that some criteria will vary between the breeds. Such detail can be discussed and resolved with each breed.

A thorough and carefully considered approach by the Kennel Club and the respective Breed Clubs to a National scheme to improve the health of pedigree dogs is essential.

Having considered the above, we present our proposals for a Two Tier Kennel Club Registration System based on Kennel Club "**Breed Health Certification**" ("**BHC**") for the German Shepherd Dog. The Kennel Club may wish to consider introducing the "BHC" for the German Shepherd Dog as a pilot **Kennel Club "BHC" Scheme**.

The current situation of 'lumping' all GSD litter registrations into a ONE TIER registration system completely fails to recognise those dogs used for breeding that have been tested by a number of health screening tests, when compared with those dogs used for breeding that have not been tested. The term "Kennel Club registered" needs to mean much more to the Pedigree puppy buying public. A Class ONE Kennel Club registration of a puppy, will clearly inform them that both parents of such a puppy have completed the "BHC" criteria and both are **Breed Health Certified**. Kennel Club registration will then begin to regain its respect from the general public.

The costs of administering a **Kennel Club "BHC" Scheme** will have to be considered and appropriate charges made. The "BHC" will encourage many breeders to Microchip/tattoo, and also DNA test for parentage, and purchase Class One PEDIGREES from the Kennel Club, which could be an appropriate design and colour. Some of these aspects could be revenue earning for the Kennel Club, offsetting some or all of the **Kennel Club "BHC" Scheme** administration costs.

The **Breed Health Certification** and the fulfilled criteria of the parents would need to be identified on the Kennel Club Registration Certificates and on their Kennel Club Pedigrees. They would then become **Breed Health Certified (BHC)** dogs. It would be clearly recognised by all owners of Class ONE KC registered dogs that their dogs' parents are **Breed Health Certified** and the fulfilled criteria they obtained to become certified. They would have assurance that the parents of their dog had passed some very important health screening tests.

From the introduction of the "BHC" the Kennel Club would facilitate a Class ONE registration.

Class ONE Kennel Club registrations will be **for Litters** from parents that have BOTH been **Breed Health Certified**, having obtained the full "BHC" criteria.

All other Kennel Club registrations will be **for Litters** from parents where either one or both have **NOT** been **Breed Health Certified**, NOT having obtained the full "BHC" criteria.

Litters registered prior to one or both parents obtaining **Breed Health Certification**, creates the possibility of requests for the upgrading of an existing normal registration, for dogs from such litters, to Class ONE when BOTH parents finally do achieve **Breed Health Certification**. The Kennel Club will need to decide its policy on this possibility, a time limitation factor may need to apply, and of course this has revenue earning potential.

IMPORTANT POINT: All dogs must obtain **Breed Health Certification** in order for their offspring to be eligible for Class ONE registration.

Therefore Class ONE registered dogs, if they are to be used for breeding, must obtain **Breed Health Certification**, to enable their own offspring to be eligible for Class ONE registration.

The "BHC" criteria **will** contain the following;
Examples:

1. Micro chip/tattoo number, this to be Vet checked prior to all health tests and DNA tests:
2. A Kennel Club DNA parentage test, (at the present time Foreign DNA parentage tests may not be compatible)
3. Other DNA tests, particularly for canine diseases, may become available; these can be considered for inclusion.
4. BVA/KC Hips score, a maximum hip score total of 25 with one side being no higher than 15.
5. A recognised foreign hip grade designated a pass or acceptable for breeding will be accepted, and noted on the pedigrees.

6. BVA/KC Elbows score, a maximum score of ?-?.
7. A recognised foreign elbow grade designated a pass or acceptable for breeding will be accepted and noted on the pedigrees.
8. Haemophilia test (males only)
9. NO line-breeding closer than 3:3 (this means no common ancestors closer than the third generation, and then only one on each side of the pedigree, Sire's side and Dam's side. The line-breeding of a dog to be included on their pedigree.
10. Only Breed Standard recognised colours will be accepted for Class ONE registrations. White, blue, liver/brown, brindle, and other non breed standard colours are unacceptable for Class ONE registration.

Physical and mental soundness, as well as working ability and functionality, are very important to the future of the GSD breeds well being. However the existing Breed Council (BC) Breed Survey may be more appropriate for dealing with these aspects.

Kennel Club **Breed Health Certification** will be completely independent from the GSD Breed Council Breed Survey and is primarily for the purpose of improving the health of the pedigree dogs.

These proposals require the approval of the GSD Breed Council, GSD League and BAGSD, in order to obtain both their input and their unified support and co-operation in fully implementing a Kennel Club **Breed Health Certification** for the GSD breed.

Proposals need to be presented to the Kennel Club no later than 23rd November 2008 and preferably earlier if possible, to facilitate more informed and meaningful discussions and to improve the possibility of reaching an agreement.

Every effort should be made by our National Breed Organisations, The GSD Breed Council, The GSD League, and BAGSD to ensure there is clear and informed communication throughout our breed regarding proposals sent to the Kennel Club for their joint deliberation, and also on the outcome of their meeting with the Kennel Club on the 23rd November.

The earliest implementation date of a Kennel Club **Breed Health Certification** and the **Two Tier Registration System** would clearly be beneficial, notwithstanding the need for ensuring that all necessary administration is in place. Some advance notice of the implementation date may be considered appropriate.

Advertising and promotion of the Kennel Club **Breed Health Certification** and the **Two Tier Registration System** is essential to its success.

Periodical review and evaluation of the Kennel Club **Breed Health Certification** and the **Two Tier Registration System** will be necessary.

David Payne – Videx GSD