

The KarltonINDEX™

Measuring progress in the health of our dogs

NEWSLETTER Issue 2, Autumn 2013



BE PART OF THE TREND

- Encourage colleagues to attend one of the Breeder Education Seminars
- Spread the word about Breed Club Health Events
- Ensure that planned breed health surveys get more publicity through your network
- Update yourself on the latest developments on health at the Kennel Club
- Get involved with an international breed programme through the Institute of Canine Biology

Please feel free to include this content in your club newsletters, acknowledging the source.

HEADLINES VERSUS TREND LINES

Last week whilst at the Clinton Global Initiative event in New York a thought occurred to me. Ok, so I wasn't actually an attendee nor in fact anywhere near New York, I was watching it live streamed online (the magic of the ubiquitous internet) whilst working in my home office here in Hertfordshire, UK (in other words I never even left my bedroom!). And in truth the thought did not occur to me either, I have stolen it from something President Bill Clinton said in his closing remarks. He said "The headlines will be swallowed by the trend lines". This resonates greatly with the work of improving dog health and welfare. Not that long ago, headlines told a particular story about pedigree dog health, and they were not easy reading. In fact they were seriously depressing reading. But having attended the Kennel Clubs' Breed Health Co-ordinator Conference and the first of the Breeder Education Seminars (run jointly by the Kennel Club and Royal Canin) in September, it is clear to me, current trends in behaviours, knowledge and activities are presenting an altogether more positive story.

So here are some trends to be thinking about.

Feedback from delegates of the Breed Health Co-ordinator Conference suggests it was the most positive and valuable one yet.

The Breeder Education Seminars are providing opportunities for hundreds of breeders to hear the latest research and insight into a number of canine related health issues directly from highly respected specialists in their fields. There are twelve seminars in total and at £25 each are a bargain.

The number of Breed Club health events advertised currently on the Kennel Club website has never been greater. It is itself a newly revamped and improved web site too. [See their health section.](#)

Look also at the growing number of breed club led health surveys now being undertaken. See same web link as above for more details. Welcome recent additions being that of [the Miniature Bull Terrier Club](#) (also a newly revamped club website – keep it up) [and French Bulldog](#).

Together with the heartening return rates received in some recent breed health surveys; [English Springer Spaniel Clubs](#) and [Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Clubs](#). Brilliant work by the teams involved. I could go on.....

What are these trends doing to those headlines? They will, if we keep going in this direction, swallow them whole.

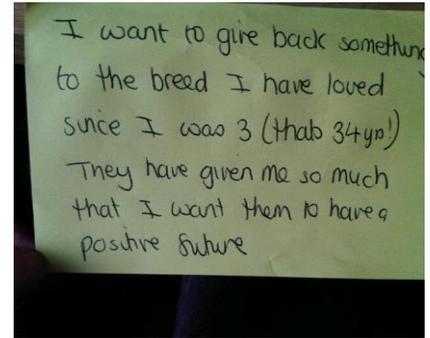
"You don't have to win the headline race. All you have to win is the trend line race." President Bill Clinton CGI 2013 [Watch him here](#)



BUT (and it is a big but) CAN WE SWALLOW THEM MORE QUICKLY?

I still hear, on a weekly basis, stories about individual breeders failing to take up appropriate testing protocols, or ignoring the results of tests when they do to pursue less than judicious breeding choices, or big breeders refusing to take-part in health surveys. I still hear of incidents of breed club politics threatening to sabotage so much good work. We know then, that even with trend lines going in the right direction the task is challenging.

I have been sorting through the “post-it” notes we used in an exercise at the BHC Conference and we can keep returning to them to remind ourselves of the motivations behind the people who are inspired to be part of the positive trend in securing the best health and welfare outcomes for the dogs. Here are just two of my favourites. The key is for those who are taking positive steps to be undeterred by those who are not. All we have to do is keep pushing the trends in the right direction. Those headlines will then take care of themselves.



TRENDS ELSEWHERE

The exciting [Vet Compass project](#) (run by the Royal Veterinary College and joint funded by a number of stakeholders) has now got data on nearly 277,000 dogs.

[SAVSNET](#) has reports on nearly 156,000 small animal veterinary consultations.

The Kennel Club has launched a groundbreaking online journal on [Canine Genetics and Epidemiology](#) and the BVA has launched the [Vet Record Open Journal](#).

Over in the States [the Institute of Canine Biology](#) is providing an excellent blog feed of relevant published research on a raft of dog health matters. Thanks to Ian Seath of the Dachshund Breed Council for bringing the last two to my attention.

Of themselves the above do not make a difference to dogs. But they demonstrate a growing body of data, insight and research that will inform the understanding of breed health champions and breeders, who in turn can apply it to their breeding programmes, which will make a difference to dogs. What is more the above trends show an increasing openness and wider collaboration than we have seen before. To me, this is all thrilling stuff.

In November it is Discover Dogs once again, a chance hopefully to meet up with many of you who are working at the frontline in dog health. I am looking forward to the Karlton Index Breed Health Awards, at which some of the sterling work by breed clubs will get token recognition at least. More news of that event will be available soon. Meanwhile let's keep those trend lines on the up.

If you have not booked on one of the Breeder Education Seminars run by The Kennel Club in association with Royal Canin there are still places available on some dates. I recommend them. For more details go to <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/breeding/breeder-education-seminars/>

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