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Eye Testing and DNA tests

British Veterinary Association / Kennel Club / International Sheep Dog Society

Routine eye testing for breeding purposes under the BVA/KC/ISDS scheme involves a full ophthalmic examination. The dog has drops place in its eyes which dilate the pupils. This takes about 20 minutes, during which time all the paperwork is completed. The original Kennel Club Owner/Breeder must be supplied at the time of examination and all adult dogs must have permanent identification (microchip or tattoo). The dog then has the eye test performed paying attention to the specific inherited conditions seen in the particular breed as well as noting any changes present in the eyes (eg a scar from a scratch after running though bushes). The Certificate of Eye Examination is then issued with the results.

Some breeds require gonioscopy (the 'glaucoma test') which is performed before the routine eye test.

DNA tests are now available for some inherited ocular diseases in some breeds. These include collie eye anomaly (CEA) in the Border collie and Rough collie, hereditary cataract in the Staffordshire bull terrier, Boston terrier and French bulldog and Progressive retinal atrophy (PRA) in the miniature poodle, Labrador retriever and miniature long haired dachshund among others. Primary lens luxation (PLL) in various terriers is also available. However the routine BVA/KC/ISDS eye tests are still required since the DNA tests can only detect some diseases while the eye examination can screen for any ocular problems including emerging conditions. Thus the 2 tests are separate, but both are important in our aims to reduce inherited eye disease and promote healthy dog breeding.

Protocol for DNA testing

Breeders requiring DNA testing, gene testing or Optigen testing (these are all the same thing) should look at the following websites for information. A blood sample (or occasionally saliva sample) is required, and their own vet can do this should do this.

All details can be found at www.optigen.com, www.aht.org.uk and www.thekennelclub.org.uk