

DCA Membership Ballot Cover Letter - 2008

August 15, 2008

Dear DCA Member:

Enclosed is an important ballot for the membership of The Dalmatian Club of America.

The question to be voted by the membership is:

Is it time for D.C.A. to discuss the possibility of AKC registration of the descendants of the Dalmatian-Pointer cross?

Background:

Dalmatians are known for their unique uric acid metabolism, where uric acid is not broken down to allantoin (as occurs in essentially all other mammals except humans). This leads to Dalmatian's high uric acid excretion in the urine, which in turn leads to a tendency to form urinary tract stones. In 1973, Dr. Robert Schaible bred a Pointer to a Dalmatian, and continued breeding the progeny to other Dalmatians as part of an experimental project. The stated goal was to potentially eliminate the unique Dalmatian uric acid metabolism genetic defect by introducing Pointer genetic material into the Dal gene pool.

By 1981, after five generations had been bred back to Dalmatians, some of the progeny were thought to look basically like Dalmatians but had (normal canine) low uric acid. With the approval of the DCA Board, AKC registered two puppies from the backcross project. Because considerable controversy followed, both within and outside of DCA, AKC then decided to decline registration to any of the progeny from those dogs.

The Dalmatian Club of America membership was deeply divided by this issue, and strong emotions ran rampant on both sides. In August 1984, after an energetic and vitriolic discussion at the DCA Annual Meeting, the membership ballot voted by ballot on two questions regarding this issue.

In 1984, 62% of the membership voted:

“The D.C.A. should stop all efforts regarding possible future A.K.C. registration of the descendants of the Dalmatian-Pointer backcrosses”

In 1984, 52% of the membership voted:

“I am not in favor of continuing the testing and breeding of the Dalmatian-Pointer backcrosses”

Following this vote, DCA abided by the membership mandate and did not support or discuss this issue any further.

In the past three years, there has been increased interest in the low uric acid progeny of the Dal-Pointer cross, and in August 2006, another membership ballot was taken on just the second topic.

In 2006, 65% of the membership voted:

“I am in favor of continuing the testing and breeding of the Dalmatian-Pointer backcrosses”

Since then, there has been considerable information gathered and shared, discussions at the national specialties, in the Spotter, on the DCA Web site, via www.luadalmatians.com, and on line. The 2007 Betty Garvin Memorial Lectures featured Danika Banasch, DVM, PhD, who discovered the defective transport gene, and the 2008 specialty had an information booth and exhibition of the low uric acid dogs and a question session after the annual meeting.

DCA has continued to avoid discussing or taking any action regarding AKC registration of these dogs, consistent with the 1984 membership vote. The DCA Board now is asking the membership whether it is time to discuss and investigate the possibility of AKC registration. Passage of this question (by majority vote) would essentially rescind the 1984 vote of stopping all efforts regarding possible future AKC registration.

If the vote is positive, DCA will investigate the details of how such registration could be accomplished, and what tasks and issues need to be addressed. We would encourage discussion and debate among the DCA members on all aspects of this topic. We do know that any request to AKC for registration would require another specific membership ballot, with a minimum two-thirds approval required. Regardless of any DCA vote, the final decision regarding registration rests with the American Kennel Club.

If the vote is negative, DCA will continue to encourage discussion on the topics of the low uric acid progeny, and support further testing, research and education, but take no action regarding possible future AKC registration.

The DCA Board of Governors has not taken an official position on this vote. The Board is eager to hear the voice of the membership, and we encourage you to participate by sending in this important ballot by October 1, 2008. Thank you!

J. Charles Garvin, M.D.
President
Dalmatian Club of America