

President's Report Dalmatian Club of America

The Dalmatian Club of America and the DCA Foundation have long been committed to improving the health and well-being of our breed, both now and in the future. We want to consider all potential avenues that could be beneficial.

Recently there has been renewed interest in the concept and results of the backcross Dalmatian-Pointer breeding of several decades ago. 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. The Dalmatian Club of America Board of Directors discussed various aspects of this issue extensively at our December 2005 meeting. We know that this project has been subject to great controversy. We realize that appropriate communication with our membership is essential in any consideration of action.

In the early 1980's the DCA was fractured by a vitriolic fight over some aspects of this issue. There was a divergence of opinion between the board and the membership, and between different factions of the membership. From an organizational standpoint, it was not our finest hour.

We have learned valuable lessons from that experience. As we investigate how much involvement the DCA should have with this project, we understand that the board needs to be more informed, the membership needs to be both educated and consulted, and we all need to consider the wide range of options with an open mind.

There are likely to be some significant differences of opinion. We do not want to avoid controversy; rather we want to manage the controversy appropriately. We will allow and encourage full discussion and deliberation.

In August 1984, following energetic discussions at the DCA annual meeting, a membership-wide mail balloting showed that 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." On a second question at the same time, 52% voted "I am not in favor of continuing the testing and breeding of the Dalmatian-Pointer backcrosses." While we recognize that the environment, both in the club and in the scientific world, has changed substantially in the past 20 years, the board must still consider the 1984 mandates from the membership until there is evidence of a change in the club's opinions. The board will not proceed without the involvement and concurrence of the membership.

There are several sets of data that need to be gathered, analyzed, and disseminated.

1. History of the backcross breeding
2. Current status of backcross progeny
3. Recent relevant scientific advances
4. Realistic projections of future genetic intervention techniques

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More information and details will be forthcoming. We encourage all DCA members to become totally informed on all aspects of this issue. As the Dalmatian Club of America proceeds with this investigation and inquiry, it is important that your opinions be heard. If you have any comments, questions, concerns, or issues, please let me know at jcgarvin@adelphia.net, or the board at board@thedca.org.

Thank you for your continued participation and support.

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