

Reporting Caesarean Sections is Key to Protecting Pedigree Dog Health and Welfare

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Kennel Club registration requires that owners consent to the reporting, to the Kennel Club, of any caesarean operation carried out on their bitch. The Kennel Club undertook these steps to increase awareness and understanding of an area of health and welfare that, given the complexity, is difficult to address. The aim was ensuring that the health and welfare of the dam was paramount.

Presently, the vast majority of reports (over 95%) of caesareans are provided by owners. Increased participation from the vet community is vital, and emphasises to owners the importance of reporting caesarean procedures to the Kennel Club. Reports from veterinary surgeons are extremely helpful in verifying owner reports, and provide information to improve breed-specific resources.

The British Veterinary Association (BVA), British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA), Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the Kennel Club all encourage reporting in the interests of health and welfare.

Breeders of KC registered dogs are aware of breeding restrictions including a limit of 4 litters per dam, age limitations, banned 'close' matings (i.e. between a father/daughter) and that we will not register litters when the dam has had two litters delivered by caesarean section (except under exceptional circumstances).

The purpose is not to put undue pressure on owners but to reduce the risk of welfare problems, encourage use of dogs with natural birthing processes, and not normalise caesareans. Caesarean data can also be used to monitor changes, and share with research specialists - to know exactly where and how to target education and information to dog breeders, owners and the public.

It is hoped that veterinary surgeons' reports to the Kennel Club will become an accepted part of the veterinary services provided to owners of Kennel Club registered dogs.

How can reporting be made easier?

Veterinary practices are encouraged to consider keeping any dog's Kennel Club registration details on the patient records as a matter of practice policy. We recognise however that this doesn't always happen or you may have clients that are reluctant to provide information. Reminding clients of Kennel Club regulations at the beginning of their relationship with your practice could take away some of the reluctance associated with reporting. Remind them that this is important to the health and welfare of the breed, and the health of their own dogs.

If a veterinary surgeon is unsure of the full details of the Kennel Club registration, it doesn't necessarily mean that a report isn't valuable. A report should aim to provide the information *available*, which, to the best of the veterinary surgeon's knowledge, is correct. There are caesarean reporting forms available to download from the Kennel Club, to make things easier.

Where can a vet find out more?

The BVA has produced FAQs which offer practical information and advice to veterinary surgeons on the reporting process. These tools, and others, can be found on the BVA website. www.bva.org.uk

You can also get information from the Kennel Club directly at:

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/3310

or email Aimee Llewellyn aimee.llewellyn@thekennelclub.org.uk