

NEWS RELEASE

NEW HEALTH PROGRAMME FOR DALMATIANS APPROVED BY KENNEL CLUB

The Kennel Club has approved a new health testing programme for Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response (BAER) testing for deafness in Dalmatians, following consultation with the Dalmatian breed clubs.

For a number of years, many responsible Dalmatian breeders have screened their litters using BAER testing to ascertain the hearing status of the puppies in a litter. There are a number of specialist centres in the UK that offer this screening and each dog screened is issued with a veterinary certificate stating the dog's hearing status as: normal, unilateral hearing loss or bilateral hearing loss.

The Kennel Club has been working with the Dalmatian breed clubs to establish an official BAER testing health programme for the breed, with the aim that the individual testing centres will eventually forward tested dogs' results directly to the Kennel Club. This will see them recorded on the tested dog's registration record, making them available for publication via the Kennel Club's Health Test Results Finder.

Caroline Kisko, Kennel Club Secretary, said: "Responsible Dalmatian breeders have been testing their dogs for years, and we are pleased to be able to offer a means of centralising the data obtained through this testing.

"The more results that are recorded, the clearer the picture will be as to the hearing status of Dalmatians in the UK. This can help owners to identify if their dog may need special care or training requirements and could help to develop tools to enable breeders make sensible breeding decisions in the future."

Results for dogs tested, which meet the approved programme criteria, can be recorded now and owners are encouraged to submit copies of the certificates directly to the Kennel Club. The programme criteria and process are as follows:

- For publication, all participating dogs will need to be Kennel Club registered and microchipped (prior to screening).
- The microchip of individual dogs will be scanned prior to screening to verify that the correct dog is being screened.
- The actual screening protocol will be determined by the individual screening centre which will issue its usual veterinary certificate for the tested dog.
- As soon as possible, individual centres will send copies of all test certificates directly to the Kennel Club for addition to the tested dog's registration database.

BAER test certificates can be sent to Health & Breeder Services, The Kennel Club, 1 – 5 Clarges Street, Piccadilly, London, W1J 8AB or scanned and emailed to hbs@thekennelclub.org.uk.

The Kennel Club continues to work alongside breed clubs and breed health coordinators, in a collaborative effort to improve the health of pedigree dogs. The Kennel Club is happy to accommodate a club's request to add a new DNA test or health testing programme to its lists and would normally need a formal request from the breed's health coordinator or a majority request from the breed clubs.