

Rottweiler Breed Council of K.U.S.A
HEALTH SUB COMMITTEE REPORT BACK

29 June 2014

Hip and Elbow Dysplasia.

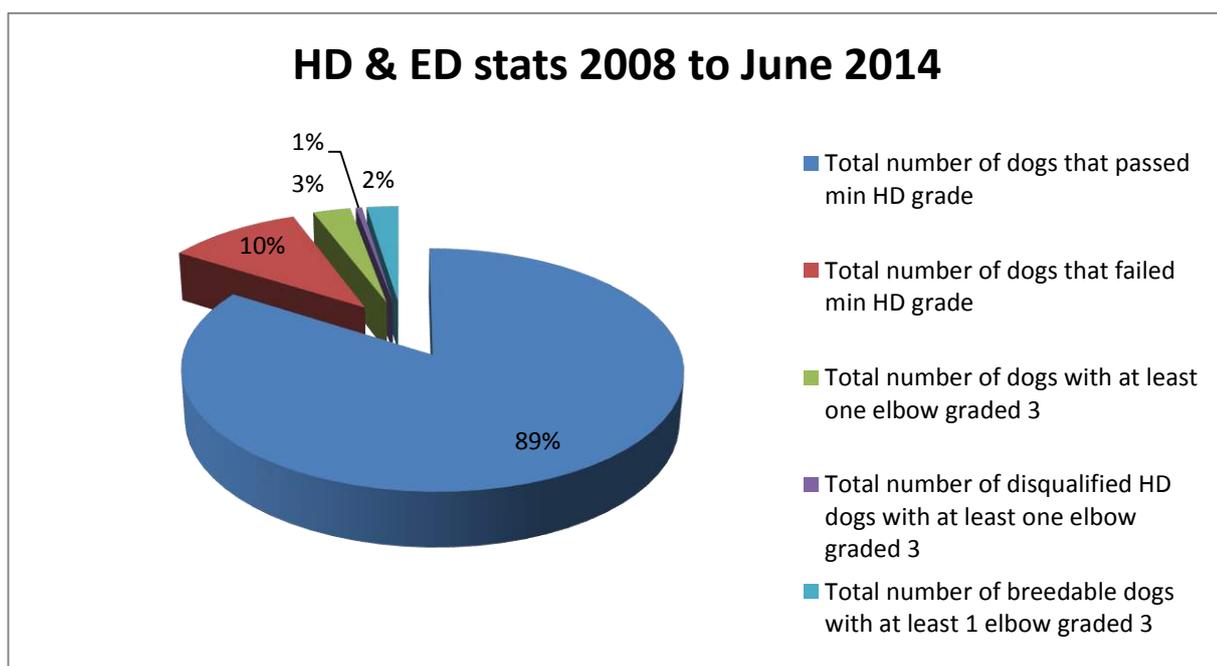
The trend of importing Rottweilers into South Africa continues to increase, and with this comes additional genetic health issues that could potentially contribute positively or negatively to the existing gene pool in the country. I have had numerous requests from KUSA to approve the Hip and Elbow gradings for dogs being imported from abroad that have been tested outside our borders. The RBC has strict requirements around the acceptance of hip and elbow results from outside South Africa and therefore proposes that these requirements are documented and advertised on the RBC and possibly the KUSA website to inform those wanting to import adult dogs.

Arising from last year's minutes wherein discussion took place alluding to the possibility of introducing some form of control measures to regulate the breeding of dogs with varying degrees of elbow dysplasia with the intention of improving these grades over time. The example given in last year's report was that the RBC should consider introducing the prerequisite of only allowing grade 2 and 3 dogs to be bred back to grades 0 or 1.

The starting point of my investigation was to establish what Germany has legislated to address the concern of elbow dysplasia. Germany has very complicated breeding requirement and essentially do not allow breeding from dogs with a Grade 3 elbow. It is for this reason that my research below places emphasis on those dogs with an elbow grade of 3.

The table and graph below was compiled using data supplied by KUSA with HD and ED statistics from 1 January 2008 to June 2014.

HD and ED stats 2008 to June 2014	Total	%
Total number of dogs (including imported) tested for HD and ED since 2008	821	
Total number of dogs that passed min HD grade	732	89
Total number of dogs that failed min HD grade	89	10.84
Total number of dogs with at least one elbow graded 3	25	3.05
Total number of disqualified HD dogs with at least one elbow graded 3	4	1
Total number of breedable dogs with at least 1 elbow graded 3	21	2.87



From the above table we can see that out of 821 dogs tested, 732 conformed to the acceptable minimum breeding requirements for HD. Therefore roughly 10% cannot be used for breeding.

Out of the 821 dogs tested 25 dogs had at least one or both elbows with a grade 3. This is roughly only 3%. And out of the 25 dogs, 4 dogs were disqualified due to failed HD as well, therefore the total number of dogs with at least one of the elbows graded 3 that forms part of the breedable pool of dogs is 21, which only constitutes roughly 2%.

It is my opinion that this indicates that there is not a serious cause for panic at this stage to warrant the **institution of forced control** to improve the elbow grades of our breeding pool of dogs yet. I therefore propose that these figures be monitored carefully over the next three years to see if the situation worsens. I further propose that the RBC becomes proactive through the various forms of media at our disposal, like the website and the RBC journal, to possibly make these types of statistics available to the public and encourage breeders to ensure that they not only look at breeding for conformation but that they breed first and foremost for sound health.

Cranial Cruciate ligament Disease (CCLD)

Another serious but treatable health problem that is becoming more common within the Rottweiler breed is the rupturing of the cranial cruciate ligament in one or both knee joints.

The cranial cruciate ligament provides important support to the knee or stifle joint. In humans the hip, knee and ankle joints are parallel to each other and perpendicular to the weight-bearing surface, allowing us to stand easily without stress on any ligaments. However, dogs' knees are naturally bent and the top weight bearing surface of the tibia slopes backwards. As the dog moves, a large force is exerted on the stifle joint pushing the femur back down the sloping tibial plateau. The cranial cruciate ligament is the main structure stopping this movement and keeping the joint stable, so with every step the dog takes stress is applied to the ligament.

Due to the enormous strain on this ligament, it may degenerate with old age. The ligament may also tear as a result of sudden trauma (injury), especially sudden twisting of the knee. The blood supply to the ligament is minimal which means that any partial tear or damage to the ligament takes a relatively long time to heal. As a result, complete healing seldom takes place before repeated trauma causes further damage, resulting in progressive deterioration of the ligament and finally complete rupture. Older, overweight and very active dogs are at higher risk of cruciate rupture. However, dogs whose tibial plateaus are steeply sloped are believed to exert more strain on the cruciate ligament, making them susceptible to the ligament giving out at an earlier age. Dogs with an increased slope of the tibial plateau often have a very upright stance or "straight" back legs.

As conformation **appears** to play a role in cruciate problems, breeders should try to avoid producing dogs at higher risk i.e. those with very straight back legs. It should also be considered whether dogs that tear cruciates at a young age (under 18 months) for no apparent reason (i.e. no obvious severe trauma to the leg) should not be considered for breeding.

Having said this, I have seen dogs with very good angulation also rupture these ligaments. It therefore seems that dogs that moves with an "up right" posture like Rottweilers, Labradors, Bull Mastiffs etc are predisposed to this type of injury. In the coming months I will be doing more research into CCLD and the possible recommendations to help reduce its occurrence.

Conclusion

In conclusion I recommend that the RBC becomes proactive in making breeders aware of the common health concerns affecting the Rottweiler breed at this point in time by actively making use of the website and other forms of media at our disposal.

Another further suggestion to ensure that the RBC interactively communicates with the breeders out there is to perhaps add a standing item on the agenda of the breeders' meeting called "breeding for better health".

With this I conclude my Health report.

Osman Damon
Convener Health Sub Committee