

GENETICS COMMITTEE MEETING – 6 NOVEMBER 2018
MEETING RECORD AND ACTION NOTES

Present: Steve Crow (chairing the meeting)
Dr Gillian Bennett John Hansson, Dr Karen Kempself, Jen Lacey and Anthony Nichols

1. Apologies for absence: Rosemary Fisher, and Dr Sue Moreland (GCCF VO)

2. **Action notes from last meeting and any matters arising**

These had been circulated and there were no queries.

a) White Cats & Deafness

There was a discussion on whether the rule should be amended so that cats could be tested prior to breeding and not as kittens.

It was agreed no change was necessary as the rule in its current form allowed that choice. Also, the use of the non-active register prior to testing should be maintained as there was now charge for a change if it was requested following a mandatory health or DNA test.

KK reported that AHT had a biobank of samples from white cats and their litter mates. Use of this would short cut the necessity of gathering samples from breeders. The Nottinham-Trent project was viable and candidate genes had been identified. The next action would be to draft a formal partnership agreement between AHT, N-T and GCCF. This was a necessity to own the project and results. If there was a successful outcome gene patenting could follow.

Actions: non-disclosure partnership arrangements **KK**
it was agreed RF as a Board Director and CWT Secretary should be the GCCF representative
Liaison with Agria for financial support **JH**
Once the project was costed the Board and Council to be informed and money to be raised **All**

b) GCCF Website Genetic Page - update

There were no specific updates to the Genetic Area.

Recommended:

- Drop down menu headings to be included in the listing as not obvious they were live links
- A much better search engine

Action: to be referred to RF **JL**

It was recommended that CWT be listed with Amazon and Pets At Home as a charity to receive donations

Action: to be referred to RF **JL**

c) Breeder licensing update

SC reported that since licensing there had been liaison with local authorities (Croydon, Shropshire, Staffs & Wilts) to discuss interpretation of the Licensing Guidelines. Intervention had proved successful.

The Office had information from to pass on to breeders who enquired and detailed notes and links were on the website.

He had raised the issue of poor interpretation with the DEFRA Committee and it had noted.

GB reported consultation for new legislation was ongoing in Scotland.

It was agreed GCCF should have official representation.

Action: effort to be made ascertain the correct channel for this **GB/SC**

SC recommended that the GC remit should be widened to include welfare.

Action: this to be included in the remit to be presented to the Board in July 2019 **JL**

d) Response from Birman BAC

The BAC did not wish to be advised by GC. Therefore there was no change to the Birman registration policy.

It was agreed that no further action was required at present **INFO**

There were no other matters arising.

3. **GEMS Code Future Proofing**

There was some dissatisfaction that the liaison via SRO and Sarah Johnson (FIFe) did not include discussion.

It was agreed that in future there should be feedback to GC, to give an opportunity for questions to be raised prior to new code being added to the computer system.

The code for Karpati had been determined as 28, but there was no clear rationale.

The code for the Golden Siberian was not z as requested, but it had been added as a second extension gene.

There was opinion expressed:

- that modifier genes should be grouped.
- Symbols could be included within EMS as well as numbers and letters

Action: a list to be made of colours/patterns that would probably need to be coded in future **AN**
when this was done a meeting to be arranged with FIFe representatives, possibly at WCC **JH**

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4. **Update on taking on responsibility from ICC for the negative register on PKD & HCM**

The list had been received but had not been uploaded to the website. It was thought possible that liaison between the website manager and the IT team was required.

Action: to be referred to RF

SC

5. **Review of breeding and outcross policies**

Burmese:

The outcross/breeding policy had proposed using the Korat as a registered outcross, there had also been some consideration of the Asian (not favoured) and the use of foundation cats. After discussion the BAC had questioned the need with it claimed that genetic diversity had been increased sufficiently by the lifting of the import ban.

GC members were doubtful as the breed had few foundation cats and lines in all countries went back to these. Langford had been contacted and Dr Helps had advised that the only way to be sure would be a further DNA study to compare results with those obtained by Dr Lyons. This would be expensive.

It was noted that other organisation allowed the use of foundation cats.

Action: investigation with Langford, Dr Lyons, AHT and Prof Tim G-J to see if it was possible to compare the inbreeding coefficients of GCCF Burmese with pedigree samples from those with import lines and cats produced prior to the import ban being lifted.

JL & KK

The BAC had suggested this, therefore (via the clubs) to be invited to fund any independent investigation offered and/or accept foundation cats as these could be behind import lines in the future anyway.

Abyssinian:

Refusal to participate in any discussion re outcrossing.

It was agreed to wait for the outcome of the action re Burmese. If successful the Aby BAC could be invited to take action to prove diversity within their breed by DNA testing (as done by the Russian BAC or coefficient assessment if available).

Siberian:

A breeding policy was required.

Action: the current BAC Secretary to be asked to request representatives to write a simple BP. There should be no problems as the breed was genetically diverse and the BPs of other BACs could be used as models or GC would assist if required.

Persian:

An article on cameos and smokes had been received. KK had reviewed it and found several mistakes, but it was not definite that GC had received the updated version after SC and RF had contributed. This would be checked.

Action:

A review to be made of the updated policy (once obtained)

KK

Advice to be sent to the Persian BAC to add a section on breeding good cameos and smokes to their breeding policy.

JL

Norwegian Forest Cat

An updated breeding policy had been circulated, and the BAC would be thanked for their work. The explanation of the SOP and description of a good NFO was particularly appreciated, though it was felt a note should be added on the avoidance of any extreme particularly with reference to muzzle shape.

Also, there should be a change in notation from S/s to Ws/ws to keep in line with current usage.

Action: feedback to the BAC

JL

6. **Registration & breed issues for discussion**

a) Changes to the Russian Registration policy

Minor changes had been made re DNA testing imports - no problems perceived

b) Recognition of Oriental Whites & the position of Foreign Whites

There was discussion on this with the following conclusions to be put to the Board:

- Only the green and odd-eyed white Oriental should be recognised and shown. There was insufficient difference between Foreign Whites and Blue-Eyed Orientals to satisfy the difference from existing cats as required by the rules.
- Blue eyed orientals would be permitted to be used in breeding programmes
- Cats to be registered as Foreign Whites would be required to be homozygous for cs, as determined by a DNA test or by parents recorded as homozygous for cs
- Foreign Whites to be shown in the Grand Class for Siamese, rather than Oriental.

c) Potential changes to the Chartreux registration policy

It was agreed that the Breeder Group should be recommended to make the following changes:

- The use of French domestic blue cats only as outcrosses (but from France, not the French countryside)
- The addition of testing for LH in the list of tests required for a an outcross.

Some other suggestions put forward existed already (Chartreux Variants were not registered as CHA, but CHA v), and longhaired progeny had no progression), or it was thought they should remain in place while until the breed had reached championship status (background of imports).

GENETICS COMMITTEE MEETING – 6 NOVEMBER 2018
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d) Ocicat & Aztec registration policies

Discussion on the comments from D Helps (Langford). No affected cats or carrier Ocicats or Aztecs detected for BHD, Burmese GM2 or HK. Therefore too soon for mandatory testing, but further testing recommended and GC would be informed if any homo/heterozygous cases were found.

It was concluded that the Board should be recommended not to accept a testing scheme within the registration policy until it was known that a problem existed.

AN had received correspondence from the Ocicat club secretary to explain that financial support would be available to assist with a testing scheme. It was agreed that testing should be advised and that the club could encourage and support members to undertake it for all Ocicats and Aztecs used for breeding. At this time (with no problem known to exist) it was only the use of the registration system to regulate testing that GC thought unnecessary.

e) HCM in British cats

KK had reviewed a project outline for the development of a DNA test for HCM in British cats. It had been produced by Dr David Connolly (Royal Veterinary College). There was now a candidate gene, but KK had points to raise on whether consideration had been given to a detected mutation being harmless and/or whether a compound used re Ragdoll and Maine Coon HCM could be non-effective with the different mutation causing HCM in British cats.

Action: these points to be described scientifically

then to be sent to the BAC on behalf of GC to be discussed with Dr Connolly

**KK
JL**

f) Recommendations from the Office

Six recommendations had been received from the Office that had been gathered from customer feedback.

It was agreed to recommend the first to the Board: copies of certified registration policies could be received directly from another registry by email if the importer wished to make that arrangement.

More information was to be requested on when the £20 Board decision fee was applied.

It would be recommended that the other four should be rejected as it was felt they were necessary in the application of rules.

The late declaration fine for a kitten was a FP - a check needed to ensure it was referred to the IC/DC Secretary for application.

It was agreed a list the DNA tests required by registration policies to assess whether any that involved testing for disease, rather than colour/pattern etc, did not require the DNA swab and chip verification to be taken by a vet. **JL**

The Office staff to be advised to suggest that those who shared cats draw up a formal agreements on costs and prefix use etc, signed by both parties. It was understood that a litter registration application could be made by one owner of a shared prefix (to be checked).

7. **Welfare**

a) Consideration of potential impact of proposed legislation on the protection of offspring (AWA report)

This suggestion was welcomed, though the detail would need to be considered.

It was hoped it would be useful to support current GCCF breeding and outcross policies in Council and when recommendations were made to BACs.

b) Feedback on welfare from all parliamentary groups

Discussed:

- Kitten checklist - ready but no official publication date
- Licensing for rehome and rescue facilities - serious impact on clubs that operated this service. It was considered that consequences of the loss of many small voluntary groups had not been considered sufficiently.
- Licensing of groomers (unlikely to have a GCCF impact)
- Animals and loneliness - support for landlords to allow the ownership of a neutered cat
- The possible loss of minority breeds
- The development of a Code of Practice for Cat Breeders - welcomed that SC had direct input. **INFO**

8. **GCCF Breeder Scheme**

It was thought that the early part of the next meeting 12-3pm should be given to discussion on this and others interested could be invited.

Discussed:

- Additional information to be requested on the application form
- Signed acceptance for the possibility of a visit
- Suitability of those making a visit - experienced, but not working with the same breed
- On-line training schemes ahead of a prefix application and BS acceptance (possibly with different levels for novice and experienced breeders).

Action: draft of possible training schemes for discussion

AN

9. **AOB**

Possible dates for the next meeting - 12 or 14 March 2019