

GENETICS COMMITTEE MEETING – 12 June 2021
MEETING RECORD AND ACTION NOTES

At 2.14 pm.

Present: Steve Crow (chairing the meeting)
Rosemary Fisher, Dr Karen Kempsell, Claire Lewis, Anthony Nichols, and Dr Sue Moreland (GCCF VO)
Jen Lacey (GCCF Committee Secretary)

1. **Apologies for absence:** Dr Gavin Eyres INFO

2. **Action notes from the meeting in January 2020 and any matters arising**

a) Meeting notes

These had been circulated following the meeting in January and corrections or amendments were made at that time. No queries were raised and they were approved. It was thought that they were then published.

Action: a check to be made that these notes were accessible on the GCCF website JL

b) Matters arising

(3) **Manx:**

KK reported that there had been no conclusive finding on the cause of death for the female she had lost. FIP had been suggested, but the necrotic kidneys remained the one definite factor. Her brothers were showing no problems, but an offspring (10 months old) from one these had indications of possible kidney malfunction. The outcome of discussion was that it could be caused by an inherited trait, but there was no direct relationship to the Manx gene. (it was observed that juvenile kidney disease had been recorded in boxer dogs).

Actions: the sharing of findings with VAC KK/SM
contact with a breeder in the USA to ascertain if similar problems had been reported in that line KK

KK noted that the Manx registration policy approved in Council in 2019 was not as required by Manx breeders. The outcross had been limited to foundation cats only rather than including British SH. This was possibly based on a misunderstanding that more than one outcross was not accepted by the system.

Action: a corrected policy to be put to the BSGC KK

This policy would include the Cymric (Manx LH) as name recognition had been granted. KK had almost completed an SOP for CYM, but had to finalise on the coat texture.

Action: circulation of the registration policy and SOP before submission to the Board KK

(4) **Revised Term of Reference (TOR):**

It was noted the amendments had been made and the TOR had been published on the website. INFO

(4) **Summary of non-recognised breeds:**

It was reported this had been returned to the Board in 2020, but was not yet approved. There was particular comment on the notes for the Peterbald as in TICA this was recognised in the heterozygous (velour coated) form and this was thought not to be impacted by the detrimental effects associated with hairlessness (skin and dental conditions). There was brief discussion on this, but reiterated that it would be ineligible for recognition because it had been agreed as a principle that no other hairless breeds would be recognised and carriers of the gene could produce hairless kittens.

It was agreed that the table should be published as it would be helpful to IC as well as SMs.

Action: circulation of the table and Board comment JL

(4) **Name recognition:**

The guidance notes in the rules had been completed in February 2020, but were thought not to be on the website yet as they were meant to be published alongside the table of non-recognised breeds. It was commented that the applicant for name recognition of the German Longhair had followed the criteria as intended.

(7b) **Suffolk:**

There had been no formal approach to the Board on the recognition of black and blue Suffolks, but CarolineT-R had been contacted by a breeder when she was reporting on the Suffolk registration policy to the BAC. It was commented that there would need to be more extensive outcrossing to Orientals to establish the new colours and GC was in agreement with the Board's view that the focus for Suffolk breeders should be on setting a breed type that was distinct from ORI rather than closely aligned to it. INFO

3. **Breeding & Registration Policies - update**

JL confirmed that there had been no amendments to Breeding Policies received and only brief acknowledgements to the suggestions sent after the last GC meeting, which was shortly before the 2020 lockdown. Some BACs had met online, though not all, and some had specific problems because of club or officer difficulties.

- **Siberian** - there had been acknowledgement and report of a breeding policy in progress early in 2020, but nothing further. It was agreed there should be further contact and the offer of AN to support should be made again.

- **Egyptian Mau** - no contact. It was thought copyright issues had caused a problem for continued production of the first breeding policy that had been almost completed. It would be suggested the facts from this could be used to produce a revised version that should be fairly simple to write.

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• **Oriental** - the introduction of the Oriental White SH had been completed and approved in Council in February 2020. CTR had assisted with the ORI registration policies. It was known the ORI outcross was to SIA and commented that as yet there had been nothing received from the Siamese Cat JAC on the introduction of foundation cats to provide an outcross.

JL reported she understood a Korat import registered with TIMBA had been accepted for full registration as there were three generations of registered Korats in accordance with the KOR registration policy and she believed TIMBA had contacted GCCF for acceptance as a registering body. It was agreed that confirmation should be sought on this as it could assist SCJAC and any other BACs that wished to import foundation cats. Such cats would not win at shows, but descendants could reach the bench more quickly and it removed the need for many generations of reference registered cats.

Action: contact with the Office re the status of TIMBA

JL

• **Ragdoll** - the necessity to test for *b* to register chocolate and lilac had been removed in September 2020 as supported by GC and the Board. At the same time there had been removal on the out of date information on outcrossing from the policy and the BAC needed to give some thought to its future outcrossing policy.

• **Burmese** - no recent contact on the breeding policy

• **Maine Coon** - acknowledgement of GC's critique of the updated Breeding Policy had been received in February 2020, but there had been no later news. The MCO registration policy had not been updated since 2004 and it was agreed recommendation needed to be made about including mandatory DNA testing as this had been specified as a 'requirement' in the Breeding Policy.

• **Turkish** - no response, but it was thought that club/BAC meetings would not have taken place 2020-21.

• **Chartreux** - the registration policy and SOP had been revised in preparation for an application to Championship status. It was presumed that a Breeding Policy would be done as there would be an incentive to produce one, and some of the breeders had good links to assistance from France.

• **Lykoi** - the breed had received preliminary recognition in February 2020, with an approved SOP and registration policy, but there had been little time for cats to be shown.

Action: contact with each of the BACs and Breeder Groups to be made in the early autumn.

JL

4. **Registration Policy Review**

SC reported that Mrs Turner-Russell (CTR) had now completed work on 23 registration policies. They had been reviewed, with conversations had with the BACs if necessary and their implementation tested on the Phoenix system to ensure they operated according to the BACs' intentions. 6 others had now reached the testing stage and for 9 others CTR was in dialogue with the BAC. That left just 6 not yet started. It was hoped that there would be completion for all by the end of the calendar year, and then it would be only a matter of updating when there were policy changes

INFO

5. **Response to queries**

• **Tonkinese BAC** - The Tonkinese BAC had taken GC advice to cut out some mandatory testing on GCCF BUR, (for conditions not recorded in the UK and controlled by the GCCF BUR import policy), but include mandatory testing on imports for known BUR conditions. This advice had been accepted and the revised Registration Policy was approved in May 2021.

INFO

• **The Ocicat Club** - The club had queried why the BAC had been asked to amend terminology used previously within its registration policy. It accepted that there could be standardisation between registration policies, but considered that as its terms were accurate it should not be asked to change.

GC agreed that the terms used with the Ocicat and Aztec policy were scientifically correct, but they were not commonly used by many breeders and the cat owning public, so the use of 'gene' rather 'allele', was preferable as the standard for over stamping as it was readily understood. However, there was no problem if the BAC wished to use the scientific term rather than the colloquial within its breeding policy.

It was also to be clarified that CTR had not standardised according to her personal preferences, but to what was most commonly in use for over stamping on registration policies. The terms Himalayan and 'pointed' were both used for the Siamese colour restriction without one being more correct than the other. They were understandable according to the context. Again explanations of this could be given with the Ocicat & Aztec Breeding Policy.

• **The Russian BAC** - The BAC had written to query whether use could be made of the Genetic Register if Russians that were or carried blood Group B were imported. GC agreed that it would be a sensible use of this register. The import of cats homozygous for B would not be recommended, but those who were carriers could be on the register for breeding with Russians without GR over stamping. All progeny of GR cats required for breeding would need to be tested, and any carriers retain the GR over stamping.

Action: replies to the Ocicat Club and Russian BAC

JL

6. **Testing for agouti in Persians**

RF gave an outline of the theory of a cameo and smoke breeder that had been circulated to the BAC. Based on his personal observations he believed all tipped cats were AA for agouti, all shaded Aa and smokes aa. It had already been agreed to test smokes used for breeding to ensure aa, so it made sense to test to determine the other patterns.

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GC agreed that this theory did not take account of wide-banding and the action of silver (*i*). This allowed for tipped cats to have shaded offspring that would also be AA and therefore not produce smokes. This had been the experience of Persian chinchilla breeders over many years, and had also been observed by those breeding BSH and Asians. It was thought that the ideal breeding for smokes was to use a self cat, but if the choice was to use cameos then testing should be carried out. The mandatory testing of smokes seemed sensible for a short time, but other testing was a matter of breeder choice.

Action: letter to the Persian LH BAC to give guidance

SC

7. Inbreeding co-efficient function on breeder accounts

SC reported there was now an inbreeding coefficient button so that breeders could consider the COI for individual cats and kittens. The aim was to extend the service so that matings could be trialled for the outcome, but initially breeders could assess the cats they had and the kittens produced. It was thought that 12 generations were assessed for the calculation.

It was agreed that there needed to be a link to good information to explain what the results meant and what the aim should be, considering the need for diversity and breeding for the purpose of fixing type. It was thought there was good information on the website and that any announcement should carry a link to it. It was also thought that a traffic light form of colour coding would be useful on any table as it was very familiar so instantly recognisable.

Action: check on existing website information

All

8. Testing for red series non-agouti kittens with an agouti parent

CTR had queried whether there was any rule on this as some BACs with red series cats included it within their registration policy and others did not. JL and SC had checked and could find no rule, it had been the decision of individual BACs depending on the importance of colour in their SOPs. It was agreed that where colour mattered BACs who did not yet include this testing should be advised to do so, but it should be a matter of individual breeder choice where it was of no relevance. It could be brought to the attention of breeders via the breeding policy rather than be a registration policy requirement.

Action: liaison with CTR via the IT Group meeting

SC

9. Recent scientific papers

- Siberian extension gene mutation - BAC informed
- Hypertypes & genetic disease - from Belgium re the banning of certain breeds
(The link to Manx re spina bifida was included though this was not the experience of GCCF Manx breeders, neither was the sensory deprivation of the breeds with no/shortened whiskers, though this seemed to be something that was lab rather field based).
- Ticked gene - to be circulated to relevant BACs
- Developmental Genetics of Colour Pattern Establishment in Cats
- Inbreeding study - breed comparisons
- British extension gene mutation - to be circulated to BSGC
- Mocha/Bangkok gene mutation - no new information

It was agreed that these should be shared (subject to copyright) via a genetics area on the new website.

10. GCCF website project

SC reported that work on a new website would begin shortly and it was hoped it would be finished by the autumn. GC could have its own area and thought should be given to scoping this and to populating it with relevant information. It should include a video player facility within it and, after the success of the video to warn buyers, the plan was for more videos to educate and train. It would be useful to have programmes/quizzes for self testing within it to teach the basics to those beginning to breed and show, as well as training videos to train judges and stewards on the breeds as KC did.

Action: bring ideas to the next meeting

All

11. The mapping of deafness in white cats

This had been almost ready to begin pre-pandemic, but with the closure of AHT in the summer of 2020 the biobank of samples had been lost, and it would be a matter starting from scratch to collect these. Those registering white cats for breeding with GCCF would have them tested, and it was hoped they would be prepared to contribute a DNA swab from any found to be deaf. KK thought around 20 would be needed to put together the data that could be used for a pilot study.

Heather at Nottingham-Trent was prepared to draft the segments required. It was hoped that the sequencing price would be held.

Action: consultation with Ian on the number of breeders registering white cats.

SC/KK

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12. **International cat gene nomenclature committee – report any progress**

AN reported that was not yet a paper on nomenclature, the work was ongoing. Genes recently found were:

- Dwarfism - as in Munchkins & Dwelf
- Ticked tabby
- Ural rex
- Occulocutaneous albinism (mutations in specific genes that are necessary for the production of melanin)
- Juvenile onset polyneuropathy in Siberian cats had been identified and a familial link made. There would now be research with the aim to develop DNA testing.

13. **FIP - potential cure**

SM commented that reports of good efficacy against FIP of the anti-viral GS-441524 had substantially increased. It could treat wet and dry forms. However efficacy seemed to be poor when there was involvement of the central nervous system. There continued to be no prescriptive source and owners relied on the black market where it sold at a high price for a full course of treatment (£10,000 approx). Some vets were supportive if it was obtained, others did not want to be involved. SM had bought a low dose for a queen who had been to stud and returned with a high viral load. She had treated the cat as per the recommendations of Dr Diane Addie and had been successful in clearing the shedding of FCoV though did not know yet if the virus remained in the intestines. More research and development were required as the potential for treating FIP and clearing FCoV from a breeding household were future possibilities. **INFO**

14 **Welfare update**

- o Animal Welfare Bill – possible late 2021 early 2022, with compulsory microchipping for owned cats and a minimum age of six months for imports and exports probable (The travel restrictions would apply to Northern Ireland)
- o On-line kitten/cat sales - an increasing number of bogus adverts noted. **SC**
Action: referral to C&FSG for possible discussion with Trading Standards on the use of pedigree names
- o Welfare update Brachycephalic Working Group – paper on improving health and welfare in brachycephalic in dogs and possible consideration of brachycephalic cats to follow
JL commented that some members of the Persian BAC would meet with researchers from the RVC in July.
- o Animal Cruelty (Sentencing) Act 2021 - the maximum sentence had increased from 6 months to 5 years.
- o Code of Practice for Cat Breeders - waiting for a sign-off from Defra.
- o Covid 19 – advice and info-graphics had been posted on the GCCF website through the pandemic and had been helpful to breeders with kittens to home. **INFO**

15. **Future meeting dates**

Possible date for the next meeting - September - October 2021 (if sufficient items for discussion)

The meeting closed at 5.20pm.