

HEALTH WELFARE AND EDUCATION

The Basset Hound is a very amiable and loyal friend who likes nothing better than to be with his human companions. Although bred for hunting, he is just as happy in front of the fire as in the field. He was bred low to the ground, with a supple skin and a smooth, short, waterproof coat, so that he could withstand dense, prickly undergrowth in all types of weather conditions. There is nothing more gratifying than watching a Basset Hound displaying an incredible turn of speed, flying across open fields and moorland in joyous voice. This old and striking Breed has a long history as a working hound. The Kennel Club's "Fit for Function, Fit for Life" promotion is fully endorsed by the Breed Clubs and responsible Breeders.

For many years individual Breed Clubs worked independently of one another on health issues. In 2009 an early Health Group was formed and then in 2011 the Group became more structured and is very pro-active and forward-looking. The Group is currently committed to "in progress" research.

- One avenue of research has been ongoing for more than seventeen years and is now approaching its final stages, for which funding is essential.
- Another has been under investigation for more than ten years and has been researched for more than seven. This research has recently been awarded a very generous grant which should, hopefully, see a final conclusion reached within two years.
- The Health Group has a formal agreement with The Animal Health Trust to "bank" blood and Buccal samples for DNA extraction to support current and future research which will benefit not just Basset Hounds, but all breeds and humans.

The latest of a series of Health Surveys was carried out in 2011 prior to which it was 2007. In future the Health Group intends to carry out such surveys with an even shorter time frame so that there is an improved observation of the health of the Breed. This latest survey points to a very healthy and long-lived Breed which is, of course, the ultimate goal.

Conditions which The Kennel Club are focused upon for the Breed are very much to the forefront of discussion by the Health Group. Action to addressing these is well under way. Any exaggerations which may have been evident in some Basset Hounds would have arisen gradually over many years and will take just as many years to eliminate. With work being done and support from the Health Group and Breed Clubs, the Basset Hound will maintain the characteristics for which this historic working hound is much-admired.

In endorsing the Kennel Club's promotion of "Fit for Function – Fit for Life" the Breed Clubs and Health Group are:

- Aware that Breeders and Judges have a significant influence on the Breed.
- Actively promoting a positive health and welfare directive in their Breed Specific Seminars with a view to educating current and future Judges.
- Encouraging all Breeders and Judges to accept that the health and welfare of the Breed is paramount.
- Motivating Breeders to avoid exaggerations thereby eliminating any health or welfare concerns.

It has to be said that, the number of Basset Hounds in the show ring is an extremely small representation of Basset Hounds actually bred. The majority of Basset Hounds, both registered and non-registered, are **not** bred or owned by active exhibitors and are therefore not, as a rule, evident in the show ring. However, the show ring is perceived to be the forum to which future owners and breeders may refer and, as such, must showcase only worthy examples of the Breed.