

## World survey of health and mortality in the otterhound

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The Otterhound is categorised as a vulnerable native breed by the UK Kennel Club as there are fewer than 300 registrations in the UK each year. It is thought that there may be fewer than 1000 living Otterhounds in the world. The small number of dogs of this breed results in a low genetic variability and is likely to lead to the prevalence of breed-specific inherited diseases increasingly markedly.

As part of the KC/BSAVA 2004 Purebred Dog Health Survey, data were collected on 56 Otterhounds living in the UK and 54 deaths. This represented only a 14.4% response rate for this breed. Of the 54 deaths that were reported, the top 2 causes of death were cancer and old age. In the group of 56 live Otterhounds, 46% reported no disease condition. Of the 20 Otterhounds which were reported to have one or more disease condition, the most commonly reported categories were dermatologic (most frequently sebaceous cysts), gastrointestinal (most frequently gastric dilatation-volvulus), aural (otitis externa) and musculoskeletal (hip and/or elbow dysplasia).

In collaboration with The Otterhound Club (UK) and The Otterhound Club of America the World Health Survey of the Otterhound and Survey of Otterhound Mortality was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008. 600 survey forms were sent out to members of both Clubs and also to known Otterhound owners in Canada, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, New Zealand, Finland, Norway and the Czech Republic.

As of the end of January data have been received on 97 live Otterhounds and 31 deaths. This represents a response rate of 16.2%, and this is expected to increase. The first reminder will be sent out 8 weeks after the initial mailing.

The results of this survey will provide detailed information on the frequency of occurrence of different diseases which may have an inherited component. It is hoped that these data may be used to guide breeding strategies to improve the overall health of the breed.