

More than two years ago in May 2006 I received a letter from the DCA asking for a vote on the question of "continuing the testing and breeding of the Dalmatian-Pointer Backcrosses." The DCA membership on that occasion voted in the affirmative.

Now we are being asked to decide whether "it time for DCA to discuss the possibility of AKC registration of the descendants of the Dalmatian-Pointer cross?" Observe that this is NOT a referendum on the question of actually registering the descendants of the Dal-Pointer cross; it is merely an enabling referendum for "discussing the possibility" of AKC registration. A small step -- but nonetheless a step in the right direction.

Those of us who have studied the hereditary defect of abnormal uric acid metabolism are greatly encouraged by the advances in DNA testing that have provided a great impetus in our understanding the anomaly. These recent discoveries, added to the accomplishments of Dr. Bob Schaible and his small band of cohorts who carried the Backcross Project forward, have substantially answered many of the concerns that were expressed over the years by Dal breeders intent on preserving Dalmatian "type."

The high uric acid anomaly in Dalmatians was reported as early as 1916 by S.R. Benedict. Trimble and Keeler (Harvard Medical School) described the defect in greater detail in their report in 1938. Of interest at the time was the question of whether or not the uric acid defect was due to the same genes responsible for the Dalmatians unique spotting pattern. They found that it was not.

Trimble and Keeler reported "Our linkage tests indicate that the genes underlying 'high uric acid excretion' and the genes underlying the production of Dalmatian spotting are resident in independent pairs of chromosomes." That finding has been confirmed by results from the Backcross Project. Simply put, spotting and the uric acid defect are not linked -- the gene for uric acid metabolism and the gene(s) for spotting are not the same. Breeders can fix the high uric acid defect without sacrificing type.

It is time to move forward. I will vote in favor of the proposal.

Jim Seltzer, PhD
Willowind Dalmatians