

A great many people still seem to be missing the point of the introduction of the LUA gene.

Uric acid does not, on its own, cause urate stones. Nor has anyone claimed that it does. There is some triggering factor that causes some dogs to form stones, some to form sediment (basically very small stones) and some to form neither. Researchers don't know currently what it is and may never know. But regardless of what the triggering factor is; whether it's genetic, environmental or some combination of both, without high levels of uric acid, urate stones cannot form.

Yes, it IS that simple. Does this mean that introducing the LUA gene is THE answer to solving Dalmatian stone disease - No, but does it mean that is **\*\*AN\*\*** answer? YES!

It is quite likely that there are other factors that can also prevent the formation of urate stones, but at this point in time; other than some management issues that can help *some dogs* (i.e. allopurinol, distilled water, surgical altering of the urinary tract), reducing the production of uric acid to a level comparable to that of all other breeds of dogs is the only one that has been scientifically proven.

There will be some who disagree that this has been scientifically proven, but consider the following:

- a.. the research that has identified the LUA gene was funded by the NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) with federal dollars.
- b.. the research was done at the UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA- DAVIS VETERINARY SCHOOL
- c.. the research team was lead by an individual with both a DVM *and* a PhD. d.. the members of the research team are all either PhDs, PhD candidates or PhD/DVM's like the lead researcher
- e.. the acknowledged "stone experts" are IN AGREEMENT that lowering the levels of uric acid can help prevent urate stones.

The same experts do say that uric acid is not the *cause* of stones, but neither do the individuals involved with the LUA Dalmatians believe or say uric acid is the cause - only that removing it makes the formation of urate stones unlikely if not impossible. Other than some individuals' heartfelt beliefs about this issue, where is the science proving that lowering the levels of uric acid does *not* prevent this problem? What scientific qualifications and experience backs up the claims that this does not and will not work?

Is lowering the uric acid levels to "normal" the **ONLY** answer, of course not. But it is AN answer and until such time we have other answers that may work better, it is the best option we have to reduce the incidence of Dalmatian stone disease.

For SOME people, LUA will be a defining issue.

For SOME people, \*bilateral hearing\* only is the issue.

For SOME people, having or not having a blue eye is the deciding issue.

For SOME people they pattern of spotting (i.e. ghost face, lots/few spots, etc) is the deciding issue

For SOME people, a temperament that will get along with their kids, cats or other dogs is the deciding issue.

For SOME people, a Dal that looks like the one they just lost is the deciding issue.

But for MANY MANY people, they just want a **\*\*DALMATIAN\*\*** This is why puppy mills and pet stores can sell puppies so easily.

Right now our breed has dropped so far in the registrations that there are more puppy homes than puppies. I regularly hear from people that they've looked for months to find pups. Dogs that end up in rescue do not end up there because someone wants a better Dal. They end up there because it's no longer a puppy and cute or because it was not trained and the behavior is poor, or because they family is moving and cannot/will not take the Dal with them or because the couple is divorcing or because a new spouse/partner/baby is incompatible with the Dal.

Moving towards allowing LUA Dalmatians to be part of the AKC breeding pool, will *\*help\** our Dals. Will it resolve the problem for all Dals? No. Because of the low number of LUA Dalmatians, the ways that reputable breeders try to “guard” their bloodlines from BYB/puppy mills and because some breeders do not view this as a solution to the problem (or don't acknowledge the urate stone disease *\*is\** a problem), there will continue to be a pool of Dalmatians that will always remain HUA. But because this solution does not solve all problems, does that mean we should not move forward with it? Of course not!

As breeders, we need to be allowed as many tools as possible so that we can breed Dalmatians that are as healthy as possible. I urge you to vote yes on the DCA ballot initiative allowing the Board to begin discussing the option of future AKC registration for the LUA Dalmatians.