

## **DNA Test for SLEM (Shaking Puppy Syndrome) is now available**

It is good news that the research in America has discovered a recessive gene that causes SLEM. It is even better news that the test will be available from the Animal Health Trust from Monday. I am informed it will cost £48 including VAT. Details will be available on the AHT website [www.ahtdnatesting.co.uk](http://www.ahtdnatesting.co.uk). They will require a cheek swab or an EDTA blood sample to carry out the test. Suitable swabs can be obtained from the AHT - they usually like a donation towards the cost.

Included with the press announcement are two articles from Dr Jerold Bell in the USA. Dr Bell comments on how best to apply the test results from DNA tests and I hope this information will be considered and used effectively. It is very important that as a breed we do not increase the prevalence of Epilepsy and CECS by over zealous attempts to rid the breed of the mutation behind SLEM/SPS. Now we have a gene test no puppy need ever be affected by this condition but removal of the gene can be done over time with little restriction upon current breeding plans.

We are fortunate the work that started in the USA some years ago has produced a gene test relatively quickly. As we breed to avoid producing affected pups we can now focus research efforts on CECS, epilepsy and any other inherited condition that may emerge in our breed in the future.

We will start to gather test results in advance of the test becoming an Official test recognised by the KC (which will take a little time). Anyone who has their dog tested can provide a copy of the test result and we will create a list of Border Terrier results so we can provide a list for those seeking information. This is a voluntary provision of data but it will make it easier for those looking particularly for a stud dog.

A closing word of caution: it is highly likely the gene discovered will deliver an effective test for SLEM but on occasions testing reveals either another condition with similar symptoms but a different gene mutation or the same condition with another gene mutation producing similar pathology. If any breeder still produces a shaking puppy despite using the advice given in Jerold Bell's comments then please contact the Breed Health Coordinator with the information.

Steve Dean