

Response From The Dalmatian Club of America

DCA president responds to concerns of Dalmatian breeders.

I have been given the opportunity to comment about the position of the Dalmatian Club of America regarding the progeny of the Dalmatian-Pointer backcross and their registration status. I will attempt to briefly describe some of the historical background and clarify the current position of the Dalmatian Club of America.

This topic has been very controversial for several decades. In 1981 many DCA members felt that they were caught unaware when AKC registered two of the fifth-generation Dal-Pointer backcross progeny, and protested loudly. AKC quickly froze the registrations, making any subsequent progeny ineligible for registration.

Extensive discussions followed which were often bitter, with a particularly divisive DCA annual meeting. In 1984 the majority of the DCA membership voted against supporting further breeding or testing of these dogs, and for the club to take no further action regarding future AKC registration.

Breeding continued on a small scale until interest increased a few years ago when some established breeders bred several litters from the Dal-Pointer backcross line, producing a percentage of low uric acid dogs. These dogs were instrumental in the research that led to the discovery of the gene responsible for the unique Dalmatian high uric acid. The DCA board and membership carefully reopened discussions on this topic, and in 2006 the DCA membership voted to support further breeding and testing of these dogs.

Subsequently, considerable information was gathered and shared. There were discussions at our National Specialties, in our quarterly magazine *The Spotter*, on the DCA website and online. The 2007 Betty Garvin Memorial Lectures at the National featured Danika Banasch DVM, Ph.D., who had discovered the defective transport gene. The 2008 specialty included an information booth and exhibition of the low uric acid dogs and a question-and-answer session after the annual meeting. DCA and the DCA Foundation paid for the testing and transportation expenses of some of the low uric acid dogs.

As more information became available, more questions arose as well. Many of the questions could be answered, but some could not. Some people thought that enough scientific information was available; others did not. Some thought that the benefits of an outcross outweighed the risks; others did not. The DCA Board wanted to get the opinion of the membership on whether the time was right to re-open discussions about AKC registration of the backcross progeny. In September 2008 a membership-wide mail ballot asked the question, "Is it time for DCA to discuss the possibility of AKC registration of the descendants of the Dalmatian-Pointer cross?" A majority of the membership voted no.

The Dalmatian Club of America's current position is that, in accordance with the membership balloting DCA will continue to encourage discussion on the topics of the low uric acid progeny, and support further testing, research and education, but at this time take no action regarding possible future AKC registration.

The DCA board has indicated that we look forward to receiving and reviewing proposals in support of further breeding and research on the backcross progeny. It seems likely that the best way to eventually achieve support for registration among all the members would be a carefully constructed bipartisan prospective plan for future breeding, testing, monitoring, and sharing of information about the long-term results of the recent and future progeny from the backcross. We also realize that the final arbiter of any registration issue is the American Kennel Club Board of Directors. (AKC Executive Secretary Jim Crowley and Assistant VP of Customer Service Mari-Beth O'Neill confirm that to date the AKC Board has fully supported parent clubs in their decisions regarding the opening and closing of stud books, in particular when a situation involves an outcross to another breed. -Ed.)

The Dalmatian Club of America and our Dalmatian Club of America Foundation have long supported research and education benefiting our breed. We have spent more than a hundred thousand dollars supporting research on a variety of health issues in Dalmatians and other breeds, and we take the responsibility of protecting our breed very seriously.

Any effort to introduce a new breed into our gene pool must be done with great caution, full and open discussions, and an accepted plan for each step along the way. A difficult task indeed, but those who are willing to make such an effort deserve our appreciation.



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President – Dalmatian Club of America
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