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THE BLOODHOUND – STATEMENT OF THE HEALTH OF THE BREED

It is hard to be precise about the beginnings of the Bloodhound breed, but hounds of this type have been around since medieval times. It is thought to have descended from the St Hubert hound, a Belgian breed. The Bloodhound is a dog that lives for its nose, that is capable of trailing the scent of humans like no other breed. This is an affectionate but 'specialist' breed which is totally governed by its nose. Hounds seen in the show ring are also seen at working trials - a true dual purpose breed.

It is also, while small in number, surprisingly genetically diverse. Breeders have taken care to select lines from overseas and a recent AHT (Animal Health Trust) report which examined the pedigrees of all the current UK hounds noted that the breed had largely avoided close breeding.

While generally enjoying good health, there are areas of concern and the breed is working hard to address these and already, over a period of some 20 years, significant improvements have been made. The recent Bloodhound Health Survey showed that compared with the 1970s:

- Eye problems needing veterinary treatment were much reduced
- Skin problems are much reduced and the amount of loose skin seen is much less in modern dogs

These improvements are due to constant diligence on the part of breeders in the UK and a commitment by breed clubs to education of both breeders and owners.

Breed Specific Breeding Strategy

At the end of 2010 the Association of Bloodhound Breeders updated the health data collated from the full breed health survey carried out in the 1970s. This was done with the intention of identifying the health status of the breed today; the chief causes of death; and the extent to which members are carrying out health screening.

The results were used to develop a **Breed Specific Breeding Strategy** with the following goals:

- The maintenance of genetic variation and the on-going improvement of breed health and longevity
- The maintenance of the functionality of the breed to perform the job for which it was developed; and the maintenance of the natural reproductive abilities of the breed
- The selection for mental (temperament) qualities required by modern society

The breed is proud of the progress already made, but is totally committed to ensuring the continued improvement to health with the specific aim of breeding hounds that retain their unique characteristics that epitomise the true working Bloodhound within a sound health framework.

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For further information contact:

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