

## HEART SCREENING STUDY UPDATE

The Deerhound Club has launched a Heart Screening Study in collaboration with a group of Veterinary Cardiologists. The researchers need 40-50 clinically healthy hounds aged 4 years or over and the aim of the study is to identify the "normal" range of heart measurements in the Deerhound. This should assist veterinary cardiologists to diagnose heart disease in the breed at an earlier stage before they show any clinical signs. If screening identifies preclinical heart problems that individual hound should benefit as the owner will be given the results to pass on to their own Veterinary Surgeon, who can closely monitor the hound and early intervention can be considered, which has been shown to be beneficial in many cases.

Clinically healthy Deerhounds aged 4 years or over are invited to participate and the owner can be present while each hound is examined by the Veterinary Cardiologist and has an Echocardiogram, ECG and DNA swabs, which may take up to one hour to complete. Ideally the same hounds will be re-screened twelve months later. Please have pedigree details available for the researchers as it may ultimately help us understand the mode of inheritance within the breed. The researchers will be bound to keep individual data in strict confidence.

The Veterinary Cardiologists are experienced in screening and their clinics are in Cheshire and Derbyshire (see below for details). The hounds are usually shaved over a small area of the chest to aid the investigations but this is not essential for the screening. If the owner would prefer that their hound is not shaved, we recommend that you inform the cardiologist when booking the appointment and before the hound is scanned. The hounds usually stand during the echocardiogram but lie down for the ECG; so teaching your hounds to lie down should ensure that the hounds are at their most relaxed throughout the examination.

A very generous donation from a Deerhound owner has been matched by the Deerhound Club and made it possible to launch this important project. We have negotiated a big discount for this type of examination, but each hound screened will cost the Club £150. So we need to raise more funds to finance the next phase of this study and we invite donations to the Deerhound Health Fund in the region of £40-£50 for each hound screened. We will also be arranging a variety of fund raising activities in support of the project, so that we can collect sufficient data to analyse and publish. Eventually, we hope a baseline will be produced as a foundation for future research into the deerhound breed. Watch this space!

**We very much hope that you will support this important new project.**

**Appointments can be made by contacting the Veterinary centre below:**

Northwest Surgeons Ltd,  
Delamere House, Ashville Point, Sutton Weaver, Cheshire WA7 3FW  
Tel: 01928 711400, Fax: 01928 711466

The Veterinary Cardiologist Practicing here is Emily Dutton BVM&S CertVC MRCVS, Resident in Cardiology.

**Please note that we recommend you book an appointment on a "Breed Day", when clients can remain with their hounds for all the tests. At present we understand that there are no appointments available between 1st May and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014 when Emily Dutton will be on study leave.**

For more information about heart testing: <http://www.nwsurgeons.co.uk/blog/2012/10/heart-testing-in-dogs-and-cats/>

Contact Sarah Helps or a member of the Deerhound Health Group if you would like more information.

Deerhound Health Group January 2014