

Papikoi

Miniature American Shepherds

*Please Note: I have gone to great expense to have Kodi's first litter of SIX puppies X-rayed and BVA scored on their elbows. All six puppies have scored **BVA 0/0** which concludes that there is no heredity predisposition to his thickened ulna bones and it will be due to either trauma or environmental factors.*

The BVA (British Veterinary Association) / Kennel Club elbow dysplasia grading scheme has given Kodi a grade 1/2 for his elbows.

OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) has given Kodi a result of 'Negative for elbow dysplasia' on the very same X-ray's.
In the USA this would be graded as 'normal'

*Due to some people not understanding these results or just seeing what they want to see, let me spell it out.....Kodi does **NOT** have elbow dysplasia, he has been graded on the thickness of the Ulna bone.*

*I would **NOT** consider using him in my breeding program if he had any elbow problems! He just has thicker bone than he should.*

Elbow Dysplasia simply means 'abnormal development of the elbow'. The term includes a number of specific abnormalities that affect the different sites within the joint. These cause problems by affecting the growth of the cartilage which form the surface of the joint or structures around it.

The elbow dysplasia (ED) grading scheme is based on that of the International Elbow Working Group, IEWG, as follows:

- Grade 0 = a radiographically normal elbow.
- Grade 1 = there is no visible primary lesion but secondary new bone (osteoarthritis) up to 2mm in depth is present at any site around the elbow joint.
- Grade 2 = osteoarthritis of more than 2mm and up to 5mm in depth is present at any site around the elbow joint.

Kodi's X-rays show that he has some 'thickening' of the bone on his Ulna's. This could be caused by a number of reasons. It could be a heredity predisposition, it could be ossification where the growth plates meet and have overlapped slightly (a possibility as he is very short in the leg) or it could just be environmental factors.

I am quite sure Kodi was a mountain goat in a previous life! He has no fear of heights, does not like being on the floor and will quite happily launch himself off the top of the sofa or any other furniture he can climb. In fact he spends most of the day bouncing off furniture, so those poor growth plates have had a really hard time! He also spent the first 7 months of his life living through a Canadian winter at -30c. He was housed with some other youngsters in the adjoining garage which had a concrete floor, this could have conducted the severe cold up through his developing leg bones. This we think may have been a major factor in the cause of his short, thickened legs as he also expresses nerve damage on his foot pads.

Conclusion

I have lost many hours of sleep over these results!

I started by speaking to the breeders of dogs in Kodi's pedigree. Many many Champion dogs who have had many offspring. Not one breeder has experienced any elbow issues in their dogs or have heard of problems in any of the offspring. Next I spoke to the Veterinarian who took the X-ray's, we discussed these in great detail and he concluded that Kodi should not have any issues with his elbows and worse case scenario would be a bit of old age arthritis. There is no reason why he can't live a perfectly normal life, compete in agility on full height and do all the things any other dog does. The X-ray's were then sent to OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) in the USA to see what they made of them as they have graded the majority of dogs in the USA/Canada and they came back as 'Negative for elbow dysplasia' which would be recorded as 'Normal'. So no elbow problems detected on their grading system.

So what to do? I could just not bother publishing his BVA elbow results, after all I have the more favourable OFA results to use insteadmany breeders do not publish unfavourable results or even bother to test in the first place, discrepancies can be seen on many websites when looking at health results. But I believe in complete honesty when it comes to breeding, it's an absolute must!.....so they are published for all to see. I have listened to advice from Veterinarians and Breeders who have said that I have a cracking little dog who is fit, healthy, clear on all his tests and has a LOT to offer in my breeding program. The phrase 'throwing out the baby with the bathwater' has been used several times! The fact that I will be using him on my girls with 0/0 grade elbows will be beneficial and all my puppies are sold on endorsed pedigree's, so any offspring can be BVA tested prior to me considering lifting any restrictions. Not one person that I have consulted has advised against using him in my breeding program, so.....

All in all the positives far out way the single negative, which of course may never even be a problem!