

Hereditary Cataract of Staffordshire Bull Terrier (Staffie)

A hereditary ocular disease prevented thanks to a DNA test

Hereditary Cataract leads to a progressive vision loss. About 8% of Staffordshire Bull Terriers are carriers of the gene responsible for the disease. A reliable DNA test can screen stud dogs and brood bitches, in order to adapt matings and avoid birth of affected puppies and spread of the disease in the breed.

A incapacitating hereditary disease

Hereditary Cataract leads to an opacity of Cristallin which causes a progressive vision loss and can lead to a complete blindness. The first symptoms can appear within the first weeks or months following birth. Cataract leads usually to a complete vision loss around 2 or 3 years old

A frequent disease

Around 8% of Staffordshire Bull Terriers are carriers of the genetic mutation responsible of hereditary cataract. A breeder can, without noticing, mate a male « carrier » and a female « carrier » and produce a litter containing affected puppies.

A dog « carrier », will not develop the disease but transmits it to 50% of its progeny. The stud dog « carrier » of the mutation, used a lot for reproduction purpose, spreads the disease through the breed and helps to increase the frequency of the putation and multiply the number of affected puppies.

A preventable disease

When a dog is suffering from the disease, it means that his two parents are at least « carrier » of the mutation (heterozygous), they can be affected as well without any visible symptom.

Breeders unaware of Hereditary Cataract can mate stud dogs and brood bitches carriers which do not show any sign of the disease yet and produce affected puppies .

A DNA test called HC, can detect Hereditary Cataract Sfaaffordshire Bull Terrier with a reliability above 99%

Avoid the birth of affected puppies

In order to secure its kennel and avoid the risk of production of affected puppies, the breeder must screen its breeding dogs thanks to the HC DNA test.

When acquiring a puppy for breeding or when a stud dog is used for a mating, the breeder verifies the genetic status of the dog for Staffordshire Bull Terrier asking for the result of the HC DNA test.

A DNA test easy to perform

The veterinarian performs a simple cheek swab and sends it to the laboratory. The result, delivered within few days, indicates if the tested dog is clear, carrier or affected for Hereditary Cataract. A genetic certificate displaying the result must be used as a guarantee for a mating or to justify the sale of puppies clear of Hereditary Cataract.

The veterinarian who notices early ocular issues in a young American Staffordshire Terrier can process a DNA test to confirm or refute the diagnosis of Hereditary Cataract. If the dog is affected, parents have to be screened as well.

A breeder who knows the genetic status of the dog can select its breeding dogs, adapt matings, avoid the birth of affected puppies and limit the spread of this ocular disease in the breed.

Dr Guillaume QUENEY
ANTAGENE