

**Health Committee Report (3/31/03)**  
**General Membership Meeting Reno, Nevada**

**Financials:**

The current balance in the Health Committee ledger is approximately \$11,000. See treasurers report - Health Committee Ledger for exact balance. This does not include expenses or income for 2003 National health seminar speaker. The health committee is operating well within their budget for calendar year 2003. This balance should support necessary expenses for the 2004 Nationals clinics and seminars, which are expected to be rather extensive to support the large turnout anticipated to celebrate the centennial show in Cincinnati.

**Correspondences:**

Personal thank-you notes and borzoi head pins have been sent to all BCOA members who have contributed \$50 or more to the Borzoi Health Committee fund during the 2002 calendar year. Thank-you notes and borzoi head pins will be mailed the first week of April for contributions received during the first quarter of calendar year 2003 and every quarter thereafter. A committee report was submitted for publication in the current issue of the Borzoi Connection.

**2003 Supported Research Studies:**

The health committee has supported 3 health research projects over the course of calendar year 2002 and is currently in the process of submitting our financial support for a 4<sup>th</sup> study with applications due the first of May of this year. The following is a brief overview of these research studies.

1. The first of the research studies the health committee supported over the course of this last year was the Canine Health Fund (CHF) - Thyroid TH3 research grant #1450. The BCOA approved the release of requested funding of \$5000 over two years to support this research project which anticipates an outcome of a more precise method of analyzing blood sample submissions to detect hypothyroidism. Since thyroid disease is among one of our more prevalent health problems, this study should prove to be beneficial to our membership in evaluating thyroid health of their dogs in the near future.
2. The second research we supported is another CHF supported study to locate common genetic markers across all pure breeds of dogs. DNA swab samples from 2 borzoi of different pedigree were submitted for this research project. There was no cost to the health committee for participation and DNA swab kits were provided free of charge.
3. In January of this year, there was a request for participation in a sighthound research project on sensitivity to, or negative reactions to Ivermectin. Nine cheek swab samples were sent to Dr. Katy Robertson at the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory, University of California at Davis. The cut off date for sample submission was the end of January, so response time to the request for sample submissions was quite short. However, Katy was very receptive to the idea of receiving as many samples from borzoi as possible by that deadline. She has also established a website where the results of her study will be posted

as it progresses. The hotlink will be added to our web site so that our members can see the status as well.

4. The health committee recently received 4 pending research proposals from the AKC/CHF with a request for financial support. While all of these research proposals hold merit, one was of particular interest and potential benefit to the borzoi population. The title of this research proposal is "Clinical and Immunological Outcomes in Dogs with Osteosarcoma Treated with Intratumoral Interleukin-Microspheres". This research proposes to add a new form of immune system stimulation for the treatment of bone cancer tumors (Osteosarcoma) in dogs. They propose that injections of Interleukin-12 (IL-12) directly into the cancerous limb, using this new microsphere formulation, will result in the slow IL-12 release within the tumor environment, promoting active antitumor immunity in dogs with this affliction and lengthen their survival time. The funding requested to support this study is \$6000 over a period of two years.

I strongly encourage our membership to visit the recently revised Canine Health Foundation website (hot linked to our Health Committee web site) to see additional information about research projects and other health related information.

#### **2004 Nationals preparation:**

Preparation for the Cincinnati Nationals is now underway and our centennial celebration brings with it a bittersweet problem. Anticipated participation for 2004 will be tremendous and scheduling time for all events will be extremely difficult. There just won't be enough hours in the day (or night!). I would like to propose to our membership that the health committee offer a single clinic day in Cincinnati where microchip, thyroid, eye CERF and heart exams will be offered for a single day, all day long, preferably on Wednesday of the show week so as to include the maximum number of interested participants early enough in the week before both dogs and owners are exhausted. I do not think that we will be able to fit more than one day of clinics into the National schedule. Several excellent opportunities are available for seminar topics, which include a CHF presentation, what's new in heart health research, and bloat tubing preparation and demonstration. We certainly want to take full advantage of the excellent veterinarian and research specialists located in the Ohio area!

#### **Health registry update:**

At the end of the year, our health registry creator extraordinaire, Dr. Lou Avant, needed to retire from her project due to professional time commitments and we were quickly running out of space on our web server to accommodate additional data. The health registry information has been copied and stored offline by the BCOA web master. All data that is certified by a registry organization will be converted to the AKC/CHF CHIC program database, which will be readily available to our membership via our Health Information web site hot link or directly through the CHF web site.

#### **Health Committee Proposals pending BCOA board approval:**

The health committee provided the following motion for the board's review and approval at the February board meeting and again at the April board meeting to be held in Reno:

Prior to the start of the 2005 Futurity nominations for bitches, I would like to propose a motion to change our Futurity nomination policy/rules. As a proponent of taking active strides towards improving the health of our future generations of borzoi, I believe that passing this motion is paramount to our breed's health. The purpose of the futurity is to showcase the very best our breeders have to offer in their breeding programs for the future of borzoi and if this does not include health screening for our most prevalent health concern, heart disease, then as breeders we have nothing to offer for our breeds futurity or future. **2005 bitch futurity nomination applications must require and include current OFA heart certification numbers for both the bitch and stud dog.** While this is not a guarantee that any or all offspring produced from certified parents are free from heart disease, it is the very first step in assuring that, as breeders, we have at least made use of the tools available to screen out known affected animals at that time from our breeding programs.

### **So, what's next?:**

It's been over 7 years since our last breed survey was conducted, so it's definitely time for us to survey our membership again on the current health status of our breed. This survey needs to include general health questions as well as detailed disease specific questions that will assist in our future heart research project so as to assure we cover all background data requirements in a single survey. To assist our membership with ease of response to this upcoming survey, we are currently working on a method to create an online survey entry system attached to our health committee web site. In addition to this, we will still provide hard copy survey forms for those of our members who either do not have Internet access or simply prefer filling out and submitting hard copy forms. Our aim is to receive as many responses from our members covering as many dogs as possible over the course of the last 10 years. On line data will NOT be saved to the health committee web site nor will it be available at any time to any BCOA member or individual from the borzoi community at large. The data, once entered and submitted, will go directly to an independent research data compiler, who will provide us with the statistical output of the survey. In turn these statistics will be shared with our membership and also provided to the AKC/CHF in order for us to submit a request for our heart research fund project, which is the next step. In addition, this survey will tell us if major health concerns have changed order significantly or at all since our last survey was conducted. Once available, your participation in this survey is extremely important. Statistical data is only significant to our research project if it encompasses the majority of the recent population.

In closing, it's been a tremendously busy year and there are still many new and exciting adventures and possibilities in the arena of veterinary science and research. I'm looking forward to reviewing the new batch of grant proposals from the AKC/CHF and hope that all of you will take a few moments to browse them as well on the CHF web site. I'm always interested to hear your concerns, viewpoints, comments, questions or suggestions. Please don't hesitate to write, phone or email. I'll do my best to help in any way I can.

Sincerely your's in borzoi health,

Virginia E. Jones  
BCOA Health Committee Chairman