

Swedish breeding rules - brief information 2011-08-22

Background and Purpose

The club would like to inform and clarify the rules that apply to all Swedish Papillon breeders who register their puppies. Unfortunately there are negative rumors about Swedish bred Papillon's that they are affected by the eye disease PRA to a greater extent than in other countries. With the following information, the club hopes that these rumors will cease.

In short we can say that Sweden is one of the few countries to implement a systematic monitoring of brood Papillon's eyes status, and where all eye examinations are published on the Swedish Kennel Club's website. No Swedish Papillon breeder can do an eye examination of his dog without the results being officially published.

The result of this openness have seen the Swedish Papillons diagnosed with PRA declining steadily for many years. We currently have about 2 cases a year (0,5% out of the checked dogs). Our Swedish breeders' openness also contributes to the research of the PRA. In the United States research is underway on the PRA and the scientists receive Swedish support.

Rules for the Swedish breeders

In Sweden there is one kennel club, where all Swedish breeders of all breeds are members, otherwise they cannot register their puppies. The club is called The Swedish Kennel Club, shortened SKK. Papillonringen (The Swedish Papillonclub) is associated with the Swedish Kennel Club (SKK) through the special club Swedish Toy Dog Club (SDHK).

If a breeder doesn't follow the SWEDISH KENNEL CLUB rules, they can be excluded until further notice or receive a warning, depending on the degree of the offense.

In broad terms, this applies to every SKK-registered Papillon

1. Female dogs are not to be mated before 18 months of age.
2. A female may not give birth to more than five litters in her lifetime.
3. If a female has two litters within 12 months, she has to rest at least 12 months before her next whelping.
4. A female more than seven years old must not be bred if she hasn't had a previous litter.
5. A female more than seven years old must always have a clear Health Certificate prior to mating. The veterinary certificate is sent to SKK attached to the litter's registration application.
6. A female more than seven years old must rest 12 months between her litters.
7. Dogs are not allowed to be kept in crates, except for certain activities. For example in the car, on the way to competitions and at competitions. Never at home.

8. For kennels there are certain measurements required depending on the size of, and number of dogs inside the kennels.

Breed clubs can apply for health programs. **SKK then verifies that the rules are followed before the puppies are registered.**

Papillonringen filed for a health program in 1994 regarding the eye disease, PRA.

In accordance with this health program the parents has to be eye tested within a year of each mating, by a certified veterinary ophthalmologist, otherwise SKK will not approve the registration of the litter.

SKK has appointed some veterinarians who have specialized skills in the eye/eye diseases to make these eye tests (veterinary ophthalmologist). When they examine our dogs they check at the same time their ID numbers. In Sweden we have to do a veterinary health check and chip mark our puppies before they are sold. So all dogs are chip marked. The breeder receives a copy of the results and the vet submits the original to the SKK, the result is recorded at SKK. The results are then available for anyone looking at the SKK's website. To our knowledge, only Denmark, has a similar health program for PRA, Norway, Finland and Iceland are also testing but, to our knowledge, on a voluntary basis.

If PRA is detected on the examination, **the following dogs will immediately be banned from breeding:**

1. The dog classified as PRA
2. The parents of the PRA-affected dog (the recessive trigger gene makes them both carriers even if they themselves are healthy)
3. Any offspring to a dog classified as PRA (they are also known carriers of the gene)

The above rules basically means that all known carriers of PRA that is, animals with generalized PRA, and their parents and any already produced offspring may not be used for breeding.

When we are eye testing our dogs the vet can also find other changes in the eyes, which is noted and included into the registration data at SKK. The Papillons have a health program banning PRA, other changes in the eye is a responsibility for each breeder.

Sometimes the veterinarian can write "**öga uppföljning**" - "eye follow up" on the examination paper that is sent into the Kennel Club.

This means that this dog is due back to the veterinarian in about 6 months to re-do the examination of the eyes. The vet is thus uncertain and wish to study the eyes again, which does not necessarily mean that he suspects PRA. We've had several dogs with "Eye Follow up" which was later proved not to have a serious eye disease and certainly not PRA. Others have unfortunately been classified as PRA.

Dogs with "öga uppföljning" is stopped for breeding until the same is examined and cleared from suspicion. The parents and/or any offspring are not stopped for breeding in the

meantime, not until the veterinarian can determine that it is PRA. But it is recommended that breeders should be careful and wait until they know the result.

PRA is an eye disease that develops over years, so the dog can be cleared from suspicion for years, then suddenly the veterinarian may see a change in the eye. 3-4 years of age is the most common age when PRA usually is found. First symptom is night blindness and later in life the dog becomes blind but can still determine light from dark unless chataracht also develops.

Breeders in Sweden are no longer hysterical about PRA since we only find about 2 cases a year. It's very sad still when it occurs, of course, since it involves so many other dogs that is actually healthy from PRA, but unfortunately found to be carriers. The rules in our neighboring countries, Denmark, for example, are not as tough as our Swedish rules.

In Denmark a known carrier can be used for breeding if it has been cleared passed the age of 4 years. The breeder must request authorization from the Danish Kennel Club prior to mating.

Although we speculate, it's not unlikely that countries with no systematic eye control have the same problem with PRA that Swedish Papillons had before our health program was introduced more than 15 years ago.

PRA is a collective term and consists of different types. Both early and late varieties exist in Papillons. Our ophthalmologists have the skills to be able to recognize them all. A company in Finland claims to have a working DNA-test for Papillons. Unfortunately it's not working on all the different forms of PRA which are present in the breed and the test is not approved by the Swedish Kennel Club.

When/if a functioning DNA-test is found it would make life so much easier. Then a carrier could be bred to a dog free of the gene and never produce a sick dog.

If you want to know more about Papillon breeding in Sweden, please contact our breeding committee

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