



media *release*

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ANIMAL HEALTH TRUST THANKS ITALIAN SPINONE BREED CLUB FOR ON-GOING SUPPORT

More than 35 Italian Spinone owners and breeders, including The Italian Spinone Club of Great Britain's Health Co-ordinator, Elaine Kirkham, attended a special Italian Spinone Day at the Animal Health Trust (AHT) on Friday 7 November to help support research projects into diseases commonly found in the breed.

Italian Spinone owners were invited to attend the free event to hear updates on projects aiming to improve understanding of the prevalence and genetic basis of idiopathic epilepsy, meaning no underlying cause for the seizures can be identified, and cancer in the breed. The Italian Spinone Day was also an opportunity for the AHT to thank the Breed Club for its on-going support; the Club have actively supported the AHT's research for many years, including the development of a DNA test for cerebellar ataxia.

The Italian Spinone Day included presentations from the AHT's Head of Neurology, Dr. Luisa De Risio, on the prevalence and clinical characteristics of idiopathic epilepsy in the Italian Spinone; Head of Canine Genetics, Dr. Cathryn Mellersh, on looking for epilepsy mutations and Head of Oncology, Davide Berlato, on the prevalence of cancer in the breed. The day also included a tour of the AHT's Small Animal Clinic.

Through funding, awareness raising and providing DNA samples, the Breed Club as well as numerous individual owners has significantly contributed to improving the health of the Italian Spinone. A DNA test for cerebellar ataxia has been available from the AHT since 2008 and more than 600 Spinone dogs have since been tested, effectively leading to the elimination of the mutation from the UK Spinone

population. The AHT's aim is to work together with the breed club over the coming years to produce a similar test for idiopathic epilepsy.

Dr. Cathryn Mellersh said: "We wanted to provide the Italian Spinone community with an update on the work we're doing into idiopathic epilepsy and to take this opportunity to thank the breeders and owners for their continued proactive approach to addressing health concerns within the breed. We couldn't do our work without their support both in terms of funding and providing DNA samples from healthy and affected dogs.

"It's this kind of relationship with breed clubs and owners that enables our clinicians and scientists to carry out their important research that can have such a positive effect on the lives of hundreds of dogs - so I'd really like to thank everyone for attending and further contributing towards our work."

Ends

For further information, please contact:

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Photographs & Videos:

Images of the breed club members who attended on the day with an Italian Spinone, Lola, can be requested from the AHT press office by emailing

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Additional notes:

- The Animal Health Trust (AHT) is an independent charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit the website at www.aht.org.uk