

Your HELP needed for PRA project!

The research project at the University of Missouri to identify a marker for Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) in English Springer Spaniels is progressing. We have added a PRA section to our Canine Genetic Diseases network website (www.CanineGeneticDiseases.net) to help us provide information to the public and to recruit more DNA samples for the study. Recently, we hired a summer employee to focus on ESS-PRA by collating data submitted, help us assemble family groups for mapping, and contact owners and breeders to request information when necessary.

Mapping technology has improved rapidly in the past year, and we now have access to information and tools that should allow us to map many diseases that would have been difficult even a few years ago. However, to map PRA (or any trait), we need family groups that will be informative. In addition to affected dogs, we need siblings, parents, and grandparents. Normal and affected dogs in these family groups are equally important to sample. It is also very important to be able to document the status of the dogs in these family groups, so we are certain they are affected or clear. To assist in this, we have created an information form and survey, and we are requesting owners and breeders complete this for their dogs. The survey is available online in the "sample submission" portion of our PRA website, and will be distributed at specialties and other ESS events.

Currently we have DNA from 1549 individual English Springer Spaniels collected and stored here. Of these, we have only 8 that are recorded as PRA affected, plus 64 dogs that are reported as normal relatives of PRA affected dogs. This is not sufficient for mapping at this time. We are asking that all breeders and owners who submitted samples from their dogs complete our survey, to help us identify affected dogs and their relatives that are already sampled. In addition, we ask your help in recruiting DNA samples from affected dogs and their normal relatives that have not yet been sampled. Collection and shipping instructions are also available on the website. Family groups from foreign countries are welcomed as well – we have special instructions for shipping from outside the US posted on the website.

Completed surveys should be send to: ESS-PRA Survey
c/o Liz Hansen
321 Connaway Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

THANK YOU for your consideration and participation in this study of PRA in ESS. If you have any questions regarding sample submission or questionnaires, please contact Liz Hansen at HansenL@missouri.edu or 573-884-3712.