

WUSV Working Group

Breed Harmonisation Programme Update

In April 2017, the BAGSD and the GSDL of GB signed an agreement which included a commitment to a programme of communication and education of breeders in the UK with an objective of implementation within 5 years.

Since then, through the WUSV Working Group, efforts have been made to find out more about the harmonisation programme and how it should be implemented in the UK. We are aware that the current lack of information is a source of great frustration to many who are interested in the German Shepherd Dog and much speculation has taken place as to the implications of the programme.

The WUSV Working Group met with the SV President, Prof Dr Messler and General Secretary, Herr Setecki in September 2017 having posed many questions about the programme to the SV Board. Herr Setecki informed us that they are not yet ready to answer our questions and that the SV had formed a working party whose task it would be look at each country in detail, how the programme affects them and to support them to implement the harmonisation programme. Herr Messler expressed the opinion that the UK is already operating at premium level (see attached matrix) – we know that he does not yet have clarity on some of the areas where we do not comply with the premium level but compared to many countries across the World we are certainly a lot closer already. We will do our best to ensure that we get feedback from the SV working party and then move ahead with communication.

The WUSV Working Group is constructing a website where all available information will be available. Any questions regarding the Breed Harmonisation Programme should be addressed to the WUSV Working Group via the General Secretary, Carole Lister – carolelister21@gmail.com

To recap, The Breed Harmonisation Programme was approved by the WUSV at its 2016 AGM and is to be implemented over 6-7 years

The WUSV has 83 member countries and each country has its own way of doing things. The SV/WUSV have recognised that in a global world, they need to exercise a global policy of standardisation to protect the GSD breed.

This is not only to protect the health of the GSD but also to protect its public image. Following Crufts 2016 it was clear that public perception can be harmed

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very quickly with any show anywhere in the World capable of appearing on the internet within minutes of judging.

The SV consider that it is their duty to be the custodian of the breed across the world.

The WUSV is establishing a global Stud Book. Dogs meeting the required criteria will be eligible for entry in this WUSV Stud book. A certification that the dog is recorded in the WUSV Stud Book will be attached to the pedigree and duly stamped. (see attached matrix)

There will be a separate register for short and long coats and breeding between the two coat types would not be allowed.

SV judges will not be able to judge any dog which does not meet the basic standard.

Every WUSV member country is expected to adopt the breed harmonisation programme.

The SV and WUSV are placing great emphasis on the following parts of the breed standard:

Character

The German Shepherd Dog must be well-balanced (with strong nerves) in terms of character, self-assured, absolutely natural and (except for a stimulated situation) good-natured as well as attentive and willing to please.
(In the Words of Prof Messler “a family dog”)

He must possess instinctive behaviour, resilience and self-assurance in order to be suitable as a companion, guard, protection, service and herding dog
(Again in the words of Prof Messler – a working dog)

They are therefore introducing character assessment for all breeding animals.

A character assessment (ZAP1) will be carried out with puppies between 9 and 13 months old and will become a requirement for all dogs on the WUSV Studbook. It is already compulsory in Germany for dogs born after 1st July 2017.

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There will also be an alternative route to Koerung: ZAP 2 is a working ability test incorporating the three phases of IPO: tracking obedience and protection but at a basic level, showing the dogs ability to be trained rather than requiring the precision and attention to minute detail which is required for IPO (and, therefore, the hours of dedication to training). Details of ZAP 2 are yet to be finalised.

A dog may take a koerung if it achieves a pass in the character assessment and the working ability test but can also follow the traditional route of IPO. Dogs achieving koerung with ZAP 2 will be eligible for V grading.

The programme was a huge task for the SV to undertake and was felt to be an essential and appropriate response to the poor public image of the German Shepherd. It is probably not surprising that as the detail of the task becomes clearer, the implementation has been slower than anticipated. Nonetheless, it is very frustrating not to have more detail and for there to be more question than answers. We have been listening to the areas of concern from the UK GSD community and have given our current understanding below....

Why are a small group of people deciding the future and why have you not consulted with members like Australia have done?

No decisions have yet been made for the future. As stated above, the UK already adheres to many of the requirements of the Breed Harmonisation Matrix and so the changes that need to be made here are possibly less challenging than Australia and other countries. Additionally, we have not yet been able to get the clarification we need to be able to draft any proposal that could be voted upon.

Both the BAGSD and the GSDL will be having their AGMs soon and members will be given an opportunity to ask questions, if possible these will be answered and if not they will be noted and added to the outstanding information we require from the SV.

When we have sufficient information to be able to understand what decisions need to be made it is our intention to have an open meeting with all those who are interested and to let everyone make their views known.

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The most likely area for voting to be required is within the requirements of the GSDL – BRG Regional Shows and the British Sieger. Changes to GSDL-BRG Regional Shows must be made at a GSDL AGM. Changes to the British Sieger requirements are made through BAGSD and GSDL recommendation to the British Sieger Working Party (including the GSD Breed Council) – both organisations will consult with their members on significant changes.

Will my puppies have to be registered with the WUSV in future?

The registration body in the UK is the Kennel Club and this will not change. Dogs which meet all the criteria of the Breed Harmonisation Programme will, in the future, be able to apply to be recorded in the WUSV stud book if the owners wish to. The concept is that registration on the WUSV stud book will become an internationally recognised “quality mark” – it will be in addition to the KC registration.

Will I be able to mate a long coat to a normal coat in future?

The registration body in the UK is the Kennel Club and so this would only change if the Kennel Club made that decision. As they are reluctant to give separate classification for the coat types and this information is not currently included on registrations it seems unlikely that any changes will occur in the foreseeable future.

Will I have to use the SV A stamp scheme for hip and elbow x-rays?

As is the case currently, anyone wishing to obtain an SV koerung with their dog must use the SV A stamp scheme for the health test requirements of that qualification.

Any working dog wishing to compete at International Level IPO competitions will have to use the SV A Stamp scheme.

Anyone wishing to register their dog on the WUSV Studbook will have to have SV A Stamp grades.

The WUSV Working Group continue to work to make the A stamp scheme as accessible as possible in the UK.

The Kennel Club do not require any health tests as mandatory for general breeders although hip x-rays are recommended for Assured Breeders and therefore A Stamp will not be required to register puppies.

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The area of uncertainty here is the requirements of the GSDL – BRG Regional Shows and the British Sieger. We will be working to have BVA health tests recognised for shows in the UK and will be explaining the need for this.

Will I have to have a koerung to compete in an IPO trial?

The Breed Harmonisation Programme is, as far as we are aware, about breeding and does not affect the rules for IPO trials. However, it has already been made very clear that SV hips and elbows only are acceptable for WUSV international championships so anyone considering that they may compete at that level should do SV hips and elbows.

Can I get a V grade in the Adult Class?

SV judges are instructed in Germany not to award a V grade to any exhibit that does not have working qualifications. The UK is almost unique in the World in awarding V in its adult class. This has been accepted for many years in the UK and the importance to our exhibitors is recognised by the WUSV Working Group.

This is again an area of uncertainty and as greater clarification of the potential for V in the adult class to be retained is received this will be communicated and discussed.

Once we have this clarification, if it means that SG will be the highest grade available and we are unable to obtain a dispensation to allow V then the implications on awards such as the BRG Gold Medal will be reviewed and addressed.

Can I do a character assessment in the UK?

Currently the SV is not processing any character assessments outside of Germany.

It is the intention of the WUSV Working Group to facilitate BAGSD and GSDL to be able to hold character assessments as soon as possible and for UK assessors to be trained and authorised by the SV to make the cost of such assessments reasonable.

Will I need a character assessment pass to show at GSDL-BRG Regionals and the British Sieger?

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This is the main requirement of the Breed Harmonisation Programme which is new to the UK and will be required for the BAGSD and the GSDL to comply with its obligations as a WUSV member club.

It cannot be introduced as a requirement for any event in the UK until it is reasonably accessible in the UK and then a period of notice will be required.

Members of the GSDL will be asked to vote on its inclusion into the requirements for showing at British Regional Group Regional Shows at a GSDL AGM.

Will I have to use SV DNA records?

As is the case currently, anyone wishing to obtain an SV koerung with their dog must use the SV DNA scheme for the health test requirements of that qualification.

Anyone wishing to register their dog on the WUSV Studbook will have to have an SV DNA.

The WUSV Working Group continue to work to make the SV DNA scheme as accessible as possible in the UK.

The Kennel Club do not require DNA records therefore SV DNA will not be required to register puppies.

The area of uncertainty here is the requirements of the GSDL – BRG Regional Shows and the British Sieger. We will be working to have UK DNA records recognised for shows in the UK and will be explaining the need for this.

It is recommended that anyone breeding in the UK has DNA recorded with Animal Health even if they do use the SV DNA scheme in order that a reliable UK database is developed.

What will change for the 2018 British Sieger and GSDL-BRG Regionals?

There are no planned changes for either the British Sieger or the Regionals in 2018.