



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB™

Steven D. Gladstone, Esq.
Director

January 19, 2008

Re: Vote to Disqualify Merles in AKC Chihuahua Breed Standard

Dear Chihuahua Club of America Members,

I write to you today as a concerned member of the dog fancy and as a breeder of merles in Cardigan Welsh Corgis for nearly 35 years.

Your club is currently conducting a ballot to disqualify in your AKC standard the merle color pattern. I hope to convince you to vote NO so as to not disqualify a perfectly safe, naturally occurring color pattern.

I am sure you have been inundated with horror stories of the alleged lethal merle gene. (I have seen some of the web sites rank with alleged facts of nothing but histrionics of misinformation). I want to assure you that such horror stories – you know the blind, deaf, eyeless pups that just come out of no where – are simply nothing but scare tactics of those who want to do away with the color pattern.

Where do I come off assuring you of anything? My credentials: As I told you Marieann and I have bred merle CWC for nearly 35 years and a score of generations. <http://www.cwcorgi.com>. I am currently President-elect of the CWCCA; a Director of the AKC, Class of 2009; Chairman of the Board, AKC Companion Animal Recovery, Inc. and a Director of the AKC Canine Health Foundation. I have long time breeding experience with the merle gene and long time political experience to analyze dog politics.

As to the alleged health issues with merle pattern breeding, *heterozygous (Mm) “normal” merles are perfectly healthy with no health issues related to the merle gene whatsoever.* It is true that a homozygous (double merle - MM) can produce pups that can be deaf or blind. ***But the only way to get a double merle is to breed two merles together.*** . In Cardigans there was concern over a “hidden merle” which when unknowingly bred to another merle would produce the dreaded MM. DNA tests for the merle gene, as well as tapetum observations (the reflecting layer immediately behind the retina of the eye) can *easily and conclusively determine the presence of the merle pattern* regardless of coat color appearance.

There is no realistic chance of a person who knows anything about their dogs will breed a double merle. I invite you to our web site for a full and complete education on merle color pattern breeding. It has been posted for years and has been referenced throughout the dog world: <http://www.cwcorgi.com/Aragorn/cardicolor.htm>

By now you are saying to yourself, “So why does this Cardigan guy care what we do in Chihuahuas with our standard?”

The merle color pattern is being hyped as horrible not only here amongst your membership but in the European Community by animal rights humaniacs. They control the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals, part of the Council of Europe, (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Convention_for_the_Protection_of_Pet_Animals) which prohibits all dock and crops throughout European countries that have subscribed.

They want to ban all breeds at the extremes, including those overly large and small, those with “pushed in faces” and those which they consider “abnormal”. These HSUS/PETA type crazies want to outlaw many breeds of dogs in whole and strains within breeds because of what they, the crazies, think are unhealthy traits. *Chihuahuas are INCLUDED because they are too small!* See <http://www.saveourbreeds.org.uk/convention.htm>. England has banned merle Chihuahuas with little cause. We are trying to have that poor decision reconsidered.

Does your club really want to give ammunition to these folks to support outlawing traits within breeds and breeds themselves by throwing out your merle color? You can be certain that your club’s DQ of merles will be used throughout the world as evidence that merles should be done away with everywhere, in all breeds because of their alleged lethal genetics.

PLEASE DON’T FALL PREY TO THE DISTORTIONS AND SCARE TACTICS OF THE INEXPERIENCED AND UNINFORMED.

VOTE NO! PLEASE DO NOT DISQUALIFY YOUR MERLE CHIHUAHUAS!

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven D. Gladstone', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steven D. Gladstone, Esq.

PS Please understand that these comments are entirely my own. They are not intended to suggest endorsement in any way by any of the organizations mentioned here. SDG