



The Burmese Breed in the UK – The Way Forward

- How many active studs and queens are currently in the U.K. gene pool?
- How healthy is the gene pool in the U.K?
- Are Burmese getting smaller?
- What is the average Burmese litter size?
- What is the average birth weight of male and female kittens?
- Does the time of year affect litter size and birth weights?
- How many kittens are born with veterinary defects?

The answer to all of the above questions is - WE DON'T KNOW.

As breeders we are in an ideal position to provide this information to help monitor the future health of the breed. Some of you may remember the collating of pedigree information on hypokalaemia which was carried out by me 15 years ago and how useful the exercise was in bringing the problem of hypokalaemia to the attention of breeders and owners and helping identify the condition and the mode of inheritance. I am now asking you to take part in a similar exercise to measure the health of the gene pool in the U.K at the present time. The aim of this is not to identify problems or necessarily expect to find issues at this stage but simply to produce baseline statistics to enable monitoring of the health of the breed now and in the future if outcrosses to other breeds are made or when new lines are imported. If enough breeders participate we hope to make this a continual monitoring process.

To help with this study a form is available to all Burmese breeders to submit details of their litters. It is important that as many breeders as possible are willing to participate so as to obtain meaningful statistics. For example, we would like information on the size of the litter, birth weights of male and female kittens and any abnormalities detected or stillborn kittens. The Burmese Breed Data Submission forms will be available from Mrs Sue Chase or Mrs Frances Bell or available to download from the website which, when completed should be returned to me. Data provided by breeders will be treated in the strictest confidence. Each litter will be given a reference number. The data will be converted to pure statistics to remove any identifying features before sending to the database compiler. There will then be a follow up form to report data on the litter at 12 weeks old. Once we have collated sufficient data we will report to the BCC Committee with our findings which will then be shared. Should any sudden anomalies become apparent in the future, for example, an increase in overall stillbirths or large decrease in average litter size then we can then discuss our findings with the BCC's Genetic and Veterinary Advisors. I do hope you will feel able to contribute to this study. This is about ensuring the future health of our breed and could be critical to it's future. Your input will be greatly appreciated.

Mrs Joyce Dell

Vice President and Genetic Advisor to The Burmese Cat Club