

International Survey of Health Testing in Irish Wolfhounds (November 2011)

In September 2011, the following questionnaire was presented to all the below countries. Responses have been almost 100%. In some cases, the replies recorded here are a digest of some of the more detailed responses received.

The Questions:

- ^ Heart testing
 - ^ Is it optional or compulsory for IWs before they can be bred
 - ^ If it is compulsory, does your breed club or your kennel club enforce this requirement
- ^ Liver shunt (PPS)
 - ^ Is it optional or compulsory for IW puppies bred
 - ^ If it is compulsory, does your breed club or your kennel club enforce this requirement
- ^ Other
 - ^ Does your country have any other optional or compulsory breed-specific health requirements for IWs

Responses:

Argentina (currently just one breeder)

- ^ Heart Testing
 - Optional, but all IWs in Argentina have been tested at 2 and 5 years of age
- ^ Liver shunt
 - Not available in Argentina
- ^ All IWs have been tested for hip and elbow dysplasia before breeding
- ^ No IW Club or Sighthound Club in Argentina, only 1 registered breeder, up to individuals

Australia

- ^ Heart Testing
 - Optional
 - Up to individuals
- ^ Liver shunt
 - Compulsory by clubs in most states (definitely NSW and South Australia)

Belgium

- ^ Heart Testing
 - Compulsory at least every year, will become within 6 months before breeding for bitches, every 6 months for males
 - IWCB enforces, Belgian Kennel Club will too in the coming year
 - People ask the club for a puppy, we always say that they should ask for the heart testing results
- ^ Liver shunt
 - Compulsory
 - IWCB enforces
- ^ Tries to make the breeders aware from the fact that it would be better to combine young bitches and older males or vice versa, or even breed with older animals (of course healthy ones) to make a better bridge to longevity

Croatia

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Optional
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Optional
- ⤴ Hip dysplasia X-rays compulsory

Czech Republic

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Optional
 - Up to the individual, increasing number of breeders are doing it
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Optional
 - Quite rare
- ⤴ In the Czech Club rules, it is stated that the breeding can't be against health of the breed and inbreeding is not recommended. It's recommended, there are no common ancestors in three generations, better in five. Bitch should not be bred more than twice to one dog (if the bitch has 3 litters, there must be at least 2 fathers).
- ⤴ Optional DNA profiling

Denmark

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - We do not have compulsory heart testing. Our club has chosen to use a lot of information and positive motivation as well as peer pressure. We have a short article on our club website educating new puppy buyers about which questions to ask, in their search of a puppy. We have chosen this approach based on the assumption, that if breeders hear the same questions often enough from potential puppy buyers, then eventually they will comply. Our approach seems to be working quite well. We have arranged collective heart scans, which has been a success, especially since we were able to do so at reduced rates.
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - We have placed equal importance on heart testing and testing litters for liver shunt in the work we have done in the club. An increasing number of breeders test their puppies.
- ⤴ We have been collecting blood (DNA) for a international research project at the Agricultural University in Uppsala, Sweden. This has been made possible with grants from the Irish Wolfhound Club of Denmark, the Danish Kennel Club and the Agricultural University in Uppsala. Focus of the research is Osteosarcoma, Cardiomyopathy and later to be followed by other genetic diseases. Participation has been voluntary.

Estonia

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Optional, but all IWs in Estonia have been tested
 - Kennel Club would enforce rule if made official by the Estonian IW Club
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Optional, but all IWs in Estonia have been tested, since this year
 - Kennel Club would enforce rule if made official by the Estonian IW Club
- ⤴ Optional, but even so, all dogs have been tested for hip and elbow dysplasia as well as the eyes for visible hereditary diseases

Finland

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Optional, auscultation is only official heart test at this time in Finland. DCM test

(=auscultation, EEG, ultrasound) is becoming more common and hopefully it will soon be an official examination.

- No enforcement. But we have public database where all official health results are published (<http://jalostus.kennelliitto.fi/frmTerveys.aspx?R=160&A=2011>)
- ♣ Liver shunt
 - Optional
 - No enforcement
- ♣ Optional eye examination (HC, RD, PRA, distichiasis etc.)
 - ♣ Our breeding committee is not approving combinations if there is certain eye problems or too many known PRA carriers in pedigree (Our kennel club is still registering puppies out of these combinations)

France

- ♣ Heart Testing
 - Optional, recommended every 18 months
 - Results published in French Club magazine and on website
 - A and B lists formed, A list is of breeders who do heart and liver shunt tests, B is for who don't, A list breeders are recommended by the club to any breeders
- ♣ Liver shunt
 - Optional
 - A and B lists formed, A list is of breeders who do heart and liver shunt tests, B is for who don't, A list breeders are recommended by the club to any breeders

Germany - DWRZV

- ♣ Heart Testing
 - Compulsory
 - Is enforced by the club
- ♣ Liver shunt
 - Optional
- ♣ Compulsory requirement from the Kennel Club: At the moment the IW HD testing is postponed until 30th April 2014 but has 3 exceptions.
 - 1.) Stud dogs that have been responsible for 10% of the litters within 1 year have to be tested. They can still be used as a stud dogs if the test shows HD free (A) or HD (B).
 - 2.) IW Import dogs have to be examined and the test results also have to be HD free (A) or HD (B).
 - 3.) IWs that have been bred in Germany but not in our DWZRV Club also have to be tested before they can get bred. Again the results have to be either HD (A) or HD (B).Effective 1st May 2014 the German Kennel Club will integrate a "spot check" test in order to take further scientific data.

Ireland

- ♣ Heart testing
 - Optional
- ♣ Liver Shunt
 - Recommended

Italy

- ♣ Heart Testing
 - Optional
 - Up to individuals
- ♣ Liver shunt
 - Optional, but done by nearly all breeders

Latvia

- ⤴ Heart testing
 - Compulsory by Kennel Club, 2 times during a dog's life, at the age of 15 months and at the age of 4 years.
- ⤴ Liver Shunt
 - Compulsory by Kennel Club, supported also by breed club
- ⤴ HD testing
 - For 10 years, the HD test was compulsory. After the analysis of situation - only 1% of dogs had B, - since last year, for local dogs the check has been recommended, but it is not compulsory. Every imported dog, if used in breeding, must be checked for HD.
- ⤴ Cancer testing
 - In collaboration with an institute of human medicine, in March 2011 90% of IWs in Latvia were tested for the presence of cancer cells. All dogs from the risk group (the cancer cells found) are not recommended for breeding. 5 dogs from the risk group already died of cancer. One dog with osteosarcoma was operated 2 weeks ago, now it has an implant. As we have this unique possibility, all dogs planned for breeding will be tested. It is not a test for the hereditary illness; it is the test for the beginning of the disease.

Luxembourg (currently just one breeder)

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - All dogs tested every year
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - All puppies tested
- ⤴ Luxembourg KC ended requirement for hip dysplasia X-ray testing last year for IWs
- ⤴ Only one breeder in Luxembourg, who agrees testing procedures directly with the Luxembourg KC

Poland

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Optional
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Optional
- ⤴ Have to get a qualification (grading) from a dog show to breed

Netherlands

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Compulsory, every year for all breeding males and females
 - Kennel Club enforces
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Compulsory
 - Kennel Club enforces
- ⤴ No other compulsory breed-specific health requirements

Norway

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Optional
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Compulsory within breed club (not the Kennel Klub) to do the testing.

- ⤴ The breed club requires all clear on HD and AA x-ray on the male and the bitch (to sell the puppies through the club)

Slovakia

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Compulsory, before any IW can be bred
 - IW Club rule, they can enforce it
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Optional
 - Kennel Club enforces
- ⤴ IW Club checks teeth and especially narrow underjaws with canine teeth growing inside to the upperjaw. Those IWs are not able for breeding.

South Africa

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Optional, reputable breeders do it
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Rarely
- ⤴ Hip X-rays done by reputable breeders

Spain (No IW club)

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Optional
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Optional
- ⤴ DNA record of the parents which is the only compulsory rule for Spanish Champions
- ⤴ No IW Club or Sighthound Club in Spain, up to individuals

Sweden

- ⤴ Heart Testing
 - Optional.
 - The IW Club support the members doing it and have made an agreement with some vets to get a better price and if you send the test results to the club you will also get €50
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Optional
- ⤴ All Breed Clubs are required to have a breed-specific breeding program. The program must have measurable goals for the breed, for example to decrease inbreeding coefficient or increase individuals that do heart testing and that the negative outcome will decrease by x% over the upcoming five years. The club needs to follow up and document the health issues and the Swedish Kennel Club approves the document and are also follows it up on a yearly basis.
- ⤴ In Sweden 95% of the dogs are insured so we get a lot of statistics from the insurers.
- ⤴ When judging in Sweden all judges get a special document regarding health issues and the Specialist Clubs, for IWs The Swedish Sighthound Club can add points or faults that they want the judges to pay special attention to. For example Borzoi and IWs has mouth problem on that list (too narrow an underjaw)

Switzerland

- ⤴ Heart Testing

- Usually optional
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Usually optional
- ⤴ According to the breeding regulations, owners are required to report any hereditary diseases to the breeding commission. The breeding commission can also require an owner to supply veterinary data as a prerequisite for approval, which we do if we have reasons to be suspicious - so there are situations where testing is not optional, but they do not apply to the majority of dogs.
- ⤴ The breeding regulations specify that dogs diagnosed with a hereditary disease are to be excluded from breeding. This includes, but is not limited to epilepsy, cryptorchism and OCD. In practice, it also applies to cardiomyopathy and any other disease that is documented to be hereditary in the veterinary literature. The exclusion can be retroactive, i.e. a dog that was already approved for breeding can be excluded again if it develops any such disease. In the case of shunt, the exclusion is extended to the full siblings and parents of an affected individual.
- ⤴ Other reasons to exclude an IW from breeding as specified in the breeding regulations are:
 - Aggressiveness or excessive shyness
 - Under- or overbite
 - Dogs missing one or both P4 teeth may only be bred to partners with full dentition.
- ⤴ Since 2007, the Kennel Club requires that all dogs must undergo a selection exam in order to be approved for breeding, which is organised by the breed club twice a year. During the exam, a breed specialist judge determines if the dogs conform to the standard sufficiently well (in practice, this means they have to get either an "excellent" or a "very good"; there have not been any refusals based on this point so far). Then another judge who is approved by the Kennel Club to judge "character" determines whether the dogs' character conforms to the requirements using one of these standardised tests where the dogs have to meet people, other dogs, are exposed to noises, opening umbrellas etc. The owner also has to supply a pedigree and a dentition certificate showing any missing teeth; the latter must be signed by either a judge or a veterinary surgeon.
- ⤴ The decision on whether or not a dog gets approved for breeding is made by the breeding commission. An owner can appeal to the committee against the decision of the breeding commission, and to the Kennel Club against the decision of the committee.

United Kingdom

- ⤴ Heart testing
 - Strongly recommended in the single Code of Ethics shared by the three UK clubs
 - The IW Health Group (comprising representatives from the UK clubs) organises regular regional heart testing throughout Great Britain & Northern Ireland
- ⤴ Liver shunt
 - Strongly recommended in the single Code of Ethics shared by the three UK clubs