

## Judges Breed Observation Scheme

by Lavina Diamanti

Last year, NZDJA introduced the Judges Breed Observation Scheme (JBO). Details were presented at the two seminars run by NZDJA and it was launched at the Kumeu/Tokoroa show weekend in July.

Since then, COVID-19 has put a halt to many events and not many clubs have been able to hold shows. Now that we are in the traffic light system and shows have started up again, I thought it was timely to refresh judges on the scheme and what you can expect when you are judging at championship show level.

Firstly, a recap of the scheme. Kennel clubs around the world have picked up the call to ensure pedigree dogs are fit, healthy, and exaggerations that have the potential to cause health issues are identified in breeds. This principally came about after the 2008 BBC programme *Pedigree Dogs Exposed* was aired in the UK and caused a huge outrage from the public, but we have also seen pressure from organisations such as PETA and the like.

The onus became on us to provide evidence that our breeders of pedigree dogs were responsible and exaggerations that were causing health issues in many breeds were identified and were being addressed by the governing bodies. The Kennel Club (UK) has implemented a scheme called Breed Watch with their 'Fit for Function: Fit For Life' campaign and the Nordic Kennel Clubs have a scheme called Breed Specific Instructions (BSI) on which we have based the New Zealand version. Dogs New Zealand already has the Accredited Breeders programme plus the Litter Registration Limitation scheme so by endorsing JBO another string is added to our bow in the fight to preserve our pedigree dogs.

So what is JBO? Essentially it is a method of collecting data. Dogs NZ is the voice of pedigree dogs in New Zealand and if they are required to go into bat for breeders on issues such as BOAS in brachycephalic breeds then they need to have relevant and current data on issues that are being identified; and the best place to do this is in the show ring.

That is where we, as judges, are required to assist in the collection of this data. We are asked to record the number of dogs within the breed (if any) that have presented with the exaggerations or health issues that have been listed plus any other issues noted. This could include breeds which have yet to be listed in the JBO scheme. It is that simple. It adds very little extra time to the judging process, but the information collected will be invaluable in time.

How does it work? Essentially the JBO committee will liaise with the Show Secretary for each show. They provide the information packs and instructions on what is required. They will also contact each judge prior to their appointment reminding them of the JBO scheme and the requirement for the relevant forms to be completed. Not all

breeds are listed; sometimes you may only have two or three breeds in a group which require you to complete the JBO form.

Your steward will remind you that you have a JBO form to complete for the breed which is about to come into the ring. I like to re-read the form so I am clear about what issues I need to note and record prior to commencing that breed's judging. It may be problems with eyes, dentition, breathing difficulties, temperament or construction problems and it is helpful to get that reminder. Then, at the completion of judging the breed, return to the steward and take a moment to record the number of dogs judged in that breed and the number of dogs (if any) that you have identified exhibiting the listed issue. Plus, if there are any other health or exaggeration problems noted that are not listed, then you record those as well. There is also a summary form for completion that allows for the recording of any issues in any other breeds.

All the forms are then put together into an envelope and sent to the JBO co-ordinator. They are not seen by or shared with exhibitors or your steward and the dogs are not identified on the forms at any time.

All the information is on the NZDJA website. In fact, we now have a dedicated tab to make it easy to find. If you haven't yet read the information, then it would be a great idea to familiarise yourself with it before your next appointment.

You will also note that Judges contracts and our judges' regulations have been amended to include the JBO requirements and this will apply to overseas judges as well once our borders open again, and hopefully that isn't too far away!

Happy judging. 🐾

### Important Dates

22 March 2022      **Theory exams**

9-10 July            **South Island Practicals**

16-17th July        **North Island Practicals**

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