

PRA Statement 2024

The Gordon Setter community has come a long way since 2009 when PRA was reported in the breed with the test for rcd-4 then being launched in 2011. Since then hundreds of Gordons have been tested and the amount of carriers has reduced while the amount of clears has increased.

When the initial research began we became aware that there were at least two other types of PRA in the breed. Genetic status for rcd-4 should be known for all breeding dogs and the only permitted breedings are clear to clear, clear to carrier or clear to affected. Clinical eye testing has also been an important way of monitoring breed eye health and a clinical eye test should be done prior to breeding.

Unfortunately, recently a case of early onset PRA has been reported in the UK. The affected dog is just under two years old.

I have been in touch with the Canine Genetics Centre and they have asked for DNA samples to be sent to them from the affected dog, the siblings and parents (who are both rcd-4 clear). These samples are currently being collected.

Irish Setters have a DNA test for PRA rcd-1 which is an early onset form of the disease and it is possible this may be the same in Gordons so the affected dog will be tested for this.

I will update the breed as more information becomes available. In the meantime the advice remains the same for breeding-know each dog's rcd-4 genetic status and ensure they have an up to date clinical eye test at the time of breeding. If anyone has concerns regarding their Gordons sight then get it checked with an eye veterinary specialist.

Going back to 2009, it was a very upsetting time for breeders but by working together the breed showed what we could achieve. It's a worrying time now to discover how much the breed may be affected by this new strain but on the positive side an early onset condition should be easier to find than the late onset which remained hidden due to some dogs not showing it in their lifetime and owners not really assuming an old dog losing their sight was a concern. My hope is that this strain will not be widely spread throughout the breed.

My advice for now is to continue doing what we have been with DNA and clinical eye testing and be aware of the early onset but don't panic. The CGC is providing excellent support by the team who helped us initially with rcd-4 so I will be guided by them.

Any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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