

1. Foreword

Ocular diseases, proven or presumed inherited in animals, were an important issue for ECVO from the start of the College, in 1992. At the 1998 ECVO annual general meeting, in Bologna, Italy, “The Scheme” and the Procedure Notes, including the first version of the eye examination certificate were presented on behalf of the Genetics Committee. This first form was a compilation of the already existing certificates of e.g. The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany and Sweden.

The original aims were to bring the specialists in veterinary ophthalmology and the eye examiners of the existing European Panels together under one “Scheme”, to have them work uniformly, and at a high and continuous level of training. They should use one uniform certificate in the national language, but also translated into English. The certificate should be readable to owners and breeders and, importantly, also include an undersigned permission that the results could be made public. This was performed with the aim of screening animals, in the beginning mainly purebred dogs, for clinical signs of presumed inherited eye diseases and, later, for all domestic animals and to establish a databank for the control of hereditary eye diseases.

In 1998, the ECVO certificate came into use in the Netherlands and also in Germany, after fusion of the two existing German panels into the DOK. In 1999, the Swiss panel and in 2001, the Austrian and the Norwegian panels followed. Also, individual Diplomates in other countries, like the UK, Spain, Israel adhered to the Scheme and began to use the form. In 2004 the Danish panel, and 3 years later, the Finnish panel also joined the ECVO Scheme. In 2009, the French and in 2010, the Italian ECVO panels were initiated. Today, almost 200 ECVO eye scheme examiners (ESE), in twelve European countries perform a total of approximately 52,000 eye examinations every year.

In 2008, representatives of the various panels were united into an Advisory Committee, which was invited to participate in the yearly meeting of the ECVO Genetics Committee. This guaranteed uniformity and contribution of all panels to the work of the Committee. Since both Committees work under the Scheme for control of hereditary eye diseases and consist of ECVO Diplomates and ESE, and are not primarily geneticists, the Genetics Committee was re-named; Hereditary Eye Disease Committee, in 2009.

Another way to establish uniformity among panels in the different countries was the introduction, at the ECVO Munich meeting 2003, of a yearly slide training session.

New developments in computerization and the use of internet enabled Germany in 2005, to go “on line”, which made it possible for the results of the eye scheme examinations to be published instantly for central registration and for direct information to the breed clubs. The use of hard copies is now mainly restricted to field trials and litter screenings. Norway and Denmark went “on line” in 2009, and several countries are working on initiating similar procedures.

The results of eye examinations in Germany were already registered in a central data bank for production of annual statistics. Norway, followed by Denmark, provides annual statistics which are directly available to the examiner during the eye examination. ECVO aims to incorporate the data produced by all ECVO Panels into one central databank to make statistics available to all ECVO examiners in Europe on a regular basis.

The production of the ECVO Manual was initiated in Berlin, 2010. The basis of this Manual builds on information and efforts from all previous Genetics/HED/Advisory Committee members. We would like to acknowledge all present and previous dedicated members of these committees for their efforts.

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