

Wirehaired Pointing Griffon - Breed improvement or destruction?

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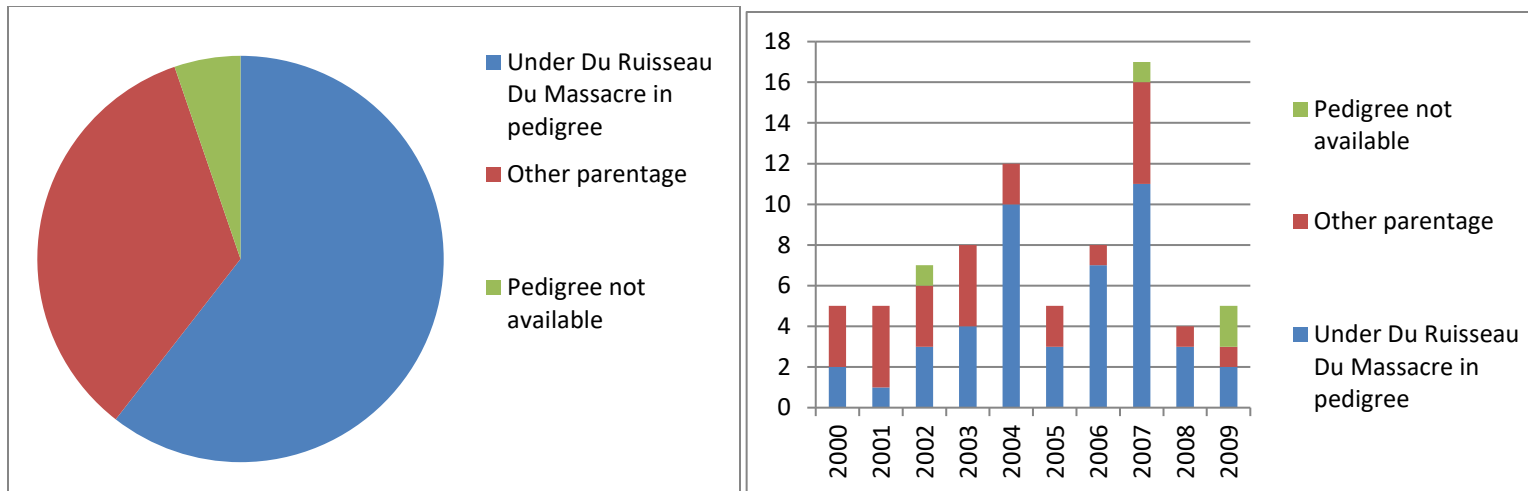
Background

Early in 2007, Jay Hoth, Board member of the AWPGA, bred a litter of wirehaired pointing griffon (WPG) puppies and noticed unusual tan point coloration. To Jay's credit he investigated this anomaly. Further research resulted in the identification of a color gene (ky) that had not previously surfaced in the breeding history of the wirehaired pointing griffon in this country. In the homozygous state (kyky) the tan point color appears. Carriers (KBky) appear normal from a color perspective. A number of dogs were tested and the results published on the AWPGA (American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association – the AKC national breed club for the WPG in the USA) website and on the Griffon Korthals Authentique.com website. To provide the alternate view, the AWPGA position paper is included after this white paper (reference 11/29/2011 <http://awpga.com/breed/health-genetics/about-k-locus>)

Some suggest that this gene was a result of spontaneous mutation that occurred suddenly and coincidentally across the USA, Canada, Belgium, United Kingdom and France. However a more plausible explanation could be that since this is a simple recessive inherited trait, a shared ancestor analysis of available testing results would reveal the source of the ky gene. This analysis was completed only with publicly available data. The analysis, which is attached in Appendix 3, reveals that all the ky carriers and kyky dogs are indeed related to a single common parent. In the USA and Canada, all ky tested griffons came from two imported dogs from France. The list of all tested and published dogs with the common parent identified is in Appendix 1.

The common ancestor analysis revealed the common parents to all ky affected hybrids as *Jacky Du Bois Aux Palombes CKC1057740* and *Hudson Des Rives De L'Aure LOF44677/05372*. These two French griffons also have a common ancestor, *Under Du Ruisseau Du Massacre LOF17921*. This common ancestor is not only common to the two common ancestors to all the ky tested dogs in the USA and Canada but also is in the pedigree of every ky tested dog worldwide. Note that in extremely tight line breedings over several decades in the USA the ky gene has never surfaced. Only the offspring from the two French imports have tested ky which supports the conclusion that the ky gene was introduced from France through Canada to the USA. Their common parent is also common to every other ky griffon tested worldwide. It can then be concluded that the affected dogs are griffon hybrids.

The concern on this issue is not one of merely color but rather indicative of an outcross that occurred that brought in not only the ky gene but also other genes not previously found in the griffon. The existence of the ky gene is an indicator that other genes have also been introduced. Noted characteristics include longer softer coats, lower ear sets and other physical characteristics that adversely affect the intent of the breed. The OFA database was used to assess the impact of the hybrid gene introduction. The correlation between *Under Du Ruisseau Du Massacre* existence in the pedigree and the growth of OFA fair and dysplastic results shows a significant trend. Not only has the number of dysplastic and fair rated dogs increased dramatically but also over 60% of the dogs rated fair or dysplastic have *Under Du Ruisseau Du Massacre* in their pedigree.



On the left is a kyky puppy – note the tan point markings on the face, legs, and shoulders as well as the lower ear set. Compare this to normal griffon puppies on the right of about the same age with correct color and structure. The detail of every dog that has been tested and published ky is in Appendix 1. All these dogs have been included in this analysis.



This information brings credence to the suspicion in the griffon community worldwide that an outcross to another breed had been made in France. This issue has split the French club into the field group that condones the outcross and the “authentique” group who believes that breeders should remain true to the type set by Edward Korthals in 1887 (<http://www.griffon-korthals-authentique.com/forum/viewforum.php?f=2>)

The Korthals Griffon club in England has also noted the issue (<http://www.korthalsgriffonclub.co.uk/index.php?page=130>) and there is a petition to the national registry to disallow the registration of the hybrids.

The official position of the AWPGA when the ky mutation was noted was to “discourage the breeding of the ky affected animals” since it was not a breed standard color pattern in addition to the other noted physical characteristics differences that are not in compliance with the breed standard. Please see the AWPGA statement at the end of this document. Subsequent conversation with the AWPGA president has confirmed that the AWPGA will not petition the AKC to make any registration changes.

Even with the AWPGA position statement, a number of breeder members in Canada and the USA continue to actively import and breed ky carriers and/or their littermates and register these dogs with the AKC, CKC and NAVHDA as purebred Wirehaired Pointing Griffons. These breeders claim that the titles and performance recognitions earned by these hybrids justifies the means of an outcross or that the ky gene issue is simply a matter of color. The dramatic differences of appearance in the homozygous state (kyky) and the increased incidents of dysplasia are indicative that this is not just about a color but rather an outcross which has created a hybrid and not an improvement to the breed.

Note that this is the second time the purebred griffon has been outcrossed in the USA. Erick OD Jezarek was the first Cesky Foucek to arrive in the US in 1985. The decision to outcross to the Cesky Foucek was published by Joan Bailey, Editor of the Gun Dog Supreme. The AKC national breed club at the time was the WPGCA (Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America). The fairly new Breeding Committee of the WPGCA made the outcross decision based upon a decline of participation in their tests and test scores of the dogs tested. The purebred Korthals griffon had lost most of its hunting instinct and the breed was in crisis. However, a small number of dedicated breeders in the USA stood firm to keep the Korthals griffon purebred, selected field tested breeding stock, and formed the American Korthals Club with the first president Barbara Young-Smith. This club later became the American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association (AWPGA). This club remains as the wirehaired pointing griffon national breed club. The name change was mandated by the AKC to have the club name to be the same as the registered breed name. These breeders shared the vision to preserve the type set by Edward Korthals from 1887. This dedicated group of breeders was successful in saving the purebred Korthals griffon in the USA as the “ultimate hunting dog”. The WPGCA continues to maintain its own breeding records and standards. The dogs in that registry bear little resemblance to the AKC wirehaired pointing griffon. Similarly the AKC hybrid wirehaired pointing griffon and the purebred Korthals griffon also are beginning to appear with more and more differences.

Current dilemma

Once again the purity of the breed is at risk. The registry organizations (AKC, CKC and NAVHDA) have at least three options.

1. Do nothing and continue to ignore this situation and allow the hybrids to be registered as purebred griffons. To be consistent then the registration of the WPGCA hybrids should also be allowed. These dogs were also outcrossed. The only difference was that the Fouscek outcross was done publicly with good breeding records. By doing nothing the registries call into question the integrity of the Griffon breed registration worldwide. This is clearly the current reality.
2. Change the registration status of the two imported dogs identified as the source of the ky gene and all their offspring to conditional registrations. This would then allow the purebreds to continue as the registered wirehaired pointing griffon in the AKC. A genetic test would be required for any griffon registration coming from outside the country. A purebred baseline has been completed with Mars Veterinary. The AWPGA has already taken the position that the national breed club would not make this recommendation.
3. Allow the remaining purebred griffons to split to another AKC recognized breed – the Korthals Griffon. Korthals Griffon is the breed designation around the world except in the USA and Canada currently. This option would allow the current hybrids to maintain their titles and also open the doors to register the WPGCA griffons in the AKC. There is a genetic baseline that has been completed with Mars Veterinary in addition to the pedigree analysis work that has been completed. This could result in three distinct breeds of wirehaired pointing griffons; the Fouscek griffon, the wirehaired pointing griffon and the Korthals griffon. This would also allow the maintenance of separate health records and would allow each breed to have separate clubs

to monitor the breeds and hold events. Currently it is impossible to look at the OFA or PennHip statistics and draw any conclusions about the breed since all three breeds are mixed in the data.

The Future of the Purebred Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

As it always has, the future of the breed lies in the hands of relatively few breeders. Each and every litter decision will either stay true to Edward Korthals' vision and type or will change the breed to something different to suit the latest competitive motivation. Recent performance in the show ring and field suggests a very different breed than what Korthals envisioned. My fervent personal hope is that the future will have purebred wirehaired pointing (Korthals) griffons for hunters fulfilling the vision of the "ultimate gun dog for the foot hunter".

About the author

Personally I am not a breeder and have the utmost respect for those who have this as their calling. I am an owner and exhibitor of purebred wirehaired pointing griffons. I have Chaired Specialties, Agility and Obedience Trials as well as Hunt Tests. Professionally, I have been a college professor an author of seven books in the field of operations management and I hold a bachelor's degree in genetics which made this analysis possible. I am an AKC approved Hunt Test Judge as well as an avid upland bird and waterfowl hunter. My dogs are used heavily during hunting season at our shooting preserve as guide dogs. My personal dogs are highly competitive in the field and show ring with the titles and accomplishments to demonstrate that. My walls are filled with ribbons and titles. My first griffon was the most titled griffon in the breed at the time with 17 different titles before and after his name in conformation, agility, tracking, and of course hunting. He was inducted into the AWPGA Hall of Fame for his accomplishments. During the off season he could be found in therapy work. My second griffon took me to the Eukanuba three times as an owner handler and won two awards of merit. He retired as a Grand Champion and is currently finishing his Master Hunter title. This information is included not to brag but rather so that the perspective and motivation for this analysis is clear. I personally have nothing to gain from making this information public. I do so at great personal risk. I have used only publicly available information. There is no innuendo or opinion – just conclusions based on facts and data. I realize that normally this situation should be handled within the national breed club. However, there was a significant number of the AWPGA membership that resigned from the AWPGA in 2007 and early 2008 due to the direction that the club was taking in the management of the breed. I am part of that group. I cannot in good conscience rejoin the national AKC breed club. Many of the board members since the identification of this issue have and continue to actively breed these hybrids. My desire and intent is to identify and bring together what is left of the purebred griffons and claim their rightful birthright as purebred Korthals Griffons. I can be contacted at captak@gryphonranch.com

Appendix 1: Dogs used in this analysis

GKA = http://griffon-korthals-authentique.com/3agk/page_3agk_ListeKBKB.htm (Feb 8, 2012)

AWPGA = <http://awpga.com/breed/health-genetics/k-locus-database> (Feb 25, 2012)

Below is the complete list of dogs published worldwide as testing ky with the information if either or both common ancestors are in the pedigree. There are seven dogs that do not have the common ancestors found in North America in their background but they do have the common ancestor behind those two. All 57 dogs analyzed have one common parent.

Dog name	Tested	JACKY DU BOIS AUX PALOMBES	HUDSON DES RIVES DE L'AURE 44677	Report number	Country report	Source
ASTUCE du Haut de la Prairie	KBky	UNDER DU RUISSEAU DU MASSACRE 17921			France	GKA
BADDY du Coteau des Terrasses	KBky	UNDER DU RUISSEAU DU MASSACRE 17921			France	GKA
BAHIA Del Campo Andaluz (2006)	KBky	N	Y		Belgium	GKA
BAVIERE	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
BERGAME	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
BIANCA	KBky	UNDER DU RUISSEAU DU MASSACRE 17921			France	GKA
Bococcimi Les Moustaches D'Or	KBky	N	Y	58043	USA	AWPGA
BOOGY des Rives de la Save	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
CALINE des Belles d'Automne	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
CARAMEL du Pays de Saint Pardoux	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
CHANEL des Grandes Origines	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
CHARLOTTE du Repère des Brigands	KBky	N	Y		UK	GKA
CHARLY Comtesse de Beaulieu	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
COLLINE du Mas du Jonquier	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
CYBELLE des Gorges de la Luzège	KBky	UNDER DU RUISSEAU DU MASSACRE 17921			France	GKA
De Jac's All The Way	KBky	N	Y	71541	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Alley-Oop	KBky	N	Y	71538	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Amanda	KBky	N	Y	71535	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Angel	KBky	N	Y	71540	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Apache	KBky	N	Y	71537	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Arms of Orion	KBky	N	Y	71536	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Autobahn	KBky	N	Y	71544	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Valleri	KBky	N	Y	61909	USA	AWPGA

De Jac's Valley Girl	KBky	N	Y	61908	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Vallotte	KBky	N	Y	61913	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Victory	KBky	N	Y	61911	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Vogue	KBky	N	Y	61914	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Wake Up Little Suzee	KBky	Y	Y	64335	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Whirley Girl	KBky	Y	Y	64332	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Whole Lotta Love	KBky	Y	Y	64331	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Windy	KBky	Y	Y	64337	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Wrap Her Up	KBky	Y	Y	64333	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Ya Ya	KBky	Y	Y	69588	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Yakety Yak	KBky	Y	Y	69587	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's You and Me	KBky	Y	Y	69586	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's You Can Do It	KBky	Y	Y	69592	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Young Blood	KBky	Y	Y	69593	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Your Mamma Don't Dance	KBky	Y	Y	69589	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Zanalee	KBky	Y	N	71159	USA	AWPGA
De Jac's Zulu	KBky	Y	N	71158	USA	AWPGA
DeJac's Zorro	KBky	Y	N	71152	USA	AWPGA
DORIE de la Croix de Bramafan	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
Duchasseur April Wine	KBky	Y	N	58285	USA	AWPGA
ELZA du Mas du Jonquier	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA
Marquis Aiming for Gold	KBky	N	Y	63371	USA	AWPGA
North Star Indian Chief	KBky	Y	Y	58284	USA	AWPGA
Pirate Des Bords Du Dan	KBky	N	Y	92254-1	USA	AWPGA
Roclaire AURIOLE ATHENA	KBky	UNDER DU RUISSEAU DU MASSACRE 17921			UK	GKA
Roclaire DONNA MARCHESA	KBky	UNDER DU RUISSEAU DU MASSACRE 17921			UK	GKA
SIBYLLE de la Réoté At Roclaire	KBky	UNDER DU RUISSEAU DU MASSACRE 17921			UK	GKA
Spruce Creek E	KBky	N	Y	--	USA	AWPGA
Spruce Creek's Splash of Beam	KBky	N	Y	61743	USA	AWPGA
Switchgrass Jean Luc	KBky	Y	Y	61147	USA	AWPGA
Switchgrass Keepsake	KBky	Y	Y	59668	USA	AWPGA
Switchgrass Triple Threat	kyky	Y	Y	–	USA	AWPGA
Tresor Des Sources D Mazerés	Kbky	N	Y	59743	USA	AWPGA
VICKIE du Clos Boveret	KBky	N	Y		France	GKA

Appendix 2: History of the breed

(reference 11/29/2011 Herrenhausen Sporting Dogs website - <http://herrenhausensportingdogs.com/info.htm>)

The Wirehaired Pointing Griffon has a long history of development. The first recorded history dates back to 1545, with notations in hunting publications in the 18th century. The main development of the breed took place in the 19th century. This historical period can be divided into three areas where noted breeders in those periods undertook the breed's development.

The Clerville Griffon – named after the *Marquis of Clerville*, took place between 1840 – 1850. Shortly thereafter, *Mssr. Guerlain*, a famous industrialist, horseman, and hunter, took up the work of the marquis of Clerville. He did the first crossing with the setter in 1857, and pointer in 1897. He attempted to settle the breed by line breeding. The Guerlain Griffon evolved into a white/orange color, were good hunters and distinguished themselves at hunting tests, which contributed to the reputation of the breed. Unfortunately, this breeding progress remained in the hands of its creator and friends.

The Korthalsian period saw the fixing of type of the breed. In 1873, at age 23, *Edward Karel Korthals* undertook serious breeding of the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon. In his breeding program he noted the dog to have a high intelligence, robust attitude, and resistance to foul weather. He described them as excellent for hunting waterfowl and working in all terrain. His breeding stock started with 20 dogs which were composed of: three spaniels, two water Spaniels (Barbet), seven Griffons, a French Pointer (Braques), and a Pointerized Setter. From these – the seven patriarchs of his breeding program were established and recorded in the Griffon Stud Book (GSB).

Less than 10 years later, the Griffon type was established. On November 15th, 1887, Edward Korthals and 16 other breeders signed and published an agreement on the breed standard. Finally, in order to form a link with breeders and assure the diffusion of doctrines and documents, the first International Griffon Club was formed in 1888. This was soon followed by the creation of local clubs including:

- 1895 the ***Southern German Griffon Club*** in Bavaria
- 1895 the ***Royal Belgium Griffon Club*** – in Belgium
- 1901 the ***Club Français Du Griffon d'Arrêt à Poil Dur Korthals*** in France
- 1911 the ***De Nederlandse Griffonclub*** in Holland

The Griffon in the U.S.A.

The history of the Korthals Griffon in this country dates back to the registration of *Zoletta* in 1887 by the American Kennel Club as a Russian Setter. In 19th century England, the Griffon was known as the Russian Setter or the Russian Retriever. The English seemed to have always considered bearded and furry dogs as products of the Siberian regions. Even though there were, in fact, Pointing Griffons in all areas of Europe.

Mr. M.R. Schneider of Long Island – along with other early historians; *Mr. Louis A. Thebaud* of New Jersey, and *Dr. E.B. Ilyus* of Pennsylvania, were among the first to import the breed. The popularity of the breed expanded rapidly with favorable publicity about their ruggedness and hunting ability. In August of 1916 the first Griffon club, *The Griffon Club of America*, was formed and an American breed standard adopted. That same year, there were 16 Griffons exhibited at the Westminster Kennel Club show in New York. With the onset of WWII, all activity stopped for the Griffon. The fledgling club of the GCA fell out of existence and very little breeding activity took place.

However, at the end of the war, *Brigadier General Thomas Deforth Rogers* brought a renewed interest with the importation of his dog *Cisa von der Hohenlinde*. A new club was formed named the *Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America (WPGCA)*. Again devoted sportsmen came to appreciate the astute, meticulous hunting characteristics of this breed. His reputation as an easily controlled hunting dog for upland birds as well as water fowl, again gained him respect with the walking hunters. A detailed article by Walter A. Dyer in "The New Country Life" magazine brought to light the up and coming importance of this new breed to the United States.

The bright future was short lived. With the advent of the fast running competition AKC field trials in the 1940's (*in which larger running dogs excelled*), breeding of the slower paced Griffon leveled out. The Korthals Griffon continued to remain in the hands of devoted hunters who appreciated the walking gun dog. Their numbers have remained about the same for the last 50 years with approximately 75 – 150 puppies being produced annually.

The breed is registered through the American Kennel Club, American field or NAVHDA organizations. "European Style" field testing of hunting instincts has been the standard for selection of breeding stock. These field tests are offered by the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA and) Versatile Hunting Dog Federation which includes both field and water testing. Since the introduction of AKC hunting tests WPG has achieved titles at the Junior, Senior, and Master levels. Only events designed for the walking hunter are recommended for this breed.

The show ring is just as natural a place to be as the field. Here, however, is where the greatest challenge for the future of the wire-haired pointing griffon rests. The challenges are the same faced by any of the lesser known AKC recognized breeds--limited breeding stock, judge's familiarity with the breed and now once again an outcross threatens the purebred griffon.