

Irish Wolfhound Club of America, Inc.



President of Ierdie
Irish Wolfhound Club
Mr. Jon Jansen
Stroetweg 1
7135 JW Harreveld
Netherlands

April 18, 2015

Dear Mr. Jansen,

I write on behalf of the Officers and Directors of the Irish Wolfhound Club of America to convey our disapproval and dismay at the plan proposed by the Dutch Irish Wolfhound Club (NIWC) to cross-breed Irish Wolfhounds to Alaskan Malamutes, for the ostensible purpose of improving the health of the Irish Wolfhound.

The letters forwarded to us from Mr. Behan (Irish Wolfhound Club of Ireland), the Board of EIWC (the European Federation of Irish Wolfhound Clubs), Mrs. Pernille Monberg, President, EIWC, and the board of Ierdie provide ample discussion of the several drawbacks to such a scheme. It is the wish of the IWCA to stand unequivocally with you and others in the international wolfhound community to oppose this outcross, and it is only to make that position absolutely clear that we reiterate the following points:

- The NIWC plans to cross Irish Wolfhounds with Alaskan Malamutes to improve the health of Irish wolfhounds, yet it has not been scientifically established that the IW is less healthy than other dogs. In fact, the mean average lifespan of the Irish Wolfhound is not significantly shorter than that of other dogs of comparable size.
- Major health concerns in the wolfhound are unlikely to be improved by an outcross to Alaskan Malamutes. A leading cause of death in both breeds is cancer (osteosarcoma, hemangiosarcoma, and lymphoma). Malamutes suffer from hip and elbow dysplasia, which are rare in wolfhounds and usually mild. Bloat, epilepsy, hypothyroidism, and Progressive Retinal Atrophy are found in both breeds. With so many common problems, in addition to other conditions in Malamutes not presently found in wolfhounds (eg., multiple coat problems, day blindness, polyneuropathy), we would be as likely to introduce new problems as to solve existing ones.
- There is no evidence that the NIWC has developed a systematic, scientifically valid plan. Such a plan would need to comply with the guidelines for outcrosses of 'Raad van Beheer', the Dutch Kennel Club. As in all animal experimentation, it must contain measurable outcomes, and plans for long-term humane care for the animals involved. Above all, there must be a specific, scientifically based reason to outcross. In the often-referenced Dalmatian/Pointer outcross, there was an identified, researched single fault in the Dalmatian that was virtually non-existent in the Pointer. There is no such specific, single disease of major concern in the Wolfhound that is not already shared with the Malamute, and nothing to suggest that this poorly-conceived proposal would increase the health or longevity of Irish wolfhounds. One of our board

members states: "As someone who works in research I find that the harm-benefit analysis, which is the cornerstone of ethical evaluation, has not been proven in this crossing of the two breeds."

- Wolfhounds crossed with Malamutes will not be wolfhounds. The two breeds have neither type nor function in common. The IWCA takes seriously its mission to protect and preserve the Irish Wolfhound as bequeathed to us by Captain Graham. An excerpt from Tony Doyle's treatise on the Irish Wolfhound states: "Of the hounds bred by Graham throughout his career, an examination of the pedigrees shows the constancy with which he adhered to the principle expressed in his brochure—that it had always been his "Steadfast endeavor to get crosses from such dogs of acknowledged Irish Wolfhound blood as were to be found, in preference to simply crossing opposite breeds to effect the desired object"."

In summary, there is nothing to be gained, and much to be lost, by outcrossing Irish Wolfhounds to Alaskan Malamutes. If, in the future, any such outcross is judged to be beneficial, it should be attempted only with the expert guidance of the scientific community, and only with the consent and cooperation of the worldwide network of Irish Wolfhound clubs.

The Officers and Directors of the Irish Wolfhound Club of America pledge our support in this effort by lerdie to stop this planned outcross, and, failing that, to identify and prevent the resultant stock from entering the gene pool of the purebred Irish Wolfhound. To that end, please use this statement in any way that will be helpful to our common cause.

Sincerely,

Patricia W. Cobb, President
Irish Wolfhound Club of America, Inc.