



Cerebellar Ataxia - Update 2026

International webinar

questions by email flatcoat-health@frc-nl.com



Agenda

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Goals for meeting - what do we want to achieve?
- ▶ Lead-up - what has happened?
- ▶ The research project - Paul Mandigers
- ▶ Overview test results
- ▶ FRC approach
- ▶ Strategy - next steps
- ▶ Round-up

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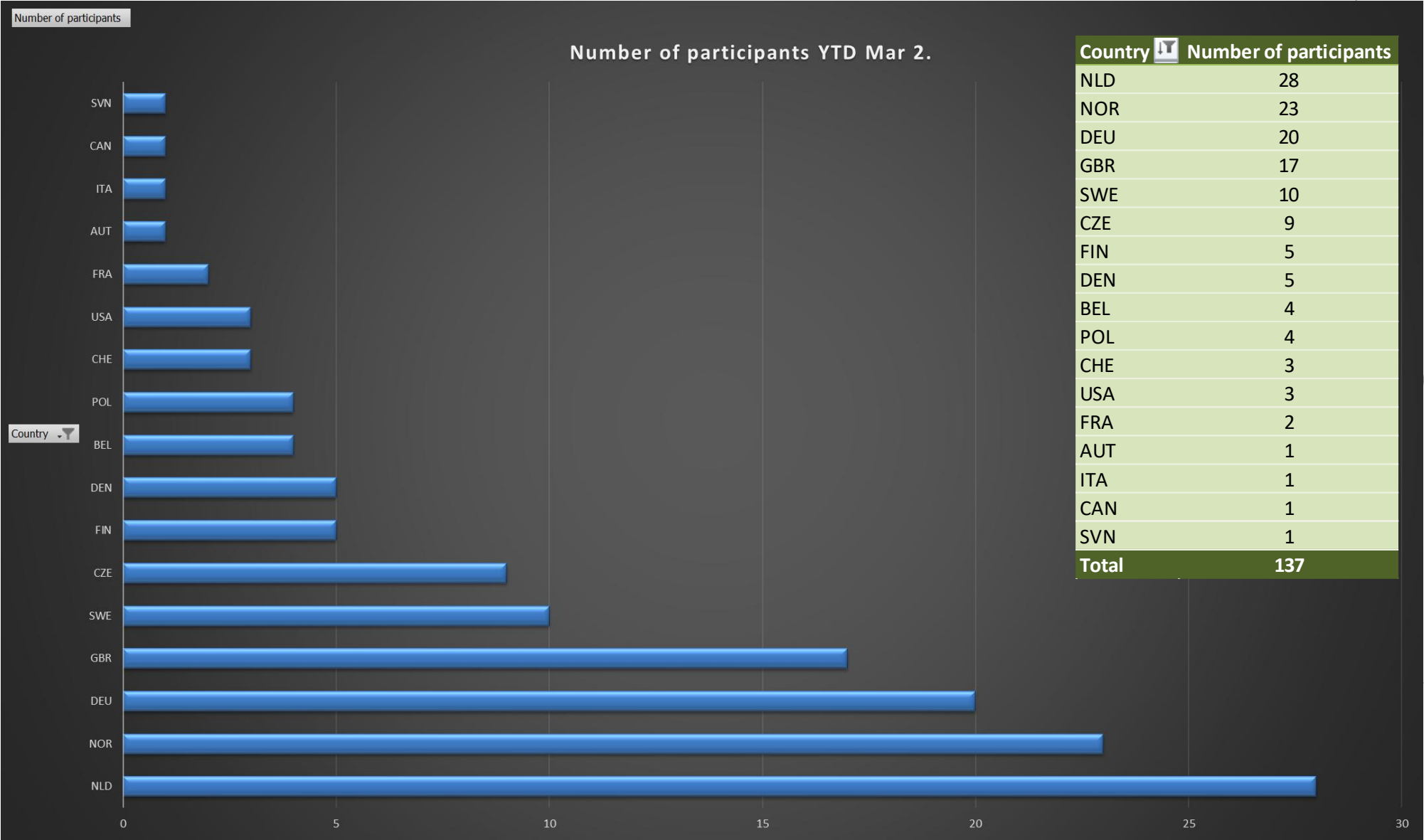


Meeting protocol

- ▶ This meeting will be recorded
- ▶ Put your camera on so we can see who is online
- ▶ Mute your microphone
- ▶ Because of the number of participants we only can answer questions by email to flatcoat-health@frc-nl.com

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What do we want to achieve?

- ▶ We want the international Flat-Coated Retriever community to realise that we are facing a serious problem regarding Cerebellar Ataxia in our breed.
- ▶ A few cases of CA in litters are known; however, the true number of cases may be higher, as unreported cases remain unknown.
- ▶ The test that has been developed, is reliable and available. By testing breeding animals, the disease can be brought under control and eradicated.

Video's of dogs suffering CA

- ▶ [Mature Dutch flatcoat](#)
- ▶ [Dutch flatcoat puppies](#)
- ▶ [Mature Norwegian flatcoat](#)
- ▶ [Norwegian flatcoat puppies](#)

How seriously is CA being taken?

being sufficiently acknowledged. It appears to us that some breeders consider this to be a minor or non-problematic issue for the breed.

For me the Cerebellar Ataxia story seems to be a hype instead a serious problem, at least in these days with such a few data information and two cases.....



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to experiment on, eat, wear,
use for entertainment, or
abuse in any other way.



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Pedigree dogs' health problems

There's much evidence demonstrating that the welfare and quality of life of many pedigree and purebred dogs are seriously compromised as a result of established selective breeding practices.



Staying Good While Playing God - Ethical Perspectives on Dog Breeding

WORLD SMALL ANIMAL VETERINARY ASSOCIATION CONGRESS PROCEEDINGS, 2017

P. Sandøe¹; S. Corr²; C. Palmer³; B. Bonnett⁴

¹Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences and Department of Food and Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark; ²College of Medical - Veterinary and Life Sciences, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK; ³Department of Philosophy, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA; ⁴B. Bonnett Consulting, Georgian Bluffs, ON, Canada

Humans have bred companion animals for many different reasons, including for particular temperaments, for example to make them good companions, or in the case of dogs, to make them suitable for certain types of work. However sometimes the breeding goals seem to serve less serious purposes.

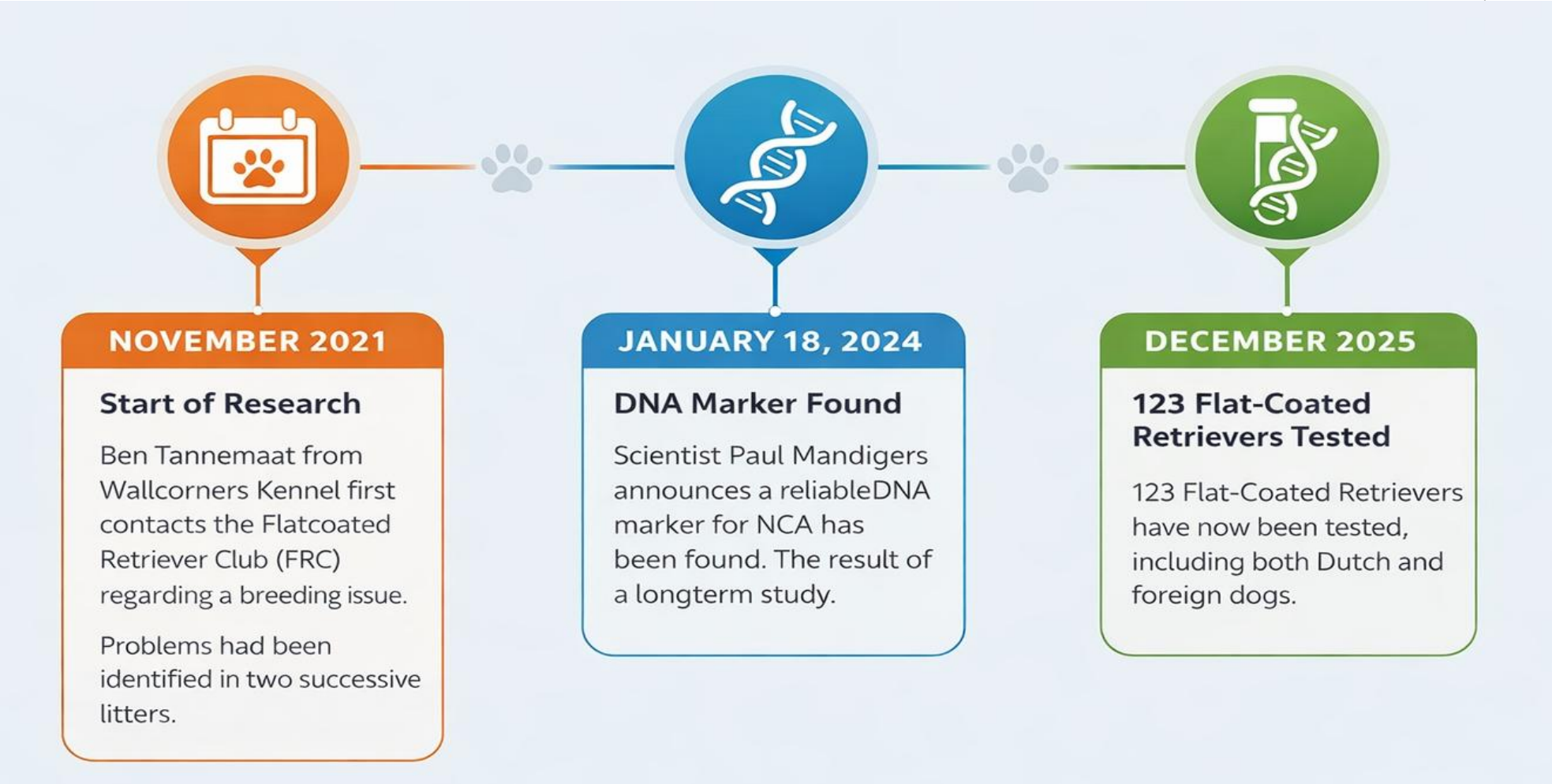
Thus, some of the features for which dogs and cats have been bred, such as bigger eyes and flat faces, make companions more "infant-like." Other physical features, such as a sloping croup, or multiple skin folds, have no obvious relationship to a "baby-like" attractiveness, but rather are features selected by breeders and show judges, and preferred by potential dog or cat owners as a result of fads and trends of the time.

However, some of the exaggerated features that appeal to owners cause health problems for the animals; and the preference for pure breeds, while certainly creating the advantage of predictability, means that animals may develop a greater number of diseases from inbreeding.

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lead-up - what has happened?



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An overview of the research project by Utrecht University



**Utrecht
University**

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Cerebellar Ataxia genotype

- ▶ A/C is heterozygous, meaning these dogs are carriers but will not develop the disease themselves.
- ▶ C/C is homozygous mutant, meaning these dogs are affected.
- ▶ A/A is homozygous for the wild type, meaning these animals are free of the CA mutation.

Theoratical inheritance

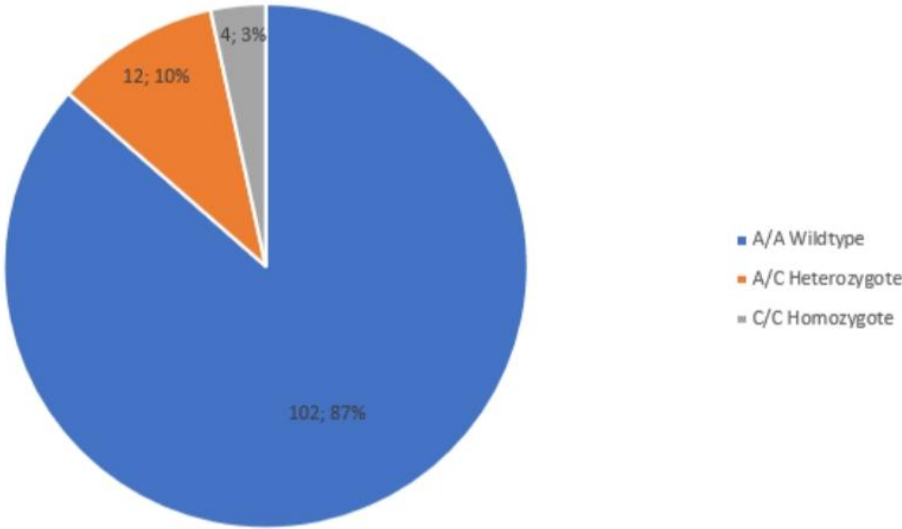
♀/♂	free	carrier	affected
free	100 % free	50% free 50% carrier	100% carrier
carrier	50% free 50% carrier	25% free 50 % carrier 25% affected	50%carrier 50%affected
affected	100% carrier	50% carrier 50% affected	100% affected

Genotype	Sum of tested CA genotype	%
A/A Wildtype	102	86
A/C Heterozygote	12	10
C/C Homozygote	4	3
Grand Total of tested FCR	118	

Allele frequency Cerebellar Ataxia in Flatcoated retriever

Wildtype A/A accounts for the majority DNA tested at Utrecht University.

Sep 2024 - Nov 2025



Results

- ▶ The results shown confirm the decision the FRC made to start this research. They provide sufficient reason to test more dogs.
- ▶ Affected dogs in the Netherlands, UK and Norway.

Availability of results



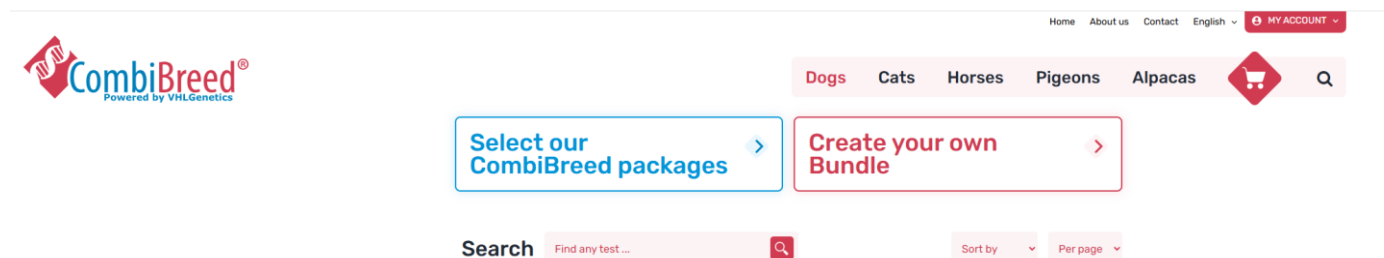
- ▶ When ordering the test, the applicant is asked whether the results may be shared with the Flatcoated Retriever Club. For those applications where this question is answered “yes”, the results are available at individual-dog level.
- ▶ We want to emphasize once again that we are working together for the health of our beautiful breed. The availability of reliable data is essential to that effort. Ignoring the issue will not help us move forward.

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How to test @VHL Genetics?



- ▶ <https://www.combibreed.com/product/cerebellar-ataxia-flat-coated-retriever/>
- ▶ 'Cerebellar Ataxia - Flat-Coated Retriever' Test code H117



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FRC approach

► Test, test, test!!!

- FRC will facilitate DNA collection and CA testing for our members. Take swabs at Shows, breeding days, hunting events—also with financial support from the FRC health fund.
- Test parents as part of breeding plans.
- Analyse results in relation to pedigrees. Can sources be demonstrated conclusively? Probably many carriers in the population...



FRC breeding policy for CA

- ▶ CA tested free x CA tested free
- ▶ CA tested free x CA tested carrier
- ▶ CA tested free x CA Not tested
(not recommended by FRC. If anyhow, then advised to test all offspring)

♀/♂	free	carrier	affected
free	100 % free	50% free 50% carrier	100% carrier
carrier	50% free 50% carrier	25% free 50 % carrier 25% affected	50%carrier 50%affected
affected	100% carrier	50% carrier 50% affected	100% affected



Strategy and communication

- ▶ Objective:
 - ▶ Raise awareness of urgency
 - ▶ Importance of testing
 - ▶ Create transparency
 - ▶ Community building
- ▶ Approach
 - ▶ Communicate the FRC approach to CA testing and motivate owners to test and share results
 - ▶ Motivate the national breeding societies to add the CA test requirement into their national breeding regulations.
 - ▶ Distribute the Utrecht University scientific report as soon as it becomes available





Round up



- ▶ See Cerebellar Ataxia as an opportunity to facilitate international collaboration
- ▶ Regular international catch up meetings
- ▶ Share local issues
- ▶ Start working groups to do projects
 - ▶ Monitoring CA
 - ▶ Epilepsia
 - ▶ Cancer
 - ▶ Retinotopy

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Thank you for your attention

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