

## Report Congress FCI – WUSV – COAPA

The first world congress of the FCI – WUSV – COAPA was held from November 16 to November 17, 2016 with venue in Mexico-City.

The presidents of all three organizations took the time to attend the event.

The FCI – the Fédération Cynologique Internationale – is the World Canine Organization and was represented by its president Rafael de Santiago. The SV (Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SV) e.V.) is the biggest dog breeding club at a worldwide level and was represented by its president Professor Dr. Heinrich Meßler. The COAPA – Confederación Americana del Pastor Alemán – was represented by its president Roberto Caputi. The event was hosted and organized by Dr. Luis Payró, vice president of the FCI.

The main focus of the event put on the German Shepherd Dog breed during those two days. And even though the subjects discussed basically covered the German Shepherd Dog breed, reference was also made to thoroughbred dogs in general.

Part one of the congress was dedicated to the field of work and training. FCI judge Edgar Scherkl showed the audience target oriented and successful ways and methods towards modern dog training under consideration of animal welfare and the animal protection law within the framework of the International Examination Regulations as issued by the FCI. There was consensus that all concerns raised in that respect were unfunded and that the training for working dogs was well compatible in terms of the international training rules.

Following this, the relevant and current bloodline in terms of working dogs was presented and the key message to be obtained was that the bloodline for working dogs was built on a much broader basis than the one for breed dogs. Obviously, working dogs were rather bred by following more individual needs – meanwhile the breeding line was focused on a more general market and its respective demand.

Luciano Musolino provided for a survey of the relevant and current female line of our breed and it was most interesting to learn that he agreed with a number of other speakers at the event that there is an explicit and overly focus on the bloodlines of *Canto*, *Quanto*, and *Wilma Kieselschlucht*. The same was reaffirmed in a significant fashion during the speech as held by Professor Meßler following Mr. Musolino's report and it needs to be pointed out that contemporary breeding is based almost exceptionally on the bloodlines of those three dogs plus a minor contribution by the *Mutz* bloodline. This background causes a true bottle-neck situation for our dogs' population. The significance of the limitation of inbreeding towards five generations was seriously questioned.

A further range of topics was the field of diseases and disorders suffered by dogs. Speeches and reports concerning the lumbar spine were delivered by Dr. Wolfgang Lauber, and complemented by Dr. Margarita Durán who reported on the topic of clinical diagnostics of hips, elbows and the lumbar spine. Subjects such as nutrition, heredity, and stress – both physical and emotional – related issues were discussed in detail. Quite obviously, there is demand for a study that takes a closer look the physical burden on the lumbar spine in connection with the training of protection work.

Professor Meßler gave a presentation on the phenomenon of inbreed depression as well as the disposition of disease of our breed. The particular situation of our breed, possible complications as well as implications, and the according means of prophylaxis were explained. The consequences of a lacking selection in terms of performance and the resulting homozygous effects on our breed were described. Individual hereditary diseases as well as the consequences of inbreed depression were detailed. Professor Meßler also reported about the options of a screening in terms of homozygous effects.

Dr. Rodrigo Téllez provided for an introduction into the field of clinical trials with the aim to identify and analyse genetic diseases.

This was followed by a vivid and controversial discussion that led to the conclusion that currently there is no chance for a reliable prognosis in terms of an existing or future hip dysplasia by means of a genetic – respectively screening test. The SV and WUSV president dedicated great emphasis to this aspect.

The next most interesting speech as held by Dr. Gustavo Garrido who covered the field of dental diseases that affect the German Shepherd Dog. All aspects in terms of oral, dental, and orthodontic diseases of our breed were addressed in detail.

Mr. Clemens Lux presented the historic background and offered a future outlook on the subject of service dogs and their respective training. At the same time, he took a closer look at the options and high potential of our breed in general. Particularly in the emerging societies of South America, the German Shepherd Dog is of crucial importance and indispensable for the future development of the breed whose future prospects on that continent are for sure more than promising.

The managing director of the WUSV, Hartmut Setecki, presented a concept for the implementation of a WUSV certification at a worldwide level which is scheduled for the year 2017. Details will be published on the WUSV homepage in due time and the member organizations will be informed accordingly. In this connection, the newly implemented temperament test for German Shepherd Dogs was presented as well. In the future the successful participation in this test will be the basic requirement for WUSV certifications at different kind of levels. Details will be published in due time.

Dr. Carmen Battaglia – the president of the GSDCA in the United States of America – reported about the specific situation in Northern America, the techniques and methods of training as applied by the AKC and the GSDCA. He presented highly interesting fields of work, particularly with reference towards the sphere of service dogs and protection work in the United States.

The president of COAPA – Roberto Caputi – and the vice president – Dr. Jorge Vega – provided for an exciting survey regarding the development of the German Shepherd Dog breed in South America. Our breeding activities are subject to considerable limitations due to immense geographical distances that need to be bridged. Against this background the progress obtained is rather impressive and as a result COAPA almost achieved a standard at Central European level during the last ten years of hard work and dedication toward the German Shepherd Dog breed.

A comprehensive and detailed discussion was held regarding the exceedance of the standards set in terms of the typification of the German Shepherd Dog. The concept was defined as “a focusing of individual features in terms of the standard set leading to a loss of the original master plan as established by cavalry captain Max von Stephanitz”.

In this regard the historic development was described, and biomechanical considerations as well as the current problem regarding the typification as mentioned above were addressed. In particular, the dogs' height and the angular shape of the hind legs which quite obviously entail a so-called “instability” not only of the hind legs but of the entire course of movement of the breed. Great importance was also attached to the problem of tension building up in the dogs' back and the lumbar spine, the so-called bend back.

In conclusion, it was unanimously agreed upon that all judges as assigned by the SV, the WUSV, and the FCI have to be able and qualified to identify those problems in a dog. The judges have to consider and include these aspects in terms of their appraisal of an animal.

In summary, it remains to be said that during the course of the congress crucial issues of all kinds regarding our breed – and in part the entire dogs' world – have been discussed and presented at the highest possible level and the congress has been – no doubt about it – an unprecedented event. My particular and deepest thanks go to Dr. Luis Payró who arranged for the organization and realization of this congress and whose commitment and dedication made the entire event a great success.

Thank you so much!

With warmest greetings

Professor Dr. Heinrich Meßler