

CONGENITAL DISQUALIFIERS

PART V-

ECTROPIAN AND ENTROPIAN

This issues' installment in our ongoing series on congenital disqualifiers deals with two fortunately rare ,but still potentially serious congenital eyelids problems of camelids, namely ectropian and entropian.

So, what is ectropian? Ectropion is a defect of conformation in which there is a sagging or rolling-out (eversion) of the eyelids. This results in abnormal exposure of the eye, which often leads to irritation.

And entropian? Entropion is the inward rolling of the eyelid, most commonly the lower lid. This irritates the surface of the eye (the cornea) and may ultimately cause visual impairment.

It is likely that both ectropion and entropian are influenced by several genes, (known as polygenetic inheritance) that affect the skin and other structures that make up the eyelids, and that affect the way the skin covers the face and head. Although admittedly studies have not been done to determine the exact mode of inheritance or the frequency of occurrence in camelids. It is most commonly seen in dogs bred for exaggerated facial features but it does occur in camelids and should remain on each breeders' mental checklist for assessing cria for their ability to be registered.

In addition to the sagging of the eyelids, camelids with ectropion commonly have a mucopurulent discharge in the eye, reddening of the exposed conjunctiva, and decreased tear production. With entropian the inrolling of the eyelid is readily apparent with generally both eyes being affected. Depending on the degree of corneal irritation caused by the condition discomfort from entropion will cause increased tearing and squinting. The cria may be sensitive to light and may attempt to rub its eyes on the ground increasing the possibility of corneal scratches. Chronic irritation by the turned-in eyelid may cause corneal ulceration and scarring which is painful and, if not treated, can permanently impair vision.

Also, because of increased exposure of the eye, camelids with ectropion are prone to develop allergic or bacterial conjunctivitis - inflammation of the thin membrane which covers the periphery of the surface of the eye and lines the eyelids. They may also develop other ocular problems because of the eyes reduced efficiency at wetting and cleaning the cornea. With mild entropion and ectropian, if secondary problems such as conjunctivitis develop, these can treated as required. For your animals' comfort both problems can also be corrected by surgical procedures. This is for the comfort and well being of the camelid only – camelids exhibiting entropian or ectropian are prohibited from registration. It is recommended that as with any of the congenital disqualifiers listed in our breed standards a repeat of the breeding combination that lead to the appearance of the disqualifier should not be repeated.

A responsible breeding programme will choose animals for breeding combinations, so as to select away from these eyelid deformities and the problems associated with them.