

# **South African Rhodesian Ridgeback Club**

Tel: (0) 12 667 5609  
Fax: (0) 12 667 5609  
Cell: 082 741 1000  
E-Mail: [shangara@icon.co.za](mailto:shangara@icon.co.za)

PO Box 95188  
Waterkloof  
0145  
South Africa

Mrs J Hubbard  
KUSA  
PO Box 2659  
Cape Town  
8000

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## **To Whom It May Concern**

The above club wishes to make the following statement on the subject of breeding ridgeless Rhodesian Ridgebacks to eliminate Dermoid Sinus from the breed, as presented in a recent FCI document.

The FCI report, which quotes the work of Dr Hilbertz et al (2002 & 2007) as saying, "No reports of dermoid sinus in ridgeless dogs of this breed" and that this, i.e. the breeding of ridgeless dogs "to a great extent will reduce the risk of dermoid sinus", is an out of date theory!

At a later stage Dr Hilbertz dismissed the findings in her early work as wrong and untrue, as it had been discovered that ridgeless specimens of this breed do indeed, present with and carry the gene for the dermoid sinus. Dr Hilbertz confirmed this with me on 1st November 2017. I have asked her to present an up to date statement for the FCI.

It would therefore **NOT** be advantageous to the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed to introduce ridgeless specimens and the rather ambiguous statement that ridged breeds need these (ridgeless) dogs is based on nothing more than total ignorance of the genetic facts.

The FCI Breeding Commission are obviously of the opinion that if the Ridge were eliminated, then so would the Dermoid Sinus. This is absolutely untrue, as dermoid sinuses have been found in other breeds such as Bull Terriers, Dobermanns, Shih Tzus, Kerry Blue Terriers and in one Golden Retriever - 5 sinuses in the neck area.

It is also found in humans. A foremost breeder of Ridgebacks in South Africa, has a son who has a dermoid sinus at the base of his spine and his father most certainly is not a ridged dog!

I founded the Rhodesian Ridgeback World Congress movement back in 1984 and apart from a couple of breeders who have kept ridgeless bitches for the sole purpose of breeding, there has never been a vote in favour of breeding from ridgeless specimens.

We, as Ridgeback breeders, strongly object to the statement in your document that, "Ridgeless puppies are often killed or neglected, recognition of ridgeless variety is therefore also a (sic) animal welfare issue."

This is a disgusting and irresponsible statement and can do nothing more than incite negativity towards our breed.

It is also shameful that a governing body such as the FCI should allow such a statement to be published without facts being presented.

In the early days of the breed, ridgeless puppies were culled. Today, although numerically less than the correct, ridged variety, they are caringly raised, sold for not much less than ridged puppies and placed in loving homes.

The suggestion that Rhodesian Ridgebacks should be interbred with Thai Ridgebacks, I am sure, would not be acceptable to either breed.

The Rhodesian Ridgeback has been pure bred since the 1920's and breeders are working tirelessly to eliminate hereditary problems.

I believe we are very close to identifying the gene for the Dermoid Sinus, which would dispel hit and miss ideas from uninformed parties, who are not directly involved with the breed and have not taken the time to conduct up to date research.

The name of our breed is RIDGEback, not RidgeLESSback and the escutcheon which gives it that name is not negotiable.

Yours faithfully,  
Elizabeth Megginson  
Chairman.