

Translation Willi's speech

Dear Presidents, dear representatives of the member countries, Dear Friends of the Leonberger Union.

I would like to start to thank my fellow members of the Board for the good cooperation for the last year. Although a lot did not happen this past year.

Since the beginning of the Corona- Pandemic that held the world literally in its grasp all of our usual activities, including the international Leonberger Union, have been reduced to a bare minimum.

That is why I want to dedicate my message mostly on the Corona Situation and the effects it has on Expositions and breeding.

For Expositions, the Corona Pandemic is, and will be a tense situation. Expositions are cancelled at the last moment, or postponed for an undefined time. Special regulations for Breeding-admittance made it possible for younger dogs to enter breeding. International breeding exchange was impossible due to travel restrictions. Contacts could only be kept digitally by e-mail or WhatsApp. Seminars, if held at all, were limited to a certain amount of attendees and with very strict hygiene rules.

The Virus will not be conquered after the end of the pandemic. I believe that in the years to come, expositions in big halls with many people attending and many entries, will hardly be feasible. Add to that, that prices for halls have risen extremely, that registration fees income are going down, there will be less visitors and less industry revenues and this will make expositions in big halls unpayable. Instead of expositions in halls, we will see increased open air expositions in the years to come. If and When expositions will return to the old "normal" is unpredictable.

The best Corona example for large Expositions would be the World Dog Show 2021 in Brno. They anticipated to have 25.000 entries, and they reached out to 170 international judges. In the end only 12.000 dogs were entered and 45 judges were canceled and taken of the list. Some of them could or didn't want to come due to travel restrictions.

Our Leonbergers are represented with 67 dogs at the World Dog Show. Not a bad amount, but also not a great amount of entered dogs. As mentioned earlier, I have the honor of judging at the WDS.

Astonishingly good were the 147 entries to the first World Championship for Leonberger in Cluny. The Wolrd Championship definitely benefitted from the regular France Club Show the day after.

Today's general assembly of the Union will be my last as president, for Per as vice president, and for Thomas as treasurer. Hein is up for election as secretary. The future will show how the Union will continue after the election of a completely new board.

Not everything, that we the board, would like to have achieved was internationally feasible. Yet, the guideline for our actions, with everything we discussed in the past, only one question was relevant. What will it bring our breed! Can it become reality, and I repeat myself, can it also be realized internationally? Wishful thinking was and is out of place.

I hope that the new board and the community of the member countries, with a positive attitude, consequently and competently will continue to work together, when it comes to the further development of the Union and OUR Leonberger, even when at times it's a hard and difficult road to travel. Make sure to find a united way forward. It will be rewarding.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the great cooperation and support for the past 13 years as Union President. It was my honor and joy at the same time!