

## 4.1 The size and structure of population

The first spinone in Finland was imported from England in 1986. There are approximately 170 spinoni in Finland. Spinoni have been imported from Italy, England, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United States, Ireland, Germany and Hungary. Spinoni have been exported from Finland to Sweden, Panama, the Netherlands, Denmark, Luxemburg and Germany.

Table 1. Spinoni in different countries.

	No. of dogs	Used for hunting	Participate in hunt-point-retrieve trials	Specific health issues
Italy	4 500–5000	90 %	2 %	-
Britain	3 500	<10 %	0,2 %	-
The United States	3 500–4000	30 %	5 %	HD, ED, bloat, seizures, autoimmune diseases, cancer
Finland	170	65 %	6 %	ED, OCD
The Netherlands	350–300	15 %	5 %	-
Sweden	200	10–15 %	2 %	Entropion, ectropion, bite
Germany	250	15 %	10 %	-

The data are estimates and based on the information received from breeders, breed clubs or other breed association of the country in question. The data describes the situation in the last 4-5 years.

HD = hip dysplasia, ED = elbow dysplasia, OCD = osteochondritis dissecans

The table above shows the number of spinoni and the degree of their use for hunting as pointing dogs in different countries. NB! The data are unofficial estimates and based on the information received from breed clubs or spinone enthusiast from the country in question. The data of the study period of the previous Objective Programme for Breeding are indicated in parenthesis.

*Finland:* the number of spinoni in Finland has slightly decreased (200), but the number of dogs used for hunting (25%) and the number of dogs participating in hunt-point-retrieve trials (5%) has increased. As much as 65 percent of spinoni born in 2004–2008 are used for hunting, which means that the development has been positive. This is greatly thanks to active breeders and well-considered breeding only for hunters. The number of spinoni that have participated in hunt-point-retrieve trials for continental pointing dogs has nearly doubled since the beginning of 2000s, but there is still room for improvement. Hunters are showing increasing interest in the breed as more dogs have participated in trials and been awarded. The number of dogs x-rayed for hip dysplasia has nearly doubled compared to the previous study period and results have been good. Few individual dogs have been diagnosed with dysplasia in elbow or shoulder, torsion, epileptic seizures and allergy, but the overall health of the breed is good.

*Italy:* The status of the breed in Italy has remained more or less unchanged compared to the previous study period. Most dogs are used for practical hunting but only a small percentage participate in HPR trials. The overall health of the breed is considered good. In terms of morphology, the trend has been, for years, to favour modern, sportive structure of a continental pointing dog used for hunting instead of the large and heavy dogs that were typical years back. Breeding has, for a long time, been based on selecting the morphologically most typical dogs out of the best hunting dogs, which means that priority in breeding is given to working abilities. This means compromising certain ancient characteristics of the breed that are rather related to the history of the breed – that used to be prominent in the show ring – than its functional working abilities (such as “skin thick as that of an ox” and large, heavy-structured dogs). Priority in breeding today lies in a more functional, dynamic and sportive structure. In open terrains, the hunt of a spinone must be wide, equal to any other continental pointing dogs. In terrains with thick vegetation spinone must, however, show the typical, intelligent hunt of a dog of “forest, bushes and difficult terrains”. Thanks to long-term breeding based on careful selection, the average

level of the working abilities of the breed is rather high, which was proven by the victory of the spinone team of the highly esteemed Coppa Italia trial in 2009.

Britain: The number of spinoni in Britain has remained unchanged. Less than 10 percent of dogs are used for hunting. Approximately 0.02 percent of dogs participate in trials organised both during the hunting season and in the summer. Working dogs in Britain do not have specific health problems, but attention, in general, is paid to epilepsy and the increasing number of cancer. Gene test to identify the carriers of cerebellar ataxia has been developed in Britain and an increasing number of dogs used for breeding are being tested. OCD is another lesser yet noteworthy problem. The small number of spinoni used for hunting in Britain is due to the late maturity of the breed: new spinone owners are keen on training their dogs for hunting, but as the dog reaches difficult teenage period (only at the age of 2-3 years), they give up. Professional trainers often favour dogs that mature earlier and therefore obtain results faster. In addition, some hunters consider spinone a slow dog and prefer another breed with faster and flashier hunt. An important reason is also the lack of suitable training opportunities and terrains.

Sweden: The number of spinoni in Sweden is estimated to have increased significantly, the current number being estimated at about 200 dogs (100). A total of 10–15 percent of the dogs are used for hunting, which means that the number of dogs used for hunting (10–15%) is not increasing as fast as the number of dogs. Approximately 2 percent of the dogs have participated in a HPR trial for continental pointing dogs. There are two working champion spinoni in Sweden, one from 2007 and the other from 2009. The Swedish Kennel Club monitors entropion and ectropion in spinone. Spinone owners also reported erroneous bite in the health questionnaire circulated. Only 7 percent of the dogs have been diagnosed with hip dysplasia since 1986. Thanks to the improved hip dysplasia situation, all hip x-rayed spinoni can be used for breeding with no restrictions on the result (previously only dogs with FCI grad A ‘excellent’ or B ‘good’ could be used for breeding). The breed club continues to monitor the characters of the dogs. Other aspects to be monitored are too light bone structure, straight upper arm and narrow posterior. It was noted that spinone is supposed to be a heavy-boned dog, not a light and fast dog. The overall health of the breed in Sweden is good.

Germany: The number of spinoni in Germany has increased, being 250 (200), and the number of dogs used for hunting is estimated to be 15 percent (5%). About 70 percent of the spinoni used for hunting have also participated in the HPR trial for continental pointing dogs, which is significantly more than during the previous study period (0.01%). No specific health problems were stated. Few individual dogs have been diagnosed with ED and OCD, and older dogs with heart problems. About 5 percent of spinoni is used for man tracking.

The Netherlands: The number of spinoni has slightly increased being 300–350 (250–300). The number of spinoni used for hunting is estimated to be 15 percent, which is more than in the previous study period (10%). Only about 5 percent (10%) of the dogs participate in HPR trials. There are no major health problems. There are three known carriers of cerebellar ataxia but most of the dogs tested have been clear. There are no specific hip or eye problems.

The United States: It must be noted that the United States is a large country covering almost an entire continent, which makes it hard to collect accurate data from the entire country. The data are therefore rough estimates. The number of spinoni was estimated to be higher than in the previous study period, being 3500-4000 (2500-3000). The number of dogs used for hunting was estimated to be approximately 30 (5) percent, but only about 5 percent of the dogs participate in the HPR working trial for continental pointing dogs. The Spinone Club of America recently carried out a health survey, which resulted in dogs reported with bloat, HD and ED, seizure disorders and autoimmune disorders. Different types of cancer were also reported, the most common type being hemangiosarcoma (previous study period HD, bloat/torsion, epilepsy, cancer).

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