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Is this the world's most dangerous dog?

By PAUL EASTON - The Dominion Post Last updated 05:00 27/05/2009

Forget rottweilers and pit bull terriers - the floppy eared, doe-eyed cocker spaniel is being singled out as one of the world's most aggressive dogs.

Kiwi owners and breeders have leapt to the defence of the "devoted and lovable" breed after a Spanish study looked at 1000 cases of dog aggression between 1998 and 2006.

Most were attributed to cocker spaniels, rottweilers, boxers, yorkshire terriers and german shepherds. But the study found english cocker spaniels were more likely than other dogs to act aggressively toward their owners and strangers.

However, Gloria Odiam, a New Zealand cocker spaniel breeder for 30 years, found the study hard to fathom.

"I don't know what they're breeding over there, but [there's] nothing like that here."

English cocker spaniels were "very much a family dog", Mrs Odiam said. "I've never heard of any problems with them."

Responsible breeders would not breed from "snappy" dogs. "That's why you should never go to a back-street breeder."

Wellington english cocker spaniel owner Bruce Klein said his dog, nine-year-old Archie, was "a joy to have in the house".

"He is a full-on dog, quite excitable, but very well-behaved and great with kids."

Archie was never aggressive, Mr Klein said. "We were especially sure when we got him as a puppy to make sure he was well-behaved."

Archie was fearless when it came to fireworks, however a result of his gun-dog pedigree. "He's not one to cower under the couch."

According to the Pedigree dog website, cocker spaniels are "devoted and lovable". "This merry little dog makes a wonderful family friend and a devoted companion."