

HEALTH SCREENING ALL BREEDERS SHOULD DO BEFORE BREEDING THEIR DOGS

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Before anyone breeds a dog, they should have done their homework, researching pedigrees of both the dam and the sire, going back at least five generations—looking for known health issues: (i.e. liver shunts/liver disorders, Juvenile Renal Disease, bladder/kidney stones, pancreatitis, diabetes, heart disease, Megaesophagus, epilepsy, thyroid disease, allergies, autoimmune diseases, Myotonia, Avian TB, to name a few...

Also certain tests should be done before a bitch is bred each time, as well as the stud dog. Some of the new DNA tests are only done once. Each breed has set guidelines of genetic testing that is available. DNA testing information and testing kits, as well as information about some of these disorders can be located at the AMSC web site. <http://amsc.us/>

EYE TESTS SPECIFIC TO OUR BREED INCLUDE:

- yearly eye exams up to 8 years of age using a Slit Lamp (CERF) test. This tests for PRA, CJC, SARDS.
- puppies should also have their CERF test done before going to their new homes; a certificate is provided.
- one step further: a full eye exam for the adult dog can be done by an ERG. The ERG tells the “whole” eye health, better than just a slit lamp test. Further testing can be done for retinal folds and more detailed and extensive eye health. An ERG needs to be only done once, followed up with yearly CERF exams. (Go to the AMSC website for a full explanation of each of the eye disorders noted above.)

BRUCELLOSIS:

Brucellosis is not a genetic disease; rather it is a venereal disease. At one time it was very prevalent in the U.S. The brucellosis test was developed and every breeder I know requires a new “negative” brucellosis test to be done and presented at the time the bitch is sent/brought for breeding. The males are also tested from time to time. The results for this test can take 3-7 days to come back, so it is important to not wait until the last minute to have it done.

A FULL BLOOD PROFILE should be done on both the dam and sire. The profile will show overall health, testing internal organs for function and abnormalities. Liver function, kidney function, hormonal abnormalities and diseases e.g. diabetes, pancreatitis, hyperlipidemia, and thyroid disorders can be identified by this profile.

Hyperlipidemia is a term that describes an elevation in one or more of 4 blood levels including, cholesterol, triglycerides, amylase and lipase. Hyperlipidemia is a condition that can lead to pancreatitis, fatty liver disease and heart related issues. Hyperlipidemia is hereditary. Blood profiles should be done after a 12-hour fast.

A COMPLETE URINALYSIS should be done; it helps check kidney function and checks for diabetes, as well as ruling out bladder stones, cystitis and infection.

VALLEY FEVER (for those in Southwest desert areas)

Dr. Lisa Shubitz, DVM, of the Valley Fever Center for Excellence at the University of Arizona, suggested at a Valley Fever seminar that all breeding bitches should be tested for Valley Fever before being bred. If a bitch with unidentified Valley Fever was bred, hormonal changes would occur during gestation and the whelping process. The sudden lowering of progesterone causes a fierce inflammatory response of the immune system, putting the bitch in a life threatening health crisis usually just prior to or shortly after whelping. While testing for VF prior to breeding may not

help if your bitch acquires VF after being bred, at least you, as the breeder, did all you could up front to protect your bitch. (Note: the VF test can take up to a week to get results.)

MYOTONIA DNA TEST:

Myotonia is a newly-discovered mutation in a few lines of miniature schnauzers. It can be carried without being expressed—but when it is expressed, it is a very debilitating. It is usually a fatal disease in puppies.

This DNA test allows breeders to check their breeding stock to see if their dogs are carriers. Testing info can be found on the AMSC website. Allow 6-8 weeks for test results.

A FEW OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELLING PUPPIES

*What does your “health guarantee” cover?

*Do you guarantee the puppy from congenital genetic defects?

*Is your health guarantee only good for 72 hrs? A week? A month?....

*Many reputable breeders guarantee congenital health for 1-5 yrs, some for life....