

planning matings, the breeder should consider the hip status of both the dog and bitch. Knowledge of the status of previous generations and of siblings of the prospective parents is also helpful.

Some breeders prefer to have their breeding stock evaluated through PennHIP, the University of Pennsylvania's Hip Improvement Program, which uses a multifaceted radiographic method for evaluation of the hip joint.

Elbow dysplasia. Chesapeakees tested through OFA for elbow dysplasia have a high rate (about 95 percent) of normal results.

Degenerative myelopathy. The DM test is available for any breed and is specifically recommended for some breeds, including Chesapeake Bay Retrievers.

Eyes. CERF registers dogs that are certified free of heritable eye disease by members of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists. DNA-based testing for eye disease includes OptiGen's *prcd*/PRA test, which helps breeders to avoid one form of progressive retinal atrophy (PRA). PRA refers to a group of diseases that cause the retina of the eye to degenerate slowly over time, resulting in vision loss and eventual blindness; *prcd* stands for *progressive rod-cone degeneration*, the type of PRA seen in several breeds.

Brucellosis. This serious disease, which can be picked up through contact with infected dogs or their urine (such as at dog shows), can be passed on through breeding. Brucellosis causes abortion of puppies and permanent infertility, and it is communicable to humans and other animals.

Therefore, it is important that both the stud dog and brood bitch are tested for it prior to breeding.

Some health clearances and certifications will automatically be reported to the AKC and appear following the dog's registered name on AKC forms, allowing for information on health status to be obtained during pedigree research.

Breeding is not just a matter of simply picking out a dog and bitch that you like. A lot must be considered. Every breeder must understand what the results of screening tests mean and how to equate those results with the characteristics of breed type he is try-

ing to achieve. DNA-based tests, such as those for PRA and DM, give us the insight so that we can breed carriers and even at-risk dogs to normal dogs and still avoid the disease itself. This gives us the opportunity to widen the breed's gene pool. By selectively using an at-risk or carrier dog, we can still get the other good qualities that particular dog may have to contribute. Thus we are not limited to a smaller gene pool by considering only normal-to-normal breedings.

There is much to learn and a lot to consider when breeding dogs.

Comments may be forwarded to me.

—Nathaniel Horn, Columbia, Md.;

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Some Thoughtful Questions

PART TWO

In my last column I shared some of the questions asked by a person who was interested in a litter of Curly-Coated Retrievers, followed by my responses. Below are the remainder of his questions and my answers.

One problem that I have with sporting breeds is [dogs having] weak pasterns and bad feet. How would you describe the feet of the pups in this litter?

Good feet are very important. I am lucky to own a bitch who has perfect feet—catlike and tight, with nails that never need trimming. My other bitches do need nail care but also have tight feet. By visiting this litter and observing the pasterns of the parents and the pups' walking habits, you should have some idea about the pasterns.

I am looking for a [dog with a] bold, outgoing personality. Does this breeder temperament-test the pups?

With Curlies, "bold and outgoing" is not always there. Breeders and owners must work on this, and some lines will never be what I call bold. It is not our breed. They are reserved for the most part, with males usually being less so than bitches. To have a well-adjusted Curly, one usually must work on this with lots of socializing—not in terms of

taking a lot of time for it, but in trying to incorporate things like taking your pup with you on short trips to the store. While there, walk him around on his leash and get him used to strange noises and sights. Be sure to vary the places pup goes to, as he will soon get used to one spot, and a new area is another challenge. Go to puppy classes, and meet as many people and other dogs as possible.

This breeder does some temperament testing. She seems to be very knowledgeable about placing the right pup with each new owner, as I have observed this with my last three bitches that have been from litters she has bred.

How closely bred is this litter? From what I can tell, it is an outcross. Are there any health problems in the lines that you know of?

Yes, this litter is the product of outcrossed lines. As long as I have owned Curlies, I have always had dogs from this type of breeding. This has not been on purpose; it just happened that way. I have had very good luck, with dogs having long lives and very good dispositions.

The breeder of this litter has bred Curlies for many years. Her pups are whelped and raised in her home. She is very aware of the few health issues in our breed and has always endeavored to avoid them through careful planning.

Do visit this litter, if possible, and meet both parents of the pups. I believe this is important for you to do, as you have asked some very provocative questions. —Ann Shinkle, Grand Island, Fla.; annshinkle@aol.com ♦



Our guest columnist for this issue is Joan Dever.

What's in a (Kennel) Name?

Like most things relating to our beloved breed, the custom of using kennel names originated in England, as did the breed itself. There are more