

ABGA

“Champions for Health”

Mission: To encourage its members/breeders to test their Champion breeding stock for potential Health issues/conditions prior to breeding a litter by utilizing as many Health Screening Tests that are currently available.

Objectives: **a)** Breeders will consult with their veterinarians to determine the appropriate age and test to be administered to accomplish health knowledge of breeding stock. **b)** To identify and make visible tested Champion dogs in our breed that have test verification dates by publishing test dates in the ABGA Bulletin and posting on the ABGA web-site as a reference tool for breeding “Champions for Health”. **c)** To create an opportunity for private dialogue between breeders, to compare Health test results of their stock in order to determine if a proposed breeding is best designed to avoid Health issues/conditions.

Methodology

Participants in the ABGA “Champions for Health” program will test all dogs that are AKC registered Champions prior to breeding a litter, utilizing as many Health tests that are currently available.

All dogs will be required to have been permanently identified utilizing either a tattoo or microchip. A “Champions for Health Test Form” can be obtained by contacting the current Chairman of the Health Committee or by accessing the ABGA web-site. Initially, there will be a total of six Health tests recommended to be performed. The first five suggested tests are based on the latest Health survey concluded by the ABGA in 2004. Test #6 has been added since this is a new major Health issue which has been recognized since the conclusion of the 2004 survey. Additional tests may be recommended in the future; pending further Health Surveys. The application form will be filled out by the participant and forwarded to the Chairman of the ABGA Health Committee. Please note that only the date of the test is required, not the actual results of the tests. A signed letter from the veterinarian, who actually performed the test, on that date, is all that is required. Thus, confidentiality remains with the owner of the dog. Applications will be mailed to the current Chairman of the ABGA Health Committee. Once the application forms are reviewed for accuracy, the test dates will be accumulated in a data base. These tests do not necessarily have to be all performed at the same time, test verification dates are accumulative.

Each test performed will be given a “Star” and a test date. Therefore, a participant may be listed as a one star “Copper”, two stars “Bronze”, three stars “Silver”, four stars “Gold”, and five stars “Platinum”, depending on how many tests have been performed. Not all tests need to be done at the same time, but members are encouraged to achieve “Platinum” status by doing any 5 of the 6 tests listed. The only test that needs to be currently renewed, on a yearly basis, is “CERF”. The validity of tests may not be valid if done at too young of an age, or may need to be renewed at an older age. Those members who reach the “Five Star Platinum” level will be honored at the ABGA yearly National event.

Below are the six suggested Health tests

- #1. OFA – Test for Patella Luxation
- #2. CERF – will need to be renewed annually while dogs are still being bred
- #3. ERG – Test for Progressive Retinal Atrophy
- #4. OFA – Test for Hip Dysplasia
- #5. OFA – Test for Thyroid
- #6. MRI - Test for Syringomelia

Verification of testing dates will be recorded in preparation for publication in the ABGA Bulletin and posting on the ABGA web-site. Only the date of the testing will be kept on file, results are not required or recorded.

Report / Conclusion

Each ABGA member/breeder who participates in the “Champions for Health” program will have their dogs or bitches “STAR” rating published in the next available issue of the ABGA Bulletin and posted on the ABGA web-site. All test verification dates received will be listed, regardless of how many tests have been performed to date. The goal, over time, is to have each of these dogs take advantage of as many Health tests that are available. By publishing the test dates in the ABGA Bulletin and on the ABGA web-site, the ABGA will be encouraging all breeders to participate in Health testing and encouraging dialogue between breeders. Breeders will be able to contact each other to actually review the results of the tests performed, and be able to plan a breeding accordingly. Thus eliminating as many Health issues/conditions as possible.