



*The Official Newsletter
of the Bearded Collie
Foundation for Health*

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**Code of Ethics For Board of Directors
The Bearded Collie Foundation for Health**

The board of directors has established the following Code of Ethics which all directors will adhere to. In keeping with our purpose of improving health of the Bearded Collie by promoting research, education, and information dissemination from our Voluntary Open Health Registry, the Board of Directors will:

- *Adhere to the policies and procedures established by the directors.
- *Hold data obtained for the Voluntary Open Health Registry within BeaCon until published.
- *Not become involved in complaints regarding breeder practices, irresponsibilities, or contract issues.
- *Not promote one breeder or kennel over another, but will share information with all on health tests that are advisable.
- *Not discuss health issues within a line or kennel outside the meetings of BeaCon.

Presidential Reflections

Exciting. A letter addressed to BeaCon for Health stated, "Our club raises money with an annual dog walk. In addition to the 3 main charities benefiting from the event, 6 active club members have earned the privilege of selecting additional charities to receive a portion of the funds.....I have been one of those selected. I feel that breakthroughs in canine health for any one breed can help to benefit the entire canine community. And, as a future "Beardie" person, your foundation's goals are important to me. Enclosed please find a check....we hope this furthers your mission of education, research, and study of Bearded Collies and all other canines." What a generous club!

A regional Bearded Collie Club: "On behalf of the ... I have enclosed a check payable to BeaCon in the amount of \$500. We appreciate the work of BeaCon and hope this money will aid in your research." Thank you very much!

Many other generous donors, such as the BOW calendar crew and individuals listed on our Web site, have enabled BeaCon to donate \$500 to our Directed Donor Fund at AKC CHF for future use in the Addison's research project. BeaCon is among the organizations giving support to the Addison's research project at UC Davis under Dr. Anita Oberbauer and administered by AKC Canine Health Foundation. Other supporters are anonymous, BCCA, Poodle Club of America, Portuguese Water Dog Foundation, Versatility in Poodles, and the Westie Foundation of America.

New Way To Enter BeaCon's Open Health Registry. Later this spring you can use an on-line form for entering your dog in the open registry. Submission will be considered your consent (unless there are co-owners). You receive a confirmation form listing material you agree to send by mail to the registry. If you are updating, a list of owner and dog ID #'s is accessible. Check with a director or the Web site after March 1 for the expected start date.

Worthy of Note. Open health regis-

try entries for year 2 came approximately equally from North America, the UK, and Australia and New Zealand. Purchases of the open health registry so far in year 2 are predominantly from the UK or Australia/New Zealand. Wonder why? The Year 2 Open Registry Book is registered with the US Copyright Office, as was the year 1 book.

Unending. New cases of a known hereditary disease, Addison's, continue to be diagnosed in Bearded Collies world wide!!!!!! Likewise for new cases of symmetrical lupoid onychodystrophy – cause unknown (maybe autoimmune), but a disabling disease.

Education is defined as instruction. Instruction is defined as the knowledge taught. Knowing is to be informed, be aware. There are two components of education, as I see it – the educational material and the use of the educational material. BeaCon's educational mission is to provide materials for study. We hope you find them worthy of study. If there are topics you would like to learn more about please let the newsletter editor know.

In this issue we offer information about selecting a breeder, open registries available for Bearded Collies, CERF, an Addison's update, and meeting a BeaCon director.

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Selecting A Bearded Collie Breeder

What To Do and Not to Do.

Locate a responsible breeder (defined below) and one who has shown dedication to the breed and who will not place a puppy before they are 8 weeks of age. For an older dog, consider the rescue program of the parent club, if that approach appeals to you. Alternatively, approach a breeder to see if they have any older dogs that no longer fit into their breeding program.

Do not consider a pet store. There will be no breeder to help you during the dog's life. The pet store's only interest in the puppy is as merchandise, not as a living, breathing creature that will be a family member for more than a decade. They do not do genetic testing, nor do their commercial breeders. Many of the breeding animals pet store puppies come from are of very poor quality. Many times these dogs are kept in appalling conditions. By getting a puppy from those sources, you help build a market and cause more puppies to be born in those conditions. In the USA many of those puppies are only eligible for registries created by the trade. That happens because some commercial breeders have lost their AKC registration privileges due to the appalling breeding practices. Little if anything will have been done to assure the health or temperament of the puppies, or to ensure that they resemble the breed structurally. For the same reasons, it is wise to avoid the friend or neighbor who had puppies accidentally or for the fun of it.

Cautions, If considering an ad, do so with care. Look for responsible breeder characteristics.

Locating a Breeder. Representatives of local regional and all-breed clubs, and the breed's parent club are possible referral resources. A country's registry usu-

ally has breeder referral, too. As not all responsible breeders belong to parent clubs, other sources would be ads or word of mouth reference from a satisfied owner. A parent club is responsible for establishing the breed Standard and conducting a membership organization on behalf of the breed. Clubs vary in their bylaws, code of ethics and enforcement, and in who may become a member. In the USA, the parent club is the BCCA; in Canada, the BCCC; in England, The BCC, in Australia there are the BCC of NSW and the Victorian BCC.

Characteristics of a Responsible Breeder.

- 1) Well educated about the breed and long term commitment to the breed.
- 2) Offers breed information and assistance.
- 3) Offers some type of guarantee if the dog doesn't work out or a health problem develops.
- 4) Dogs are maintained in clean quarters with suitable shelter.
- 5) Breeding animals are healthy, temperamentally sound, and can be seen. You can see how the dogs live, if you like the dam (and sire if also on the premises), and where the puppies are raised.
- 6) Does appropriate genetic health screening testing at professionally recommended intervals on both sire and dam and will provide copies of the test results or registry certificates. Note: some breeders will do testing to assure normal results, but will not obtain certificates for every test.
- 7) Offers pictures or a video if you cannot visit.
- 8) Asks buyers questions about home and lifestyle (i.e., family members, work schedules), choice of the breed, understanding of the breed, prior dog owning experience, perhaps the name of your vet. So many questions can be annoying – be understanding. A breeder is attempting, in the context of an increasingly "disposable" society, to assure a life long appropriate home for their precious pups. But if they **don't** show concern for these factors, keep on looking.
- 9) Maintains pedigree records, medical/health status records, and required national registry breeder forms.
- 10) Offers suggestions for puppy vaccinations, and flea and heartworm prevention.
- 11) Knows the dam has either adequate titers against distemper and parvo, or has been vaccinated at the recommended interval.
- 12) Provides references from other puppy buyers that you may follow up on.
- 13) Offers a lifetime resource for your puppy and is there to answer any questions however trivial they may seem to you. They will help out if you and your dog have any problems – for example, with hands on demonstration if you experience difficulty with grooming.

Questions To Ask A Breeder.

What activities do you participate in and encourage puppy buyers to become involved in? Involvement in at

"The greatest discovery of any generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude."
William James

least one area (conformation, herding, obedience, tracking, or agility) indicates dedication.

How long have you been breeding Bearded Collies? If the person is just starting, this should not be held against them; ask who is mentoring them in the breed. The number of litters produced or the number of champions from the kennel may or may not be reflective of the quality of the breeding program. Each country has different requirements to achieve a championship; in some places this is achieved with greater difficulty than in others.

Socialization. Are the puppies outgoing and friendly? Do they overreact to noises or strangers? Has the puppy been acclimated to car rides and crates?

Do they strive to match the pup's personality to the buyer's personality, lifestyle, and expectations?

What is the health history of the sire and dam's families? This tells you that the breeder has kept in contact with the families of puppies they have placed before and will share the information. What health registries are the sire and dam registered in (see separate article on available registries)? If they are in no health registry, ask why not!!!

Does the breeder talk about other breeders with respect or negatively? A responsible breeder is not in life and death competition with other breeders, but should have the good of the breed at heart. Friendly competition is good and is based on respect.

Health Screening. The optimal hoped for is normal results on both sire and dam for hips and elbows (one time tests), eyes and thyroid panel within the past year up to age 4 or 5, then every other year. The thyroid panel could be either OFA or a complete thyroid panel (see the fall 02 newsletter for details). See references for rationale of health screening agency recommendations. The optimal is not always possible or practical, so listen to what your breeder has to say on this topic. Documentation of passing tests can be certificates from various agencies (in the USA - OFA, CERF) or copies of the test results from the examining veterinarian or testing lab.

Q: Contracts.

A: You should be able to obtain a copy of the contract before making a deposit. It should include health guarantees, cost of the puppy, return agreement, and when the country's kennel club registration papers will be given to you. Be aware that breeders can only guarantee measures used to try to produce puppies that will be healthy. They attempt to avoid hereditary problems by the choice of sire and dam based on currently known health information. In addition they try to avoid other health problems by the care given the dam and puppies in the first eight weeks of life. There can be no 100% guarantee of a totally healthy future. If you are entering into a special agreement, such as a co-ownership, the specifics of the agreement should be spelled out in detail. Be certain you understand the contract language

“Shoot for the moon, if you miss, you will land among the stars.”
Author unknown

and implications. For example, what if you wanted to report your dog's good health or a health problem in an open health registry? Would the breeder co-owner allow that? Some will; some won't. Ask about what is not in the written contract, too. Some arrangements are verbal and not written.

Some prudent breeders will retain co-ownership on dogs sold as pets (i.e., non-conformation) until the spay/neuter portion of a contract has been completed. Then the buyer gains full ownership.

Q: Expectations.

A: There have been many lifelong friendships between breeders and their puppy buyers, shared times at performance events, and Beardie bounces, picnics, and festivals. We hope this will be true for you and your future breeder.

Abbreviations

- AKC – American Kennel Club
- BCC – The Bearded Collie Club
- BCC of NSW – Bearded Collie Club of New South Wales
- BCCA – Bearded Collie Club of America
- BCCC – Bearded Collie Club of Canada
- CERF – Canine Eye Registry Foundation
- OFA – Orthopedic Foundation for Animals
- Victorian BCC – Victorian Bearded Collie Club

References:

CERF: Why yearly exams are important. <http://www.vmdb.org/aug02.html#dxspot>

OFA – autoimmune thyroiditis: <http://www.offa.org/ofathy.html>

American Dog Owners Association – Why Buy From A Responsible Breeder? www.adoa.org

Health Registries Available for Bearded Collies in Early 2003

Beacon's Open Health Registry is one option. Begun in 1999, it is open to purebred Beardies worldwide, healthy or not. The purpose of the registry is to provide education and research opportunities through publicly available health information. Reproductive outcome and a range of health problems are included.

The only requirement for participation is that all owners must give consent. The registry includes basic demographic information and pedigree on each dog, owner and breeder information, details of any health problems, cause of death for deceased dogs, and health screening test results, if done. Owners are asked to obtain veterinarian confirmation of health problems when that is possible. The registry form is available in hard copy or on-line (beginning March 03). There are 410 dogs in the registry. Data in this registry are currently available to the public by purchase of hard copy or a CD. For more information or to download a registry form, visit this URL: www.beaconforhealth.org/Survey & Registry.htm

CHIC. Another option is a program called CHIC (Canine Health Information Center), which was developed by the AKC Canine Health Foundation for parent breed clubs in the USA. The parent breed club deter-

mines what health screening tests are required and how an owner reports results. These tests do not have to be passing and the owner determines if results are made public or not. Participating dogs receive a CHIC certificate with a CHIC number. If your pup's sire and dam have CHIC numbers, you should ask to see copies of the original health screening organization's certificate to confirm that the tests were passed. Since the CHIC program is very new and only 33 Beardies were enrolled in CHIC as of mid-fall 2002, it is hoped that the number of participants will increase in the years to come.

The BCCA CHIC screening tests are:
 Hips (OFA, Penn Hip, Institute for Genetic Disease control, or Ontario Veterinary College)
 Autoimmune thyroiditis – OFA thyroid panel yearly until age 5, then every other.
 Eyes – CERF each year until 5, then every other.
 Elbow – optional.
 If the sire or dam of your prospective puppy is in neither registry, ask **“WHY NOT!!!”**



CERF UPDATE

CERF Registry. In the USA, CERF is the registry for eye exams performed by certified veterinary ophthalmologists. A CERF exam is recorded in triplicate. The owner receives one copy for submission with a fee to CERF for a certificate if there are no hereditary problems. One form goes to the CERF research database. One form is kept by the ophthalmologist. For eye structure information go to: (<http://www.havanese.org/heart/havaneseAnatomy.htm>).

CERF and AVCO (American Veterinary College of Ophthalmologists) publish information from the research database. The AVCO genetics committee has defined breeding recommendations for each ophthalmologic diagnosis. AVCO makes a no breeding recommendation when substantial evidence exists to support the heritability of the diagnosis and/or the diagnosis represents a potential compromise of vision or other ocular function. In Bearded Collies and the 124 other breeds with hereditary cataracts, AVCO's breeder recommendation is NO. Otherwise, breeding recommendation is “breeder's choice”.

Historical Perspective I. For the years 1991-2002, 1827 CERF exams were done on Bearded Collies; 75.4% of exams in males and 80.0% of exams in females were normal. The table shows the number of CERF exams performed in each year and figures elsewhere refer to the number of diagnoses in each year. The increase in exams for 97-99 may reflect educational efforts. The obvious decline in exams after 2002 should be of concern. The 2002 figures may be low if not all data have been received by CERF from ophthalmologists.

Year	# of CERF exams	# AKC Registrations
1991	60	795
1992	129	766
1993	102	749
1994	94	640
1995	128	762

Year	# of CERF exams	# AKC Registrations
1996	111	720
1997	192	711
1998	271	752
1999	286	614
2000	233	682
2001	136	620
2002	95	587

Historical Perspective II. By Thomas Miller, DVM on 1996 BCCA Specialty Eye Clinic. “...15/40 dogs failed to obtain CERF certification due to cataracts. This is an amazing failure rate for a breed that ‘doesn't have eye problems’... What Do You Do About It? You can stick your head in the sand and muddle along, maintaining the old belief that Beardies don't have eye problems...This seems to have been the approach of many breeders in the past, as CERF statistics show only a small fraction of dogs (an estimated 2%) are ever examined. My recommendations include: 1) Have a second opinion if your dog was found to have a cataract at the specialty clinic, 2) Check all breeding stock for eye problems, 3) Check all dogs from litters in which cataracts have been diagnosed, even pets and those already neutered or spayed, 4) Dogs should be reexamined until they are 5 or 6 to identify those who develop cataracts during the high risk 2-5 year period...5) Affected dogs should be removed from your breeding program and they should continue to have eye exams yearly to document the progress (or not) of the cataract(s), 6) Your health committee and board need to vigorously pursue development of an open registry for listing dogs who are affected with cataracts so as to document classification, track progression, and hopefully identify the mode of genetic inheritance, 7) Owners of a dog with cataract(s) should notify the dog's breeder, 8) Breeders need to become advocates for the open registry process.”

CERF Categories are defined as diagnoses which haven't yet been defined as a hereditary disease for a specific breed. CERF policy about a “Category” diagnosis is that a CERF certificate and number will be issued, and the category is printed on the certificate. Below are the number of Beardies in each category (total n of Beardies = 791).

Category	Location	# dogs
A	Eyelids	2
B	Third eyelid	17
C	Cornea	2
D	Iris	22
E	Lens	87
F	Vitreous degeneration	2
G	Retinal dysplasia-folds & misc	4

Persistent pupillary membranes (PPM), Category D. This is an iris problem which must be looked for PRIOR to dilation of the eye; as many ophthalmologists will routinely put the eye drops in when the dog arrives in clinic, you must ask that the exam for PPM occur prior to the eye drops! PPMs are persistent blood vessel remnants in the anterior chamber of the eye which fail to re-

In the Spotlight
Meet the Director – Kathy Coxwell
By Chris Walkowicz



Kathy Coxwell became a Board member of BeaCon “in the beginning.” We keep her around for comic relief. She makes sure we toe the line. Kathy claims to be a member of a very exclusive club: poor honest lawyers.

She’s had dogs off and on all her life, mostly on. Her last birthday made that a very long time. She can readily remember her early years, particularly “Look, look, look. Oh, oh, oh. See Spot. See Spot run.” Kathy’s first Beardie came into her life about twenty years ago. She claims she was four.

Presently she has only two, and she’s suffering from withdrawal because it’s been a while since she’s felt the delight of a puppy teething on her ankle. The Coxwells’ son, Will complains that they’ve never had only three dogs. (They also have Toby, a 15-year-old Tibetan Spaniel.)

When asked if she is a breeder, she responded, “I’ve bred two children and had a few litters under the Keltic name. I limited my breeding on purpose and then law school took far too much time to leave any time to devote to a proper, sound breeding program.”

She’s shown and finished several Beardies to their Championship. Now she has started going to obedience classes. “I enjoy taking Siggy, Ch. Discover Walkoway LuckyCharm to obedience weekly. It’s a 75-mile drive to Cantonment, FL, but it’s great fun and Joanne Pernowicz, the instructor, is a fantastic teacher. Siggy is doing very well, but I’m a klutz. I can’t dance, either. I plan to try for Siggy’s CD this fall and then go on. I will start obedience classes with Libby (Ch. Ragtyme’s If You See A Dream) after that.”

Kathy says her family consists of “my husband, Milton (another poor, honest lawyer), with whom I practice law in Monroeville, Alabama, one son, Will, who is a first year law student at the University of Alabama (poor and honest runs in the family); and a daughter, Stewart, a junior at Auburn University, who plans on a career as a nurse anesthetist. Thank heavens for Stewart, as someone has to break the mold!”

Kathy says, “We also have two Beardies, Libby, Siggy, and Toby the Tibbie who thinks he’s as big as the Beardies. Oh yes, and 7 cats, all registered with the Y. C A A. (Yard Cat Association of America). The children loved the Beardies when they were younger, but they

“Vision is the gift to see what others only dream”
Author unknown

gress normally during the first three months of life. These strands may bridge from iris to iris, iris to cornea, iris to lens, or form sheets of tissue in the anterior chamber. The last three forms pose the greatest threat to vision and, when severe, vision impairment may occur. These may result in anterior capsular cataracts or corneal edema. The mode of inheritance has not been defined in any breed. In Bearded Collies, all forms of PPM are passed as category D.

PPM is listed as a problem in 53 breeds by AVCO. In most of the breeds with PPM, breeding advice is “Breeder Choice”. For the following breeds, breeding advice is “NO”: Basenji, Boston Terrier, Bullmastiff, Chow Chow, Pembroke Welsh Corgi, and Yorkshire Terrier. The frequency of iris-iris PPM in Beardies is 3.7% for males and 4.3% for females (1991-2002 database).

Punctate Cataracts (Category E). A cataract is partial or complete opacity of the lens and/or its capsule. Cataracts designated as significance unknown are passed as Category E. These types of cataracts usually involve only a localized region of the lens – some are called punctate cataracts. Frequency figures for cataracts in Beardies (91-02) follow.

Type Cataract	male exams	female exams
Hereditary	9.7%	6.6%
Significance unknown (E)	9.4%	8.1%

Although 119 breeds are listed as having cataracts by AVCO, the mode of inheritance is known in only a few. Whether you are purchasing a pup (in which case you may want to know the CERF status of both sire or dam) or breeding (in which case you have the dam’s CERF and want to know the sire’s CERF status), it is wise to see the original or a copy of a dog’s CERF certificate. Otherwise you will not know the reason for a CERF category. Very recently CERF began disclosure of Category diagnoses on it’s web site.

Yearly CERF exams are an important part of a responsible breeding program because of the possibilities of later onset of inherited eye problems and that some of the category diagnoses change to more serious and heritable problems over time. CERF has an article on the importance of yearly exams: <http://www.vmdb.org/aug02.html#dxspot> One wonders if enough Beardies are having eye exams, given what we know about the frequency of several eye problems and the number being registered with AKC. Let us not become complacent.

Also, as Dr. Miller suggested in 1996, BeaCon encourages that dogs with a Category diagnosis be entered in BeaCon’s open health registry and that you have follow-up exams repeated every year or two to document the stability or any change in diagnosis. This is vital to gain an understanding as to whether the Category diagnoses are benign or have serious implications in the Bearded Collie.

The data for this article was supplied by CERF.
Reference: Disorders Presumed to be Inherited in Purebred Dogs. AVCO, 1999.

grew up and turned into something called teenagers and they didn't like anything. Now both are grown and not home much. Milton likes them when they are calm, quiet, and not barking." (She means the dogs, not the kids).

A member of the BCCA and Magnolia BCC, Kathy claims living in a remote village makes participation in any regional club difficult. "We are 100 miles south of Montgomery, 100 miles north of Mobile, 25 miles from the interstate and 10 miles from the nearest beer store. I've trained the Beardies to carry a tiny barrel of beer like the St. Bernards, but they always seem to drink it before they make it back home."

Kathy has been Alabama coordinator for BCCA Rescue for quite a number of years. "We have been fortunate in that we don't have many rescue situations in this part of the South, but those we have had have all been placed in wonderful homes."

She joined BeaCon because she feels that over the years we have developed some problems in our breed. "I have never believed that "ostriching," as the Queen Mum used to say, ever solved any problems. Pretending we don't have problems or sweeping problems under the rug solely for pecuniary gain is, in my opinion, a disaster waiting to happen. Too many lovely breeds have been seriously damaged because of this attitude, and it will take many years of carefully researched breeding to eliminate these problems. I feel very strongly that BeaCon can be of help to every breeder in evaluating their breeding program and is a source of invaluable information to everyone who truly loves this breed and wants only the best for it.

"An open registry would allow anyone who is planning to breed or buy access to very valuable information which would help in making crucial decisions. An open registry is not a tool designed to undermine anyone's breeding program, but would provide information to everyone which would not only help to avoid the continuance of specific problems, (and) would help those breeders with specific problems to look to other dogs to help eliminate certain traits in that breeding program."

When time allows, she lurks on both BDL and BCL and occasionally inserts a pithy comment. She feels each has a distinct flavor and finds it refreshing. "I find it fascinating that Beardie people the world over have formed such a close-knit community through the miracle of the internet. I'm still trying to figure out how the telephone works, so trying to understand how I can be in Monroeville, Alabama and correspond instantly with people on other continents boggles my mind, but what great fun it is! I've asked friends in other breeds if their people have a group like this, and the answer is always the same: NO!

"I'd be more than happy for Beardie owners to contact me for health information. Of course the mail only runs once a month now that we have a new postmaster and the canceling machine broke, but email and telephone work fine. (No kidding, if I send a letter from my office to another business in Monroeville, it has to go to Montgomery to be cancelled and then brought back to Monroeville. If I don't know the answer, I can promise I will find someone who does."

The Coxwells' Tibetan Spaniel just celebrated his 15th birthday. Toby takes an anti-senility pill every day and gets along quite nicely. She adds she might try one of them herself one of these days. "Since Toby is the grand old man of the house, the Beardies don't know anything about life without a funny looking miniature Beardie. They get along fine, except that Siggy does tend to knock poor Toby over in his haste to get back in out of the heat and humidity. Toby takes it all in stride, but he does get a little feisty when Libby comes in heat."

She says, "Over the years we have run the gamut...dogs, cats, hamsters, rabbits. And all this a mere 1/2 block off the town square. We still have our registered yard cats, all of whom are spayed and neutered and the dogs. The oldest cat is Tabby, a tabby cat (imagine that) of indeterminate age. We know she is at least 15 and probably older, followed by her best friend Soot, almost as old and the mother of countless offspring until we caught her and had her spayed, and Soot's daughter, Sylvia. Ginger lives primarily on the roof in the back and in the Gingko tree because she is afraid of Morris and Jack. Lucifer is the latest addition and he thinks he owns the world."

When asked if she participates in other areas of the dog world, she replied: "Absolutely. Because of my overwhelming support through the years my vet has an entire wing of his clinic named after me and a new swimming pool at his house."

Other hobbies: Reading (Monroeville is where Truman Capote and Harper Lee hail from -- and she knows Harper Lee!), particularly English history, biographies and mysteries; needlepoint, and watching really old movies. She also likes to fiddle around with woodworking, carpentry and French hand sewing.

She feels the greatest danger to the breed comes through ill-informed, indiscriminate breeding and over breeding by people who have self-aggrandizement as their goal and not the good of the dogs. "Dog people are competitive, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that; but when bragging rights replace good "judgment and soundness in temperament, type and health, we have serious problems on our hands.

"Television has popularized the Beardie so much in the last decade and we must be wary. The last thing Beardies need are to become like the Cockers of the '50s when every family had one, and every family thought it a great idea to have puppies. We must do everything we can to protect, not exploit this wonderful breed."

"This is the beginning of a new day. You have been given this day to use as you will. You can waste it or use it for good. What you do today is important because you are exchanging a day of your life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever; in its place is something that you have left behind...let it be something good."

Author unknown

Update on Hypoadrenocorticism in the Bearded Collie:

Addison's disease and the Genes

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Although Bearded Collie owners have long recognized the adverse health implications of Addison's disease in their breed, this disease has recently garnered national attention with the publication of an article describing the consequences of Addison's disease in President John F. Kennedy. With this increased awareness of the symptoms associated with Addison's disease, a disease more accurately termed hypoadrenocorticism (a name reflecting the origin of the disease), dog breeders are in search of a more thorough understanding of the cause of the disease. In humans, a genetic predisposition has been confirmed, but in dogs, controversy has surrounded the disorder in terms of whether there is or is not a genetic component to the disease.

With the willing participation of Bearded Collie owners, we were able to demonstrate that indeed, hypoadrenocorticism in Bearded Collies IS highly heritable (heritability estimate of 0.76). This was reported in last May's issue of American Journal of Veterinary Research. At that time, the precise genetic mechanism responsible for inheritance of the disorder was unable to be determined for the Bearded Collie, however, it was clear that breeding decisions must include consideration of the genetic likelihood of passing on this deleterious disorder. What that means in lay terms is that while we know that Addison's in the Bearded Collie is under genetic control, we cannot say how many genes participate in the expression of Addison's or their mode of action.

Since that report was published based upon the data for 635 Bearded Collies, we have been fortunate that the Bearded Collie owners and breeders have continued to submit health and DNA information. We currently have the Addison health status for 990 Beardies with an additional fifty or so submissions received in the last week. These dogs represent countries from all over the world: Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. Of these dogs, 80 are Addisonian with males and females being equally affected (not statistically different).

We have also received Addisonian information on 1178 Standard Poodles (9.25% of them are diagnosed with Addison's disease), 296 Leonbergers (23% affected), and 504 Portuguese Water Dogs (3.8%). When the number of submitted Standard Poodles reached proportions of affected and unaffected that are sufficient for analyses, we evaluated the heritability and mode of inheritance in that breed. While the genetic contribution to the expression of Addison's in the Poodle was similar to that noted for the Bearded Collies (heritability estimate of 0.75 for the Poodle), the mode of inheritance strongly

suggested an autosomal recessive locus influencing Addison's in the Poodle. This is in contrast to what was detected for the Bearded Collie. Preliminary pedigree analyses on the Leonbergers and Portuguese Water Dogs also demonstrate a significant genetic component to Addison's disease but fail to support a single locus as having large effect on expression of the disease. Thus, the data from the Bearded Collie, Leonberger, and Portuguese Water Dogs all unequivocally demonstrate that Addison's is highly heritable in those breeds. However the analyses cannot claim that a single locus strongly influences Addison's. Whether this difference in genetic regulation reflects breed differences of Addison's or merely represents an artifact of the data due to limited submission numbers remains to be seen. With the addition of 355 new Bearded Collies to the data set, we will be repeating the analyses to answer that question. The results from these expanded analyses will clarify if a single gene does indeed affect the expression of Addison's in the Bearded Collie as is the case for the Standard Poodle. If a single gene does significantly contribute to hypoadrenocorticism, then our hope in developing a genetic test will look more promising.

In the meantime, with the unequivocal genetic component contributing to Addison's disease in the Bearded Collie, breeders should make a concerted effort to characterize the risk associated with any proposed breeding. In general, it would be wise to avoid pedigrees that demonstrate a high frequency of Addison's disease. Prudent breeding practices will minimize the occurrence of Addison's in the Bearded Collie until such time that a genetic marker test is available.

Quiz in a Box

(answer on page 8)

When was the following written and by whom?

"The first and major hindrance to recognizing the significance and cost of genetic disease is that most breeders believe that the MAJORITY OF DOGS ARE GENETICALLY NORMAL. This is not the case at all. In dogs, we do not have good estimates of the number of defective genes they carry, but it is estimated that each human being carries three to five major defective genes. It is likely that, as a minimum, each individual dog is equivalent to humans in this regard. Aside from what is likely to be the case, if you believe that most dogs are genetically normal and you find out your dog carries a defect, whether it's cataracts or something else, you do not want to talk about it because you believe your dog is different (less worthwhile) than MOST dogs."

"This belief causes a person to be secretive about a trait, to deny that it occurs, and as a result, to fail to address the defective gene as a problem which can be solved.....Dog breeders in general ... cause defective genes to spread within a breed by failing to approach genetic defects in an open manner. They control the matings of their dogs, but somehow they end up expecting "nature" to correct defects in the same manner natural selection works in a wild population."

Odds and Ends

Donations



Contributions to BeaCon and the open health registry should be mailed to:
Chris Walkowicz
1396 265th Street
Sherrard, IL 61281-8553.

Donors of up to \$15-\$99 receive a logo pin
For \$100-\$199 you receive a sterling silver angel pin
For \$200 and up you receive a 14K gold angel pin
The pins can be viewed on the BeaCon Web site.

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Attention all Beardies!!!! BEARDIE QUILT RAFFLE

One ticket for \$4 or three tickets for \$10

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Tell your human to send US dollars either of two ways!!!

1. Personal cheques (USA only) made out to BeaCon for Health and sent to:
Elsa Sell (262 Liberty Rd, Milner, GA 30257 USA)

2. OR you can go to our website and pay via PayPal.
www.beaconforhealth.org scroll down the home page to find all the information you need including a great currency converter!!!

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Any member of the Board of Directors may be contacted at these addresses for any questions you might have. Please contact the Board if you have any ideas or wish to participate in any of BeaCon's ongoing projects.

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Future editions of the BeaCon newsletter will be available free to anyone interested in the Health of Bearded Collies. Please contact the editor if you wish to receive any future editions of the newsletter by e-mail, didn't receive the earlier editions, want to have another person added to the mailing list or want to be removed from the mailing list.

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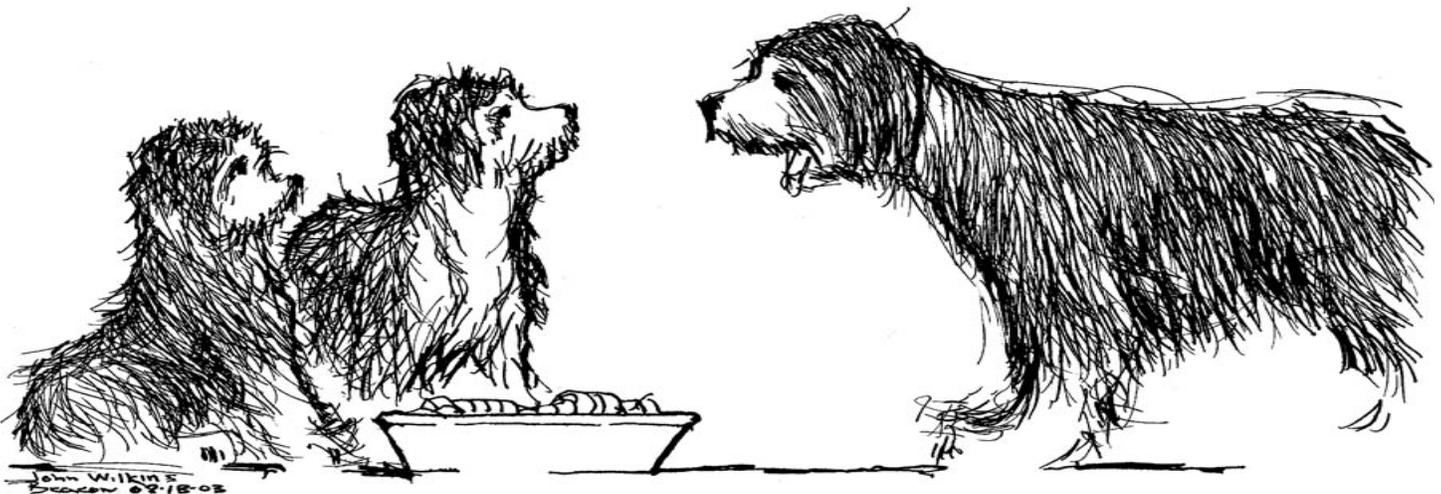
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Visit BeaCon on the web at www.beaconforhealth.org

Quiz in a Box

*Answer: George A Padgett, DVM
May 1989 Beardie Bulletin*

MacLean and Company...



"The yellow and green things are called 'veggies', and THEY'RE GOOD FOR YOU!!"

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**Lighting the Way
The BeaCon Newsletter
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