

German Wirehaired
Pointers



Ethical Breeding

A BBC documentary titled *Pedigree Dogs Exposed* put a spotlight on the practices of purebred dog breeders in the United Kingdom. Although the program originally aired in 2008, I recently saw it for the first time. The fact that the producers of this program were able to find a few grossly irresponsible breeders and portray the unethical breeding practices of these people as the norm should be a wake-up call for all of us.

As breeders we simply cannot ignore even any hint of unethical breeding practices. We need to shine a light on and dissociate ourselves from any breeder who seems to care more about winning than the health of the puppies he produces. We must be as outraged by any seemingly unethical behavior as a member of the general public would be. If a top-winning dog is found to have genetic health issues, you shouldn't breed to that dog, and you must convince other breeders not to do so.

Although nearly every parent club has a code of ethics, generally the code affects only parent-club members and does not bar a non-member from breeding. All responsible breeders should refuse to breed their dogs to unhealthy animals and refuse to associate with any breeder who acts unethically. The result is that unethical breeders have few options for breeding and eventually have to breed more responsibly or else quit breeding dogs. Responsible breeders can use peer pressure to force less-responsible breeders to modify their breeding practices.

I believe that in America, and specifically in the GWP community, the vast majority of breeders are highly ethical. Even with our breed's small gene pool—especially because of its small gene pool—we must stay away from anyone who would deliberately breed genetically unhealthy dogs.

We should always consider the health of the puppies we produce above all else, with temperament following close behind.

We all have the goal of breeding the next top winner, be it in the field, show ring, or a performance event, but we should remember that most of the puppies we produce will never enter competition and will live out their lives as beloved family pets. —*Jodi Quesnell, Sheridan, Wyo.; idawiregwps@isp.com* ♦

Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

Chesapeake Substance

The Chesapeake is described as a strong and powerful dog. His purpose includes working in the marsh, swimming in swift and cold water, and hunting on land. A Chesapeake needs to be capable of easily climbing in and out of a boat and climbing up and down banks. He must have the stamina to retrieve ducks and/or upland game all day. Most Chesapeakes we see are not too tall, but many are well beyond the weight specifications described in the standard (males, 65–80 pounds; females, 55–70 pounds).

The breed's substance should never be excessive. The Chesapeake should not be coarse, overdone, or too heavy in body. This is a sporting dog and should not be as heavily boned as the larger breeds in the Working Group. It is a continuous effort to keep the Chesapeake a dual breed, with a similar look in both field and show dogs.

How do we avoid the temptation to cross the line of our strongly desired muscular and powerful dog becoming a coarse, overdone animal that is not as useful? It is important to maintain the best dog we can and avoid a fad or fancy that arises from some breeding and judging preferences.

The Chesapeake is a strong, well-balanced, powerfully built animal of moderate size and medium length in body and leg. He is deep and wide in the chest, with shoulders built with full liberty of movement and with no tendency to weakness in any feature. Avoid dogs with weight or height that go far beyond what is called for in the standard. Dogs with heavy bone structure will weigh well above the limits set by the standard. This larger size is not ideal, as it inhibits agility,

function, and endurance.

A dog that is often in body will coarzen a coarse head as well. The skull should be about six inches broad and should be round over the skull, from the root of one ear to the other, not blocky or flat. The muzzle should taper; its width at the nose should not be the same as at the stop. The correct head should have length of muzzle (from the end of the nose to the stop) the same as from the stop to the occiput. Avoid a short or square muzzle. Sufficient length of muzzle is necessary for retrieving large waterfowl such as geese.

The breed's eye appears medium-large in size; the description in the standard implies that the eye is oval. *Wide-set eyes* should not imply "the wider, the better." Eyes set too far apart are often placed in an unprotected eye-set. Eyes that protrude and appear exposed should be avoided. These are more susceptible to injury in the field.

Avoid excessive jowls. Extra flews bring excessive water into the dog's mouth and can cause annoyance to the dog while carrying game. Aspire for small, leaf-type ears and artful head-type, and avoid cheekiness, oversized ears, and any other indication of overdone features on the head.

Breeders and judges, while aspiring to produce or reward the best dog in the ring, please keep breed function in mind, and couple that with the sense of what makes for the best dog in the field. This will guide us to the most impressive Chesapeake of good type that we should all strive for. —*Nathaniel Horn, Columbia, Md.; Kcboy0@yahoo.com* ♦



Curly-Coated Retrievers



My guest columnist is Pat Stearns, who has owned Curly-Coated Retrievers for the past 15 years.

Oh, Those Challenges!

Our breed standard says that Curly-Coated Retrievers are *wickedly smart, of independent nature and discerning intelligence,*

and sometimes appear aloof or self-willed. All this combined with the breed's independence can sometimes make training challenging.

My first Curly was a breeze to train, so I was spoiled. My third one has been a bit of a challenge, however. My goal was to train her for agility. Built for speed and full of energy, she seemed well suited for this venue. However, she is also sound- and motion-sensitive. I have had all kinds of advice on how to deal with this from both novices and pros. One tip that has echoed in my mind over the years came from an older lady in my obedience club who had Shelties. She said, simply, "You must know your own dog."

Not all training methods apply to all dogs. I have found that harsh methods seem to be absolutely the worst for training this breed. I have also learned that shortcuts can never replace good foundation work.



I figured that I was sent a hard-to-train bitch for a reason. It was my responsibility to know her and love her for who she is and not compare her to other Curlies I had trained.

I gave her good foundation work in agility. When she got nervous because things were going wrong in the ring, the foundation work brought her confidence level up, and she was able to recover from whatever got her off track.

I can't stress enough the value of positive training methods for the "challenging" Curly—or even the easy-to-train one. The breed loves to please and loves activity, but they hate to be wrong. A simple "whoops" to mark an incorrect behavior is more effective than getting frustrated and raising your voice.

Keep training short and positive. Any new method is best trained in repetitions of three. Always end your training session on a positive, successful note, even if that means going back to a more basic activity. Having ended the session with this success, your Curly will be more willing to work for you the next time.

The biggest error I have made is mis-

taking a dog's unwillingness to perform or seeming ignorance of his handler's commands for bad behavior. Remember, there are no bad dogs, just bad or inexperienced trainers. When there is a problem, most likely there is an underlying reason for the dog's avoidance. Either you have not trained the exercise properly or the dog is fearful for one reason or another. It is your job as a trainer to figure out why, rather than making excuses for yourself or your dog.

With three years of hard work and lots of positive training, my girl finally earned her Novice Preferred JWW title. She was able to overcome her sensitivity to noise and motion to get on that teeter and trust that if the table moved, she wasn't going to die.

Love, patience, foundation work, and positive training will all work together to bring performance success to you and your Curly. —P.S.

Thank you, Pat, for sharing this helpful information. —Ann Shinkle, Grand Island, Fla.; annshinkle@aol.com ♦

Flat-Coated Retrievers

Your New Flat-Coat Puppy

Some challenges of raising your new Flat-Coated Retriever puppy might come as a surprise to you if you have previously raised other retriever or retriever mixed-breed puppies. Be prepared for a puppy who needs mental as well as physical exercise, calm handling to prevent separation anxiety, and structure for mental and emotional development.

You should prepare for your new Flat-Coat before he arrives. All dogs are creatures of habit, and many of your Flat-Coat's habits begin as soon as you bring him home.

First, take him for a walk outdoors alone, with a long line dragging behind him if you have no fenced yard, so that the first place he urinates or defecates is an area you have chosen for that purpose.

Next, take him to the place where he will spend the night, and do what you can to make him feel comfortable there. Take

him there four or five times more during that first day. (If the Flat-Coat will typically be left alone for most of the day, he must be allowed to spend each night in the bedroom of a family member, rather than alone.)

Third, take him to the non-carpeted room in the house where you will spend the most time with him. (This is usually the kitchen.) Then, while in that room, or else outdoors, introduce your puppy gently and quietly to each family member, one at a time. Introduce people first, then animals.

When raising a Flat-Coat puppy, your gates should all be double-latched, crates should be certified for airline use (meaning they are sturdy and well built), and partitions and baby gates should be sturdy, tall, and escape proof. If it is possible for any puppy to get out of an enclosure, a Flat-Coat will do it. Trying to patch things up after an escape will create a Houdini. Outdoor fencing should be at least five feet high, and preferably six or seven feet. Flat-Coats can be trained to respect a lower fence, but that training has to be extensive. It isn't that the Flat-Coat is always trying to get away; it is that they are opportunists, always looking for company or excitement.

To keep him interested and entertained, the Flat-Coat puppy should be encouraged to play with retrieving and interactive toys. Tease your puppy with a toy and throw it a short distance. When he picks it up, run away, call him, and clap your hands, so he chases you. Praise and pet him when he arrives, but don't reach for the toy. Tease him with a second toy, but throw it only after he has dropped his. This will prevent him from feeling competitive with you over toys as he would with another puppy. It will also encourage him to come to you quickly and to have a cooperative instead of competitive attitude toward you and other family members.

In fact, when a Flat-Coat has a stolen or undesirable object in his mouth, it is effective to tease him with a toy or treat to get him to drop it. Then throw the toy or treat, and pick up and hide the undesirable object while he is not looking.

