

motion, you want to observe breed type from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail. This includes head and tail properly positioned and a good disposition displaying a willing-to-work attitude. During examination, the judge has the opportunity to consider details regarding type. Judges must continue to educate themselves about the head, which includes nose, eyes, ears, muzzle, skull, stop, expression, lips, and teeth. The expression should be intelligent and display a happily driven demeanor. Of most importance is the breed's hallmark, the double coat of great density designed to protect the Chesapeake from cold and icy conditions. Hare feet, medium length of leg, and a good tail (heavier at the base) are also important.

Breeders have to share the responsibility. The more quality dogs we provide judges, the better. All too often exhibitors become enamored with winning, and again the emphasis is placed on soundness and showmanship. The most conscientious exhibitors have to keep showing the best dogs that display breed type. It is understood that type can vary within breeding programs, and the Chesapeake breed allows variance in topline, size and proportion, color, and other features. A quality, balanced outline is stressed, coupled with coat. Features that are not open to variance must be judged accordingly: for example, hare feet. Breeding and judging are not easy. When one tries to make it easy, that is when we see a deterioration of breed type. So do your best. The breed is in your hands. —*Nathaniel Horn, Columbia, Md.*; kcb0y0@yahoo.com ♦

### Curly-Coated Retrievers



#### It's There—Make It Fun!

When I first owned this breed of ours, AKC hunt tests did not exist. I never gave much thought to the innate retrieving ability of the Curly-Coated Retriever. Times have changed; hunt tests are fun to enter and I have learned a whole new approach to one facet of raising my Curlies.

Twelve years ago a puppy arrived

who enjoyed picking up any object on the floor and bringing it to me. I learned to take advantage of this and started to always have dog-food treats in my pocket. When she brought an article to me, she soon learned that she would receive a treat in return and praise for giving up the article. As she matured, there was nothing that she would not pick up. There was never any force-fetching for her—she did not need it. She was taught what the words “take it” mean; she would need this in the obedience ring and for the therapy work that she sometimes does.

When my second pup arrived, it did not take her long to observe the older one's desire to retrieve objects to me. Yes, this activity earned a reward and she followed suit. By the time this pup arrived, rally trials had come about, and I further utilized the returning to me with a “field finish” to the left of handler with the command to “place.” I never had to formally train this pup for the finish on the left or right as, soon after becoming proficient in the “place” exercise, she was able to do the finish on the right with the command “around.” Both of these exercises are important in rally and obedience trials.

One of my Curlies has sometimes been too diligent in her picking up and retrieving objects to me. When I returned to our motor home the other day while on a trip, she came walking toward me with her “object in the mouth” demeanor and relinquished a piece of glass into my hand. A glass plate had broken on the trip, and I had missed one little piece of glass when cleaning up. Fortunately, she has a very gentle hold and there was no problem, but it taught me to be more thorough after breaking items.

Needless to say, not one of my Curlies has needed any forcing to retrieve. The desire was there, and I took steps to make it fun. Now, this is not to say that I never have challenges when training for the hunt tests. If there is one thing I have learned, it is that almost every retriever I observed in our field-training group has some challenge to overcome to pass the tests. If anyone is starting a Curly in fieldwork, feel free to contact me. I always enjoy talking about training a Curly for the field. One may need to take a bit more time in preparing

Curlies for the beginning test levels but, once they learn and understand, they do not forget. I am pleased to say that today there are many more Curlies in the field than there were a few years ago. —*Ann Shinkle, Grand Island, Fla.*; annshinkle@aol.com ♦

### Flat-Coated Retrievers



Don Freeman has had Flat-Coats since 1966 and has hunted extensively. He has obtained conformation championships on eight of his dogs, CDXs on three, and Senior Hunter titles on four. He is a hunt-test judge and does not breed. The following column has been condensed from the FCRSA newsletter (spring 2008).

#### How to Select a Working Flat-Coated Retriever

There are no guarantees. Great hunting dogs spring from wells seemingly dry of instinct, and duds come out of the best-intended and -researched litters. So how do you find a puppy that has the best chance of becoming an above-average hunter? The answer: Buy from a breeder who evaluates field ability and breeds dogs accordingly.

Too many breeders believe that field ability happens with little to no effort. When asking a hunting-only home, “Is your dog great?” the answer will almost always be, “Absolutely!” Breeders who accept such feedback as verification may never make a breeding decision based on field ability.

*Evaluation—the hard part:* Evaluation of field talent is much more complex than ascertaining show quality. Conformation is visible to the eye; working ability is between the ears, and a field breeder has to be able to train in order to effectively evaluate that.

You can be sure that serious field breeders, with several Senior- and Master-titled dogs to their credit, have honestly evaluated strengths and weaknesses to be addressed in their breeding program.

I mention Senior and Master Hunter titles because performance at that level