

for a cart for their dog at that point and use suitable nursing strategies to prolong the dog's quality of life. As the disease progresses, front legs become affected, and eventually so do internal organs, with breathing and swallowing becoming increasingly difficult. There is currently no cure, and owners are faced with the heartbreaking dilemma of choosing when to euthanize their beloved pets.

Much of the initial testing seemed to be by those fanciers who had either owned a DM-affected dog or had dogs who were related to suspected DM-affected dogs. The challenge for breeders now is to maintain genetic diversity and positive breed traits while lowering the numbers of dogs with "at risk" results. Researchers suggest that widely used stud dogs and bitches producing multiple litters be tested so that the prevalence of the mutated gene is not inadvertently increased. Not all dogs identified as "at risk" will develop clinical signs of DM in their lifetime and may well die from other causes. Additional research is underway to determine if there is a secondary "trigger" gene that causes clinical symptoms to appear early, or whether there may be a "protector" gene that prevents symptoms from occurring until much later in life.

While other labs may offer DM testing, the University of Missouri processes the tests done through OFA, and only those results go into the research database.

Thank you, Liz Hansen (HansenL@missouri.edu), for providing background information from which this column was written.

A DM clinic is planned for this year's national specialty in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, September 17 through 24. For more information, visit pwcca.org. Note that this year's herding tests and trials will be at Purina Farms on October 15 and 16. We invite you to come see the best our breed has to offer in all events.

—Lynda McKee, Hiram, Ga.;
TifflynLDM@aol.com ♦

Pulik



Co-Ownership: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Breeders may use co-ownership as a means of keeping control of a promising puppy. They may require breeding rights on males or puppies back from females. This can be beneficial for breeders who must limit the number of dogs they keep personally but is there a downside to co-owning?

A call to the AKC Registrations department revealed that the AKC does not like co-ownerships because these can and often do lead to bitter disagreements. The organization's policy is to not get involved in disputes arising from co-owning dogs. Feuding co-owners are left to resolve matters on their own, often through the courts. Many friendships have been ruined because of disagreements over co-owned dogs. In addition to the registration paper, it is also advisable to have a mutually signed contract spelling out all possible contingencies regarding showing, breeding, division and sale of puppies, and so on.

If one co-owner dies, new problems can develop, depending on whether the decedent has left a will. Since dogs are considered property by the courts, they become part of the person's estate. If there is a will, the executor can act in the deceased owner's behalf and sign over registration papers, but must first file a Statement of Legal Rights with the AKC. With no will, the dogs pass to the next of kin and that person assumes the role of co-owner.

According to their spokesperson, the AKC would honor a signed letter from the decedent specifying the disposition of the dog if there was no will but would not get involved in any controversy over ownership. A representative of the decedent's estate, whether executor or next of kin, could file a claim to retain possession of any property. In any event, any document regarding the desired disposition of one's dogs should clearly identify each dog by registered name, AKC number,

microchip and/or tattoo, pictures, or other means.

Another factor to consider in deciding whether to enter into a co-ownership is to ask yourself just how well you know the other party. According to the AKC's *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Dog Shows and Registration*, if any person is suspended from AKC privileges for any reason, all their dogs owned in whole or in part are also suspended. That means that a dog you co-own with them could be stripped of its status as AKC-registered, and you would effectively lose the use and value of that dog. Furthermore, its offspring would come into question, and the AKC would look at each of the offspring on a case-by-case basis in deciding if it was still eligible for registration, based on when it was transferred from the suspended person's possession.

Virtually the only positive aspect of co-owning, according to the AKC Registrations department, is that in the case of male dogs, any co-owner can sign litter-registration papers. However, females who produce a litter require the signature of all co-owners. This does give the breeder of females some control over the use of their female puppies.

After researching this topic, I realized that I am fortunate to have navigated the hazards of co-owning dogs for almost 40 years without any serious problems. I hope all readers have been as lucky.

—Sherry Gibson, Manchester, Tenn.;
gibsons@blomand.net ♦

Pyrenean Shepherds

This is the third installment about herding from guest columnist Susan Buttivant. She has been breeding Pyrenean Shepherds since 1995 and in 1996 started herding sheep with them on her working farm in Ontario, Canada.

Herding with Pyrenean Shepherds PART THREE

Training for this breed can begin as early as 3 months, and the instinct and interest can be seen in a young puppy



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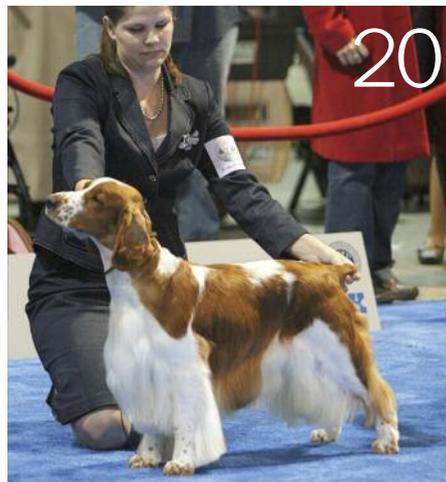
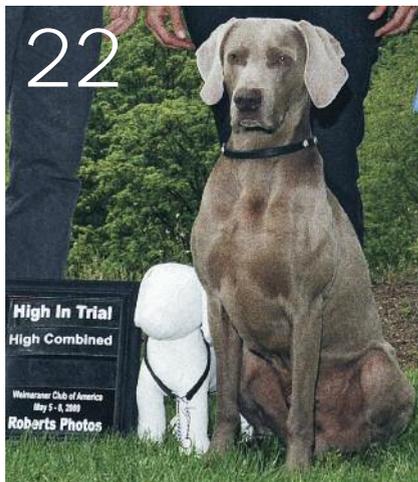
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