

BREED COLUMNS



HERDING GROUP

(IVDD) and other possible causes of DM-like symptoms, but they are hoping to find a specific marker in the MRI indicating the onset of DM.

Also in progress is research on the treatment of DM. Dr. Coates's group is recruiting for a clinical trial to investigate a drug designed to repress the SOD1 protein production (coded for by the DM gene) and also are working on developing a test based on the CSF analysis. At Tufts, gene therapy is being tested in a clinical trial.

All of this research has implications for the diagnosis and treatment of humans with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

We can be extremely grateful to the Pembroke breeders and owners who have gone the extra mile to help in these research efforts by donating blood and tissue samples, supported research financially, participated in clinical trials, and modified their breeding programs to reduce the incidence of DM in Pembrokes. I hope the next 10 years shows a decrease in the number of "at risk" Pembrokes, less expensive and more accurate tests to diagnose the actual onset of the disease, an affordable treatment to slow, if not cure, DM. —B.M.

Thank you, Bobbie.

—Lynda McKee

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Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America

Pulik

PULIK AS ACHIEVER DOGS

Since there are Puli owners surprised to be receiving an AKC Achiever Dog certificate in the mail (or hearing from their friends that they are getting them) but have no clue what it means or what the Achiever Dog program is, or how to participate, I thought this might be a great topic to cover.

A number of folks were vaguely aware of this program that AKC started on December 1, 2017, as a pilot project. The AKC's new certificate program was designed to recognize those exhibitors and dogs who participate in multiple sports. A dog must earn a placement or qualifying score in three different sports in order to earn the Achiever Dog certificate. Important fact: The dog must earn at least one of the three sport achievements on or later than December 1, 2017. Your dog will not be grandfathered in (for example, having a multitude of titles pre-December 1, 2017), so it's important to note that you must do something to trigger earning the certificate.

Previously earned titles or participation, however, can be used as two of the three required achievements. So for example, I have a Puli who is retired, but I wanted him to receive the certificate. So, since he is agility trained and already had a CGC, he only needed to demonstrate a few tricks to the evaluator to



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earn his Trick Dog Novice title (TKN), and then he received his certificate in the mail.

The Puli Club of America (PCA) has its own program to recognize the accomplishments of Puli (March 2014 AKC GAZETTE, “Versatile Puli”) Achievements in activities such as conformation, therapy dog, Canine Good Citizen, herding, obedience, rally, and agility allow you to apply for a Versatile Puli certificate thru the PCA. In the case of the Achiever Dog certification program, the AKC issues you the certificate and it is automatically mailed to you after the third activity is completed and recorded by the AKC. You also have a much wider selection of activities for Achiever Dog than those listed for Versatile Puli, including the before-mentioned activities, trick dog, lure coursing, Barn Hunt, dock diving, flyball, and so on (the list is actually pretty mindboggling long in terms of choices of activities). See the AKC website’s full list of [the sports and the qualification requirements](#) within those sports.

As of June 11, the AKC has recognized 27 Pulik as meeting the qualifications needed to earn the Achiever Dog certificate, and I hope that the number continues to grow. The Achiever Dog program encourages owners and their dogs to try a variety of activities. Working toward Achiever Dog can be a fun thing for you and your Puli to do—no matter

your age or your Puli’s age and ability to get around! I for one hope that the AKC continues the program past the test/pilot stage.

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Swedish Vallhunds

WE’RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

In 2016 I wrote two columns about a litter I was trying to breed, in the hopes of sharing some information that I found useful. In short, I tried to do a shipped fresh-chilled semen breeding on a maiden bitch, and she resorbed the litter and we had no puppies at the end of it. (Anyone who thinks dog breeders are “only in it for the money” would do well to educate themselves about things like that. I had spent thousands on that litter and had nothing to show for it.)

But the bitch I was trying to breed was very worthy, and the stud was amazing and matched my bitch really well. I really wanted this litter to happen.

The owner of the stud dog is a dear friend, so I called her and asked did we think there was any way we might at least try to get our dogs together in person for a breeding. Difficulty level: We live 2,200 miles apart. But she said, “Let me make a phone call.”

And then she called me back and said she thought there was a way.

You see, a friend of hers is a professional herding trainer and handler who travels all over the country to herding trials. As it turned out, the friend was traveling to a herding trial just two states away from me and was willing to bring the stud dog with her. So my friend drove several hours to meet her at another trial, handed the stud dog over, then the herding trainer drove several days to the herding trial, and I drove several hours to meet the herding trainer and pick him up.

He spent the summer with me, having what his breeder termed “every boy’s dream summer” (sports and girls). I continued the agility training my friend had started with him and took him to a few agility trials, and he even earned his first Novice legs while he was here! And we got the breeding done, which resulted in five amazing puppies who are exactly what I’d hoped for.

And then, when it was time for the stud dog to go home, a network of people stepped up to help yet again. I drove him several hours, then a fellow Swedish Vallhund breeder met us and drove him a few more hours, to where he met up with the herding trainer again at another herding trial, and she took him home with her, and then my friend drove to pick him up.

The incredible generosity and willingness to

step up and help of these fellow dog people made my litter happen. It was truly and in so many ways my “it takes a village” litter, and I will forever be grateful to these people: The stud dog’s owner, who trusted me with her beloved dog for several months; her friend the herding trainer, who was willing to care for another dog for the several-day journey both ways; the breeder friend who was willing to make part of her vacation include going out of her way to transport a dog; my veterinarian, who talked to me in the middle of the night when we had a problem during whelping, and met me at the clinic when it became clear that we needed medical intervention for the last puppy; the veterinary technician who got that last puppy breathing well and nursing; and the knowledgeable folks on a Facebook group who virtually held my hand and walked me through measures to help a puppy who might otherwise have died.

All of these people took time out of their lives and went out of their way (sometimes hundreds of miles out of their way) to step up and help me—not for money or recognition, but just because they were willing to help. I hope to be able to do the same for someone in future. We truly are all in this together.

—Amanda Lowery,
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