

TODAY'S BREEDER

A Purina Pro Plan Publication Dedicated to the Needs of Canine Enthusiasts



EXCEPTIONAL HOUNDS

Quiet Creek Bloodhounds

- DNA TESTING & GENETIC DIVERSITY
- *INCREDIBLE DOG CHALLENGE*
- SPECIAL 100TH ISSUE COVERAGE

NOBLE SWISS BREED REVERED AT SAINT BERNARD NATIONAL SPECIALTY



Powerful and strong, the mighty Saint Bernard came to Purina Farms in October. The three-day Saint Bernard Club of America National Specialty was held along with three regional specialties to celebrate this noble Swiss breed best known for helping to rescue weary travelers stranded in the Alps.

His fourth time to judge Best of Breed, Dr. Ivan Palmblad of Providence, Utah, chose CH Kings Mill Willow, an eye-catching 7-year-old female with a mostly white coat and splashes of dark rich colors, as his pick. "I found 'Willow' to have an excellent head, straight topline and strong rear, which contributed to her proper movement," he said, noting she is one of 13 bitches to have won the National in its 81-year history.

Bred by Kings Mill breeders Lacey and Roy Wilson of Shawano, Wisconsin, Willow is owned by Daniel Cabrera of Heber City, Utah, and Christopher Whiting of Cedar Fort, Utah, and was handled by Javier Molina of Mexico City. "Willow whelped her fourth litter just six months ago," Cabrera said proudly, as the 125-pound gentle giant jumped up to give him a friendly smooch. "This is her first time being shown this year, and she also won the Heart of America Saint Bernard Club's Regional Specialty. We are thrilled to win."

On the eve of Best of Breed as dusk settled bringing the chill of fall, many gathered at an outdoor pavilion for the National Weight Pull. A test of a dog's strength, intelligence and working threshold, this event was custom-made to build confidence and included ample warm-ups and practice runs. Judge Barry Roland of Atlanta offered suggestions as owners got on their knees and looked up at their dogs while singing out encouragement and waving their arms. The king-size dogs wore harnesses that distributed their weight as they pulled gradually heavier loads.

"Come on! Good girl!" shouted owner Cecelia Williams of Beulah, Michigan, to her 2-year-old weight puller, "Cheri" (Ramblewood's Cherise WP CGC RN). A Saint Bernard owner since 1981, Williams said, "We tried this on a whim, so it was a surprise to earn the third leg needed for the Weight Pull title after qualifying at the two regional specialty weight pulls before this."

The beloved Saint Bernard was revered by all who came to the National Specialty. Their infinite devotion and loyalty to this friendly, ginormous breed was inspirational and endearing. ■

Best of Breed winner "Willow" (CH Kings Mill Willow) jumps up to snuggle happily with owner Daniel Cabrera of Heber City, Utah.

Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri, will hold 26 National Specialties in 2020. Located about one hour from St. Louis, Purina Farms is home to the Purina Event Center and outdoor competition areas used for herding, tracking, lure coursing, earthdog trials, barn hunt, and outdoor dog shows. For information, please contact Kaite Flamm, Purina Farms Senior Manager of Programming, at 888-688-PETS (888-688-7387) or by email at kaite.flamm@purina.nestle.com.

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A lifetime of crowning achievements distinguish breeder Susan LaCroix Hamil and her world-famous Bloodhounds.

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ON THE COVER

Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Quiet Creek's Limited Edition ("Bob") is a 7 ½-year-old male Bloodhound bred and owned by Susan Hamil of Laguna Beach, California, and handled by Tara Schultz of Bonita, California. See story on page 18.

THIS PAGE

"Sounders," a 4-year-old male Whippet, sets a Fetch It world record at the Purina Pro Plan Incredible Dog Challenge National Finals. Laurel Behnke of Rochester, Washington, is the breeder-owner-handler. See story on page 10.



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Your Pet, Our Passion.

TODAY'S BREEDER CELEBRATES MILESTONE 100TH ISSUE



Issue 1 of *Today's Breeder* was published in 1990.

Cheers to *Today's Breeder* on this 100th issue. In 2020, the magazine will celebrate 30 years of publication.

Sorting through the archives, a common thread ties together the featured dog breeders. Woven with passion and tenacity, dog breeding is not a sport for the fainthearted. *Today's Breeder* is pleased to reprise reflections from breeders profiled in past issues that poignantly convey the soul of dog breeding.

"You really owe it to yourself and the breed to do the homework and concentrate on one litter at a time in order to come up with the best all-around dogs," says Jon Prescott of Side-By-Side German Wirehair Kennel (Issue 32, 1991). "We breed for sound temperament because it results in a dog that is easier to train, willing to please and good with kids. We also breed for desire, the horsepower that gets you where you need to go, and conformation, the chassis that allows you to get the power to the road."

Brophy Irish Setter (Issue 34, 2000) breeder Ken Ruff says, "My goal is to create a line of dogs that can easily be trained by anyone. The best field dogs are well-socialized to humans,

which gives them the instinct to stay with their handler. Ours are constantly around people."

Likening dog breeding to life lessons, Carillon Bedlington Terrier (Issue 37, 2001) breeder Lucy Heyman says, "Breeders have a tall order. It takes a lot of steel to be able to deal with tragedies and triumphs. If you are doing things right, you are always learning and growing."

Gretchen Bernardi of Berwyck Irish Wolfhounds (Issue 54, 2005) says, "When I finish breeding, I want to know that the breed is in as good or better shape than when I started."

Consistently striving for excellence, Jim White, who breeds Cambria Doberman Pinschers (Issue 87, 2014) with his wife, Ann, says, "We are always trying to breed the perfect Doberman by the breed standard. It will never happen. We just keep at it. That's what we're good at."

The take-home message is to keep pushing toward your goals. In dog breeding there are no short cuts. Trust and believe. Rewards come to those who never give up. ■



FAVORITE COVER CONTEST

To help celebrate our 100th issue, *Today's Breeder* invites you to vote for your favorite cover. Choose from those pictured here and the Bloodhound featured on this issue's cover. To cast your vote, send an email to today'sbreeder@purina.com.

You also may call 314-982-2256 with your selection. Be sure to include your name and phone number in the message. Voting ends at 5 p.m. on Jan. 20, 2020. Come on and vote for your favorite cover!



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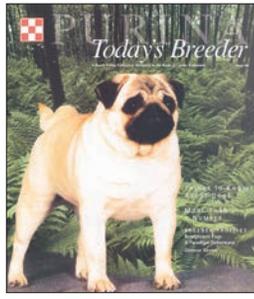
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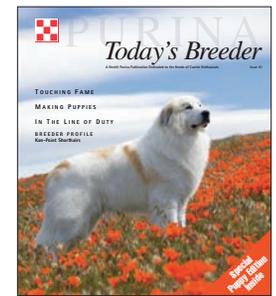
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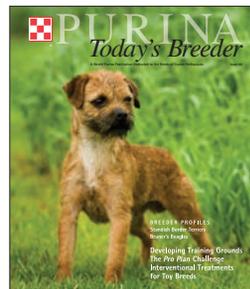
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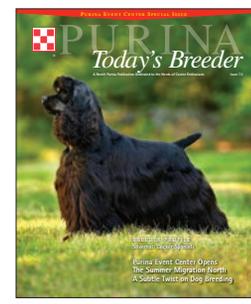
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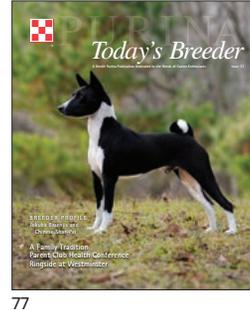
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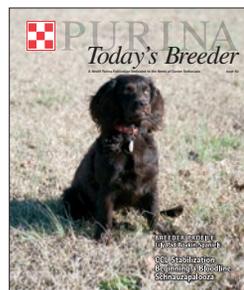
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AT A CROSSROADS

THE IMPACT OF GENETIC TESTING ON BREED DIVERSITY

“Big Red,” a popular Disney movie from 1962, made the Irish Setter a Top 10 breed in American Kennel Club registrations, a lofty ranking that came with a price, says Anne Marie Kubacz, of Jackson, New Jersey.

“By the early ’70s, there was an explosion of progressive retinal atrophy (PRA), which began as night blindness in the breed. Breeders unknowingly produced puppies that showed signs around 6 weeks of age and became blind by 1 to 2 years old,” says Kubacz, health chair of the Irish Setter Club of America (ISCA) Foundation. “It was an emotionally charged disease, and everyone wanted to do the right thing.”

Seeking answers, the parent club began working with Gustavo Aguirre, VMD, PhD, professor of medical genetics and ophthalmology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. With Dr. Aguirre’s guidance, Irish Setter breeders knowingly test bred dogs to help advance research to determine the inheritance and causative mutation for the early-onset disease. At the time, test breeding was the only way a breeder could know if a sire or dam was genetically clear of *rcd-1* PRA and would not produce blind puppies.

Dr. Aguirre found that rod-cone dysplasia type 1-PRA in young Irish Setters was caused by a nonsense mutation in the cGMP phosphodiesterase β -subunit gene (*PDE6B*). Identifying that cGMP was critically involved in the disease was based on a study published in September 1978 in *Science*. Once the gene and mutation were identified in 1994, a direct DNA test empowered breeders to selectively breed carriers, the dogs most responsible for disseminating the unwanted gene, to genetically

normal dogs, and select genetically clear offspring for use in future breeding.

“Because of *rcd-1*, our club has always been a proponent of supporting research to help advance the health of our breed as well as that of all dogs,” says Kubacz, one of eight ISCA representatives — more than any other club — who attended the 2019 AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference sponsored by Purina.

“Although our club usually sends two or three people, our board members felt it was important for more of us to attend this year,” Kubacz says. “They felt it was important to learn about the outcomes of the Canine Health Foundation work we support and to help sort out the currently

“Inappropriate genetic tests limit your ability to pay attention to what is meaningful.”

Jerold Bell, DVM, adjunct professor of genetics at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, Tufts University

available genetic testing for *rcd-1* and other diseases. We really are at a crossroads.”

Parent clubs determine the breed-specific genetic and health screening tests for their respective Orthopedic Foundation for Animals’ Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) program. A dog receives CHIC certification if it has been screened for all the required tests designated by the parent club and if those results are publicly available in the database. The intent is to help improve the overall health of the breed and allow breeders to make informed breeding decisions. As an example, health screenings for hip dysplasia, autoimmune thyroiditis and PRA are required for Irish Setters to earn CHIC numbers.

Historically, every year at the Jane Gavin Health Clinic held during the ISCA National Specialty, health screenings are performed along with the collection of blood samples for *rcd-1* evaluation by a genetic testing lab. Until this year, blood samples were sent to a

ROOTED IN TRADITION

The 12th biennial AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference held in August 2019 in St. Louis followed tradition in educating and enlightening nearly 300 attendees about a broad swath of topics. Insights into canine health and genetic research that is part of the Foundation's active grants portfolio of 135 studies totaling more than \$10.8 million provided key learnings and triggered robust, heartfelt interactive panel discussions. Talks by researchers centered on the impact of nutrition on diseases, autoimmunity and vector-borne diseases, infectious diseases and cancer, and genetics and dog breeding. The leading funder worldwide of exclusively canine health research, the Foundation has provided over \$52.9 million for more than 970 grants since 1995. These studies have resulted in more than 760 scientific articles and have been cited more than 26,000 times in peer-reviewed journals. Purina is proud to be the charter sponsor since 1997 of this important parent club canine health conference.



Eight members of the Irish Setter Club of America – more than any other club – attended the AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference. They are, front row, from left, Kelli Aitken and Jeanine Wilson, and back row, from left, Dr. Diane Brown, CEO of the Foundation, Anne Marie Kubacz, Carolyn Dison, Karolynne McAteer, Dr. Cheryl Stiehl, Dr. Linda Kalmar, and Mary Lamphier.

lab that performed a bundle test of three autosomal recessive conditions in Irish Setters: *rcd-1*; *rcd-4*, a late-onset form of PRA; and canine leukocyte adhesion deficiency (CLAD), a blood disorder that can cause abnormal blood clotting and immune dysfunction.

“Owners now get results from a panel DNA test that includes more than 170 health conditions,” Kubacz says. “All these years, we have been used to getting results that provide information about diseases that are meaningful to our breeding programs. We’ve started telling members they are getting bonus information and not to be concerned about diseases that have not been reported and are not a problem in our breed. On one hand, breeders and owners want to do what is right and test for conditions that are pertinent to their breed, and on the other hand, there’s confusion about how to interpret the results when there are so many additional tests.”

Genetic testing for canine diseases, including new panel DNA testing and how these tests impact breed diversity and the health of dog breeds, was a featured topic at the AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference. In the wake of concerns about preserving rare dog breeds and an overall decline in purebred dog breeding — the once Top 10-ranked Irish Setter is now 77th in AKC breed registrations — these topics are becoming increasingly important to parent clubs and breeders.

“The AKC Canine Health Foundation is committed to advancing the health of dogs through sound scientific research while also providing educational outreach for breeders, veterinarians

and other dog professionals,” says Dr. Diane Brown, CEO of the Foundation. “Thanks to our partnership with Purina, we are able to hold the canine health conference every other year to bring these groups together with canine health researchers, including geneticists, to share and discuss complex matters such as DNA testing and breed diversity.”

RELEVANT GENETIC TESTING

Deciphering a genetic soup of panel DNA health test results to determine what is relevant to an individual breed and individual breeding program can be overwhelming. Likewise, so can the selection of appropriate genetic testing labs for parent clubs.

“Inappropriate genetic tests limit your ability to pay attention to what is meaningful,” Jerold Bell, DVM, adjunct professor of genetics at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University and a genetic advisor to national parent breed clubs, told conference attendees during his talk on understanding dog breeds as populations.

Leigh Anne Clark, PhD, associate professor of genetics at Clemson University, advised in her talk on genetic risk assessment, “If a disease is not a problem in your breed, don’t make it a problem. Then, more dogs can be used for breeding. Breeders have free will to decide what is most important to them in their breeding and health programs.”

Along with choosing genetic health tests for their breeds, parent clubs weigh in on the best testing labs to perform health screenings. The myriad of choices and lack of standardization among genetic testing labs in the U.S. and worldwide led to the

development of the Harmonization of Genetic Testing for Dogs (HGTD) initiative in April 2017.

Brenda Bonnett, DVM, PhD, CEO of the International Partnership For Dogs (IPFD) and a veterinary epidemiologist, told attendees in her talk on harmonization of genetic testing and breed-specific resources, “Five years ago, there were too many DNA testing labs focusing on single-gene tests and lots of questions about which tests were reliable. Gaps in understanding DNA test reliability, lab quality assurance, balanced breeding, and test advice for individual breeds led to IPFD’s HGTD initiative. We plan to create comprehensive breed-specific packages that describe the health picture for breeds nationally and internationally and that include breed-specific recommendations for health testing.”

Funding support from the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals, American Kennel Club, AKC Canine Health Foundation, Leadership Sponsors including genetic test providers, and IPFD founding members gave rise to IPFD’s HGTD initiative (<https://dogwellnet.com/ctp/>). A two-year research grant from the AKC Canine Health Foundation, with sponsorship from several parent clubs, is helping move the effort forward.

“The idea is to improve standardization and access to robust genetic testing that will support health improvements and sustain a healthy future for dogs,” Dr. Bonnett explains. “We want to support best practices in the discovery, communication and application of genetic testing to maximize the opportunity to positively impact the health of individual dogs and breeds and to ensure a sustainable future for healthy dogs.”

Among the tools and resources that the HGTD initiative is developing to help dog breeders understand genetic testing for their breed are:

- A portal at *DogWellNet.com* to provide information on genetic testing providers, genetic tests and breed-specific tests
- A Quality Testing Database with 40 major genetic test providers (GTPs) participating and 36 others listed, searchable by their status as a commercial, nonprofit, academic, test developer, or non-test developer lab and with quality information on participating GTPs
- Information on over 300 tests for more than 400 breeds
- A Health Strategies Database for Dogs (HSDD) to include all conditions in which health testing (DNA and other) is required, recommended or on the radar of kennel clubs, breed clubs or veterinary organizations
- An Expert Panel to provide genetic counseling resources

Kubacz, of the ISCA Foundation, laments about what can happen when breeders and owners rely on unapproved genetic testing labs. “As a club, we are always battling misinformation on the internet about genetic tests for our breed and reliable testing labs,” she says. “About 20 years ago, a few members were using a less costly lab that was not approved for *rcd-1* testing. Dogs were reported as clear, but in time the owners realized

they were carriers when two supposedly clear dogs produced a blind puppy.”

ADDRESSING GENETIC DIVERSITY

Dog breeds were produced by inbreeding or linebreeding on a small group of founding canine ancestors. Breeders selected for purposefully bred litters based on phenotype, form and function. In some breeds, deleterious mutated genes, primarily recessive genes, accumulated in the background of their gene pool, resulting in conditions such as *rcd-1* in Irish Setters.

As Dr. Bell points out, dog breed survival relies on maintaining the breadth of genetic diversity and quality traits. “Breed genetic diversity has to do with maintaining unique lines, not on measurements of homozygosity or heterozygosity,” he says.

“The most common genetic diseases seen by veterinarians every day in their practices are due to ancient liability genes that originated in ancestors that preceded the separation of breeds,” says Dr. Bell. “These include allergies, hip dysplasia, heart diseases, cataracts, cruciate ligament disease, hereditary cancers, and others. They occur in purebred and mixed-breed dogs.”

About 65 percent of heritable diseases are autosomal recessive conditions compared with polygenic or genetically complex diseases, notes Dr. Clark. “To help maintain genetic diversity, breeders should consider reducing the number of times a sire or dam is bred,” she says. “You also have to look at the impact of environmental factors, such as stress, toxins, hormones, activity level, diet, and even ultraviolet exposure, on disease conditions.”

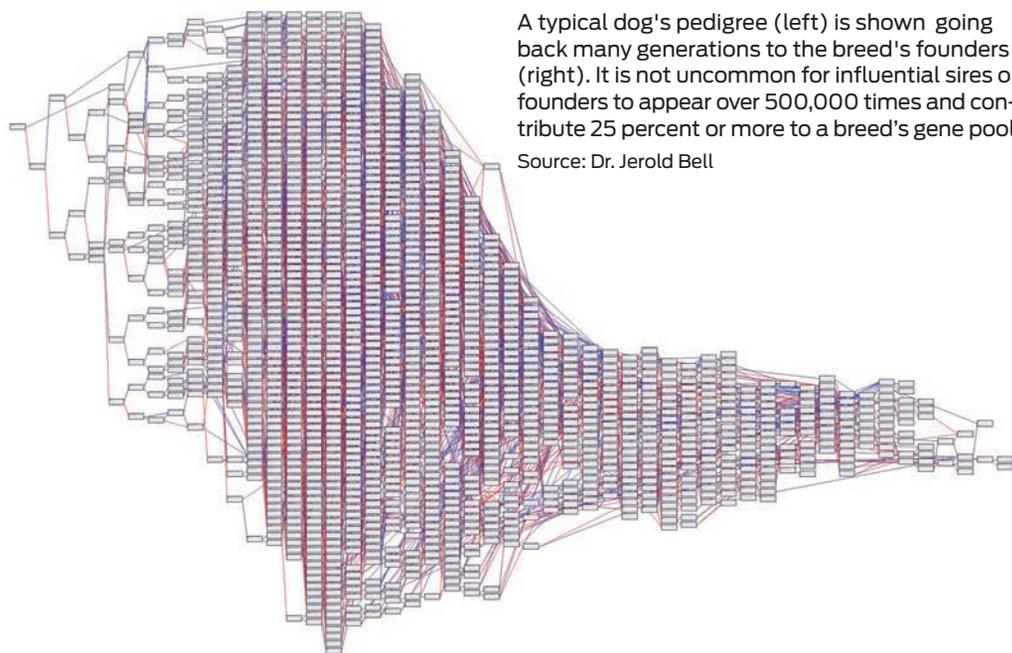
Dr. Bell agrees, adding that “the majority of the 65 percent of recessive mutations are rare diseases, while the most frequently seen genetic diseases are complexly inherited.”

In reality, only a small number of dogs are used to produce the next generation, Dr. Bell says. “Influential ancestors are different from popular sires. For example, in today’s Cardigan

DOG GENETICS 101

- Dog breeds were created by inbreeding dogs with the same phenotype, essentially creating partial clones
- All purebreds as well as mixed breeds have deleterious mutations — disease-causing genes — that accumulated in the background of their gene pool
- Breed survival depends on maintaining genetic diversity and quality traits
- Outcrossing to a mate that phenotypically complements your dog’s good traits will help introduce new traits to your bloodline, though it is important to breed back to dogs related to the original breeding stock to solidify new traits
- Linebreeding concentrates genes of a particular ancestor(s) multiple times in both the sire’s and dam’s side of the pedigree





Source: Dr. Jerold Bell

Welsh Corgis, Withybrook Brock born in 1941 does not appear usually until the 14th generation, but he appears on average over 500,000 times contributing approximately 25 percent of the genes to all Cardigans. With popular sires, males are bred without the benefit of an evaluation over time, resulting in the loss of other quality male lines and potentially contributing to deleterious genes.

“Breed-specific genetic disorders are due to recent mutations and result from the expression of specific deleterious genes,” Dr. Bell says. “An increase of breed-related diseases is due to homozygosity of deleterious recessive or additive liability genes that have accumulated primarily because they are not expressed by the carriers in the heterozygous state. An unaffected carrier can perpetuate the spread of deleterious genes, which can increase in frequency if linked to positively selected genes, or through genetic drift, which is the random accumulation of disease liability genes in the absence of selection.”

For many genetic disorders, genetic tests are available to identify carriers. Dr. Bell advises breeders to breed quality carriers to non-carrier dogs and replace the carrier parent with a quality non-carrier offspring. “In this way breeding lines — and breed genetic diversity — are not abandoned, and testable disease liability genes can be lost in one generation,” he says.

Meanwhile, for other disorders genetic screening and medical history help to differentiate normal from affected dogs. “The selection against disease-causing genes is the only way to reduce the transmission of genetic diseases. Ensuring that the parents are healthy is key to the health of the offspring. If all breeders include pre-breeding genetic screening in their mate selection, then dogs will be healthier,” Dr. Bell says.

A pre-breeding veterinary examination should include:

- Phenotypic examination of a dog's musculoskeletal, cardiac,

ophthalmologic, gastrointestinal, pulmonary, and dermatologic systems, as well as screening for behavioral abnormalities

- Medical history for inherited diseases such as allergies, seizures, bloat, bladder stones, cruciate ligament disease, and others that cannot be identified during an examination

Breeding healthy dogs is an ongoing effort. Parent clubs conduct breed health surveys to learn about conditions and diseases that could be increasing and may warrant investigation. The Irish Setter parent club regularly conducts health surveys and includes owners who are not members to gather the most valid information. The OFA website maintains online, real-time breed health surveys designed by parent breed clubs.

As Dr. Bonnett pointed out in her talk, “Parent club and health committee representatives indicate that they sometimes have challenges educating their members and achieving compliance with even straightforward recommendations. Successful application of scientific information requires more effective communication strategies to achieve appropriate application of health testing recommendations.”

Cheryl Stiehl, DVM, of Woodbine, Maryland, a member of the ISCA health committee and a first-time attendee of the AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference says, “I loved the conference from a dog breeder's and veterinarian's perspective. You can never be done learning. The focus should be on science-based information, which is what this conference is all about.”

Reflecting on the progress the Irish Setter club has made since the *rcd-1* mutation discovery by Dr. Aguirre, Kubacz says, “Nearly 30 years later, we still get blindness in some dogs, showing there are unscrupulous breeders who are not using the test. This is why breed health education is so important and why our club supports AKC Canine Health Foundation research.”

From 2001 to 2019, the Irish Setter Club of America Foundation provided funding of \$538,000 to support several Foundation studies, including the Tick-Borne Disease Initiative, degenerative myelopathy, cancer, and bloat. In 2019, the club is providing funding of \$200,000 for research of hemangiosarcoma, lymphoma, epilepsy treatment, and others.

“Knowing more makes a difference in all our animals' lives,” says Kubacz, the 2013 AKC Sporting Breeder of the Year. “We are at a crossroads. Being knowledgeable about genetic testing and the best ways to breed healthy dogs has never been more important.” ■

PURINA PRO PLAN INCREDIBLE DOG CHALLENGE IS ALL ABOUT HAVING FUN

“Are you ready?” shouted breeder-owner-handler Laurel Behnke to the rearing-to-go 4-year-old red brindle and white male Whippet, “Sounders.”

Hitting a bumper three times on the edge of a 40-foot-long wooden stage, Behnke was stirring excitement, teasing the cues that prompt her diving dog to get ready to charge into the 45-foot-long 3 ½-foot-deep pool. As her teammate Sydney Gersich released hold of the muscular, power-driven dog, Sounders exploded like a cannonball, gaining momentum as he ran down the stage, soaring through the air and splashing into the pool.

Not once, not twice, but three times, Behnke and the amazing Sounders set world records at the *Purina Pro Plan Incredible Dog Challenge* (IDC) National Finals in September at Purina Farms. Competing for the first time in Diving Dog, an event where each dog gets two jumps, Sounders jumped 34 feet, 11 inches on the first jump, and 35 feet, 9 inches on the second jump — a whopping 2 feet beyond the record of 33 feet, 10 inches.

Sounders, who was dog No. 27, then outjumped the 27-foot Fetch It record — going 27 feet, 6 inches. A sport similar to Diving Dog, Fetch It involves jumping from the stage to catch or knock down a bumper hanging 4 feet above the water.

Representing the fourth generation of racing Whippets that Behnke has bred, Sounders comes naturally by his high prey drive. “Sounders’ grandsire, ‘Cochiti,’ won several diving dog events and competed at IDC in 2012,” says Behnke, of Rochester, Washington. “Whippets are born athletes. They run at speeds of 40 mph chasing anything that moves. This is why I also do whippet racing and oval racing with Sounders.”

The trek to Purina Farms to compete in the IDC National Finals is a ritual for many families and their canine athletes. Some have participated for many years and enjoy the reunion as much as the competition. At this year’s 22nd annual event, there were 65 competitors in Diving Dog, Fetch It, Small and Large Dog



“Sounders” leaps to a world record of 35 feet, 9 inches in Diving Dog.



Jack Russell Terriers jump for joy as they chase a lure in hurdle racing.

Agility, Jack Russell Hurdle Racing, 30-Weave Up-And-Back Racing, Freestyle Flying Disc, and Flyball.

“It is great to see the love and bond the owners have with their dogs and the support the competitors share with one another,” says Jim Allen, *Purina Pro Plan* Marketing Manager. “We call it the *Incredible Dog Challenge* because these dogs really are incredible athletes. The event is becoming more and more competitive with the offspring of former competitors now competing.”

Jack Russell hurdle racing competitor Mary Daly of St. Louis is the owner of Hopewell Acres Trubel (pronounced Trouble), a 3-year-old male, who placed second, besting his sire, Hopewell Acres Blade, a 4-year-old, who took third place. The first-place finisher, Hopewell Acres Blondie, is a 2-year-old and the first female to win the IDC Jack Russell hurdle races. “Blondie,” who is owned by breeder Sammy Hopewell of Bartow, Florida, is first cousin to “Blade” and second cousin to “Trubel.”

“These dogs have so much energy that they must have a job or they will get into trouble,” says Daly, who got her first Jack Russell Terrier 30 years ago when her mother wanted a dog like “Eddie” from the TV series “Frasier.” “Chasing after prey is a natural for a Jack Russell as they were bred to hunt, and racing our dogs with the lure in front of them imitates the hunt.”

Many of the competitors — including Sounders, Trubel, Blade, and Blondie — were fueled to their wins by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Formula. The concentrated nutrition of the super-premium dog food optimizes oxygen metabolism



A Border Collie named “Pepper,” owned by Kim Fuque of La Mesa, New Mexico, eases over the high bar jump during Large Dog Agility.

(VO₂ max) for increased endurance. With 30 percent protein and 20 percent fat, it also fuels metabolic needs and maintains lean muscles.

“We believe that the IDC really brings to life the nutritional foundation of *Purina Pro Plan* — Nutrition That Performs,” Allen says. “Every year these star canine athletes take this event to a new level. It’s exciting.”

An invitational event that attracts the top dogs in their respective sports, IDC also holds open qualifiers the day before the event in Diving Dog, Fetch It and Freestyle Flying Disc. The IDC is one of the longest-running dog-focused programs on television.

In 2020, the Central Regional IDC will be held May 15-16 at the Texas Motor Speedway during the Ducks Unlimited Expo, and the Western Regional will be July 17-18 in Huntington Beach, California. The National Finals will be at Purina Farms Sept. 25-26. To learn more about IDC, go to www.incrediblechallenge.com and click on the Channel Finder button to learn when and where an IDC program will air.

IDC has something for all dog lovers. The action-packed sports are thrilling to watch. If you think your dog might enjoy catching a disc, running an agility course or leaping into a pool after a bumper, come along. Your dog could be the next IDC superstar. ■

HIGH ACHIEVERS

HIT 100 MILESTONES

One hundred of anything is an achievement, so when *Today's Breeder* started checking to learn about people and dogs who have reached 100 milestones, we were pleasantly surprised to find a good many high achievers. All of these hardworking enthusiasts and their top-winning dogs are to be commended for their endurance, integrity and love of the sport. Thank you for sharing your stories with us.



Portuguese Water Dog "Matisse" is the top-winning male dog of all time, having won 238 Bests in Show.

TOP DOG OF ALL TIME IS 'MATISSE'

An 18-month-old Portuguese Water Dog named "Matisse" was just starting his Specials career when he arrived at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in 2013 largely unknown to the dog fancy. He had finished 2012 with limited showing ranked No. 5 in the breed. When he won the Working Group that year at the Garden, it was one of 350 Working Groups

that Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Claircreek Impression De Matisse would win over the next two and a half years.

It was an upset, won by an impeccably groomed, stately male whose commanding presence and great fluidity of movement defined a style that would carry him to 238 all-breed Bests in Show and create a rippling effect of record-setting achievements. The top-winning all-breed male of all time, Matisse also is the top-winning Working dog and the winningest Portuguese Water Dog in breed history.

When Matisse returned to Westminster in 2014, he again won the Working Group. The charismatic male who turned the dog show world upside down was on his way to winning 134 Bests in Show that year and becoming the No. 1 dog in the country. Matisse took his third Westminster Working Group First in 2015.

"You could not walk by Matisse without looking at him," says handler Michael Scott of Chesapeake Bay, Maryland. "Some judges told me they could not find anything wrong with him."

"It was unanticipated when he won that first year at the Garden," says Milan Lint, of New York City, who owns Matisse with Peggy Helming of Flemington, New Jersey, and Claircreek Portuguese Water Dog breeder Donna Gottdenker of Arthur, Ontario, Canada. "He took the dog show world by storm, and things really took off from that point."

Other big wins for Matisse include taking Best in Show out of about 4,500 dogs at the AKC National Championship in 2013 and Reserve Best in Show in 2014. He also won Best of Breed at the Portuguese Water Dog Club of America National Specialty in 2013 and in 2014, when his offspring from litters out of three different bitches took Winners Dog, Reserve Winners Dog, Winners Bitch, and Reserve Winners Bitch, a nod to his impact as a sire.

Matisse was sired by Lint and Helming's male, GCH Pouch Cove Caribe CDX RA, out of AM/CAN CH Claircreek Femme Fatale. Gottdenker reached out to the Pouch Cove team seeking to breed their male to her "Apolina," who had won the Working Group at the 2007 World Dog Show in Mexico City.

Reflecting on Matisse's success, Lint says, "He had the ability to capture the attention of judges. It was all about his presence and his presentation by Michael and Michelle Scott. When Matisse came along, it had been 30 years since the breed was recognized by the AKC in 1984. It simply was the right time for the breed."



Donald L. McVay Jr. is shown with GRPCH Sundown Janice Joplin, a sister to World Hunting Beagle Champion Willie Brown.

THE WINNING WAYS OF SUNDOWN BEAGLES

Donald L. McVay Jr. of West Lafayette, Ohio, got his start with gundog Beagles through his father, Donald L. McVay Sr. “My dad always had Beagles to rabbit hunt, and then we started going to field trials. It progressed from there,” McVay says.

“We started Sundown Beagles in 1992, the same year the United Kennel Club began its beagling program. We were founding members,” he says. “I am the breeder of over 100 litters and have registered over 180 dogs over the past 27 years.”

One of the winningest hound kennels in UKC history, Sundown Beagles has finished over 100 UKC Hunting Beagle Champions and Grand Hunting Champions, including eight National Hunt and Show Champions. In that mix are three UKC World Hunting Beagle Champions, a UKC World Performance Pack Champion and a UKC World Show Champion.

When his father died in March 2002, McVay and his brother, Dave McVay, a Purina Hound Consultant, became partners on Sundown Beagles. “We gave Dave a puppy dad bred that became the winningest Beagle in UKC history,” McVay says.

That puppy, Sundown Tess, a 13-inch female, won the UKC World Hunting Beagle Championship and the Performance Pack World in 2004. Both events are highly competitive with about 200 hounds

judged on their tracking and accuracy on the rabbit line. While Tess won the World Hunting Beagle Championship, their 13-inch male, Sundown’s Running Rebel, won the World Show.

In 2012, a 15-inch male they bought and trained, Gauge VIII, won the World Hunting Beagle Championship. They repeated the victory in 2014 with Sundown Willie Brown, a 15-inch male whom they bred, raised and trained from start to finish.

“I love seeing the dogs learn as we train them,” McVay says. “If you put the time into them, they will give back. The excitement of running these dogs is like nothing else.”

THE BEAUTY OF COMPANIONSHIP

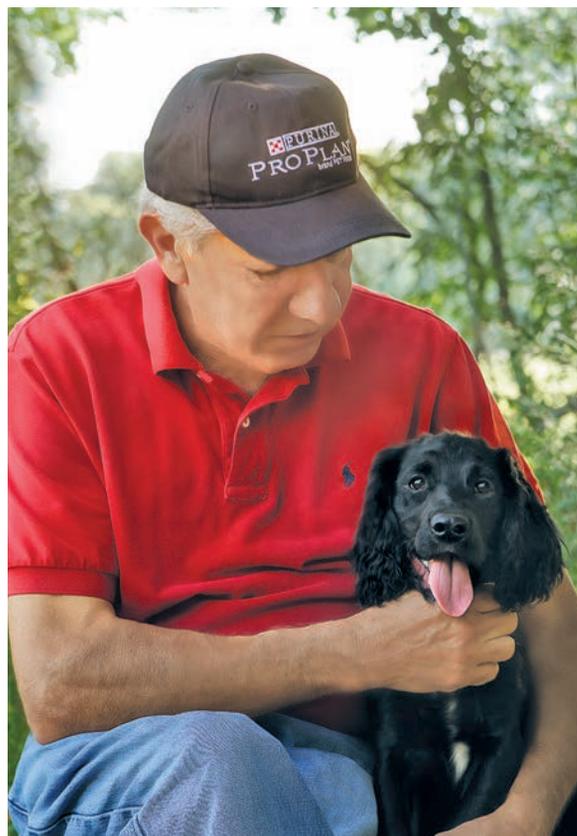
In 1969, Ray “Jerry” Cacchio bought his first English Springer Spaniel, whom he named My Own Alex, adopting the prefix of his grandfather, Herman Mellenthin, who was famous for handling CH My Own Brucie, a black male Cocker Spaniel, to Bests in Show at the 1940 and 1941 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Shows. Cacchio grew up watching his grandfather work hard training and handling his dogs, so it came to him naturally to give his all with his own dogs.

While working full time at IBM, Cacchio trained in the mornings and evenings. When he retired from IBM in 1985, he began training dogs full time at his Pondview Kennels in Clinton Corners, New York. His love for the intelligent, sweet-tempered breed was mutual.

“Over 52 years, there were three dogs particularly that would do anything for me,” he says. “My two National Champions [NFC-FC Pondview’s Left In The Light (“Lefty”) and NFC-FC Ru-Char’s Country Boy (“CB”)], and ‘Jiffy’ (FC Rodismore Jiffy), a Field Champion I got from England. The most important thing about spaniels is teamwork, because a spaniel is not a self-hunter. They are always looking for you. Companionship is a beautiful thing with these dogs.”

Cacchio was inducted in 2012, into the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association (ESSFTA) and the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Halls of Fame. That same year his springer, Lefty, was inducted into the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Hall of Fame.

He takes pride in having judged 133 all-age spaniel stakes and



Ray “Jerry” Cacchio, shown with English Springer Spaniel “Tiger,” has judged 133 all-age spaniel stakes and six English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association National Championships.

having been selected by his peers to judge six ESSFTA National Championships. “To judge the National means you are considered to be honest and trusted to know what a springer should do,” says Cacchio, who retired from training in 2005 and is now a consultant and flushing dog seminar instructor.

‘OAKLEY’ TURNS ON THE CHARM

Although only campaigned for about 18 months in the U.S., a third-generation male German Wirehaired Pointer named “Oakley” (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS BRAZ/AM GCH Mt. View’s Ripsnorter’s Silver Charm) gave his all to become the No. 1 dog



“Oakley,” the winningest German Wirehaired Pointer, is the No. 2 Sporting dog of all time based on winning 73 Bests in Show and 152 Group Firsts in 2012.

was the No. 1 Sporting dog in 2010. When Oakley returned to the U.S., his pairing with Booth resulted in 73 Bests in Show and 152 Sporting Group Firsts in 2012, making Oakley the No. 2 Sporting dog of all time based on those combined wins.

Bred by the Mountain View German Wirehair team of Claire Wisch Abraham of Lovettsville, Virginia, and her daughter, Kelly

in the country in 2012. Handled by pro Phil Booth, of Redlands, California, Oakley won 102 Bests in Show, making him the top-winning German Wirehair in breed history.

“Above and beyond being a true example of the breed, Oakley had an amazing heart,” Booth says. “His willingness to please me was second to none. Oakley loved his job and loved being a show dog.”

Before Oakley’s U.S. campaign, owner Victor Malzoni Jr. of Malibu, California, sent the young male to his native Brazil for showing, where he won 18 Bests in Show and

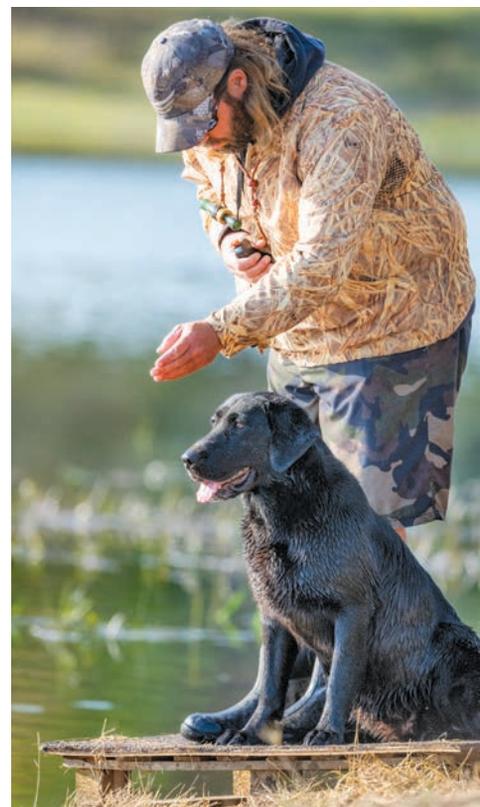
Wisch Shupp of Hallam, Pennsylvania, Oakley and his litter-mate brother, “Scout” (Multi-BIS/BISS GCH Ripsnorter’s Mt. View Lookout JH ROM), tallied an amazing 150 Bests in Show. Ripsnorter (now Lookout) breeder Helen Witt of Crossville, Tennessee, is co-breeder. The frozen semen litter was sired by CH Ripsnorter’s Thunderhart out of CH Mountain View’s Next Strike, a grandsire-to-granddaughter linebreeding.

“Oakley is a beautiful representative of the breed,” says Wisch Shupp, now a pro handler herself, of the 13-year-old who lives with her. “He was always on and always gave Phil 110 percent. We are now breeding his great-grandbabies, and they are lovely as well.”

TAYLOR FARMS RETRIEVER TRAINER READS DOGS

Retriever trainer Stephen Durrance of Taylor Farm Kennels in Sylvania, Georgia, learned the art of reading animals from his grandfather, Odis Taylor. That talent has helped him produce 106 Hunting Retriever Champions (United Kennel Club Hunting Retriever Club) and 100 Master Hunters (American Kennel Club retriever hunting tests), with some dogs earning titles in both systems.

Durrance handled the 2019 Super Retriever Series Crown Champion, a 5 ½-year-old female Labrador Retriever named “Georgia” (Taylor Farms Midnight Georgia MH), who excelled to win the 70-dog qualifying championship. Georgia is owned by Sue Liemohn of St. Francis, Minnesota.



Pro trainer Stephen Durrance lines up Labrador Retriever “Georgia” at the Hunting Retriever Club Grand in spring 2019.

WISCONSIN AMATEUR FIELD TRIAL CLUB CELEBRATES 81 YEARS IN RETRIEVER TRIALS

Far more than 100 retriever field trials have been held on the 150 acres of rolling hills and technical waters of the Wisconsin Amateur Field Trial Club (WAFTC) in Horicon, though the exact number is likely lost to history. A charter member of the American Kennel Club, WAFTC was founded in 1938 by avid outdoorsmen interested in training their hunting dogs. The club originally included Retrievers, English Springer Spaniels and Pointers, but by 1990, the Pointer group had disbanded and the Springer group had formed its own club. The retriever club today holds two field trials a year, including a qualifying stake and Open, Amateur and Derby stakes, plus two AKC hunting tests. In 2004, the

club held the Master National. The club started a newsletter in 1944 that reported on retriever field trial results. As its popularity and circulation grew, the newsletter became the national publication for retriever field trials. In 1965, the National Retriever Club and the National Amateur Retriever Club bought the publication that today is known as *Retriever News*. Congratulations, Wisconsin Amateur Field Trial Club on your rich 81-year history supporting retriever field trials!



“When I was in college, I fell in love with retrievers at a demo held at the state fairgrounds,” Durrence says. “The first one I trained was my black Lab ‘Allie,’ who became a Hunting Retriever Champion despite me, as I was learning, I got addicted fast — hook, line and sinker.”

Now, after 13 years as a pro, Durrence and his team of four training assistants work with 60 to 90 dogs. Taylor Farm Kennels trained the three American Water Spaniels to earn Master Hunter titles and has handled the only two Boykin Spaniels to earn a qualifying score at the Master National. “You really have to think outside the box with these breeds, because they are not inside the box to begin with,” he says.

Similarly, Durrence has learned to balance retriever training with his family life, which includes wife Kendra and three children ages 6 and younger. “In the beginning, I would work from daylight to dark,” he says. “Now, we train smarter by streamlining our training sessions so they complement one another with less jumping around. That doesn’t mean I don’t still lay awake at night thinking about what needs done to help a dog be better.”

OBEDIENCE PRO IS STILL LEARNING

An ultimatum to start training her misbehaved Wire Fox Terrier or not return to class turned Lynn Heidinger of Tinley Park, Illinois, into an obedience professional. That was in the 1970s. Today, Heidinger is the owner-handler of three Golden Retrievers on the AKC Top Ten Obedience Lifetime Points

Earned list. She has won the AKC Obedience Invitational three times with two different dogs and the Obedience Dog of the Year four times with two different dogs.

“Even after 50 years, I am still learning,” Heidinger says. “A while back ‘Tapper’ (OTCH Sunfire’s What’s On Tap UDX31 OGM GN GO) had a bad spot in his go outs (a utility exercise). He was taking extra steps before sitting. I was using a stern voice to correct him, and it wasn’t working. I began shouting, ‘Good sit!’ He’s had almost perfect go outs ever since.”

The 2019 Obedience Dog of the Year, Tapper, a 7-year-old male, is a three-time winner of the prestigious honor, having also won in 2016 and 2017. He placed second in 2015 and 2018. Ranked No. 7 in the AKC Top



Lynn Heidinger and Golden Retriever “Tapper” are three-time winners of the Top Obedience Dog of the Year, having won in 2016, 2017 and 2019.



Larry Huffman, pictured with Whippoorwill War Dance in 2008, has handled three of the eight National Field Trial Champions won by Whippoorwill Kennel. His father, Dr. Jack Huffman, founded the kennel 50 years ago. More than 100 litters have been raised at Whippoorwill.

Ten Obedience Lifetime Points Earned ranking, with 5,874 points thus far, Tapper has shined his way to 11 perfect 200 scores, 262 High in Trials and 350 High Combined Scores.

“Toasty” (NOC2 OTCH Sunfire’s Toast of the Town), the Top Obedience Dog in 2001, holds the No. 2 spot on the Top Ten Obedience Lifetime Points Earned list, with 8,555 points. He is the highest-rated Golden Retriever on the list. “Chemo” (NOC OTCH Meadowpond’s High on Chemo UDX) ranks No. 8, with 5,621 points. He was the 2001 Obedience Dog of the Year in 2001 and achieved 10 perfect 200 scores.

As to her love of the sport, Heidinger says, “I enjoy the people and the dog shows. Most important is the bond you have with your dog. Without that, you don’t have anything.”

WHIPPOORWILL’S NATIONAL FIELD TRIAL CHAMPIONS

In bird dog all-age horseback stakes the name Whippoorwill is stamped on eight National Field Trial Champions. Six are bred-by champions, putting Whippoorwill in a tie for the most National Champions bred. The Pointers that have won are extraordinary.

“They have to be smart. They have to be stylish, both running and on point,” says Dr. Jack Huffman. “They need to have good conformation, endurance, trainability, and a good nose. And they’ve got to be smart. Smart should be in there twice.”

Fifty years ago, Dr. Huffman founded the Whippoorwill Kennel in Michigan City, Mississippi, only miles from Ames Plantation, where the National Championship is run. Passing on his love for bird dogs and field trialing to his son, Larry Huffman, has produced a powerful team that includes Larry’s wife, Piper.

El Sauz Doll, whom Dr. Huffman owned but did not breed, won the 1983 National Championship handled by pro Tommy Davis. The six National Champions that followed were bred at Whippoorwill: Bluff City Mike won in 1986 and Whippoorwill’s Rebel won in 1987 and 1989, both were handled by pro Tommy Davis, and Larry Huffman, then a college student, scouted in 1989; Dunn’s Fearless Bud, owned by Wilson Davis and handled by Randy Patterson, won in 1990; Whippoorwill Wild Card won



Luke and Diane Ehricht are pictured with Shih Tzu "Rocket," the No. 1 Toy dog in 2015 and grandson of their top-winning Shih Tzu of all time, "Andy."

in 1999, and his grandson, Whippoorwill Wild Agin, co-owned with Dr. Terry Terlep, won in 2008, both were handled by Larry Huffman. The most recent winner in 2016 was Whippoorwill Justified, sired by Wild Agin, who was bred by Bob Walthal and handled by Larry Huffman.

The success of the Whippoorwill team starts with a sharp eye for identifying quality traits in puppies. Behind the puppies is a breeding program that has allowed them to develop the dogs they have today. "We consistently have bred to dogs that have not necessarily won but have the characteristics we liked. When we needed to outcross, we outcrossed," says Dr. Huffman.

Three of their Whippoorwill National Champions are in the Field Trial Hall of Fame. Rebel was inducted in 1992, Bud in 2003 and Wild Agin in 2014. Whippoorwill's patriarch Dr. Huffman was inducted in 2001. The highlight, he says, "has been seeing my son win a National Championship with a dog we bred, owned and trained."

HALLMARK JOLEI'S ALL-TIME TOP SHIH TZU

More than 150 conformation Champions have been bred by the Hallmark Jolei Shih Tzu breeders Luke and Diane Ehricht of Monclova, Ohio, and assistant Terry Eredita. The career stats of the American Kennel Club's 2008 Toy Group Breeders of the Year include winning 200 Bests in Show and 13 of 18 Bests of Breed at the American Shih Tzu Club National Specialty from 1993 to 2011.

Their top winner and the top-winning Shih Tzu in breed history is "Andy" (CH Hallmark

Jolei Raggedy Andy), who won 84 Bests in Show, succeeding the 83 won by his sire, "Joey" (CH Charing Cross Ragtime Cowboy). "Andy and Joey took turns as the top Toy Group winners of all time," says Luke Ehricht.

Another record setter is "Rocket" (GCH Hallmark Jolei Rocket Power), the No. Shih Tzu in 2014 and 2015, who won 142 Toy Group Firsts in 2015, more than any other toy dog. Rocket's pedigree includes top winners Andy, his grandsire, and Joey, his great-grandsire.

Many of the Hallmark Jolei Shih Tzu go back to the top-producing bitch in breed history, "Tinkerbell" (CH Hallmark Jolei Tinkerbell). "Tinkerbell was our most influential dog," Luke Ehricht says. "She was one in a million. A strong-willed bitch and one of the funniest dogs we've ever had."

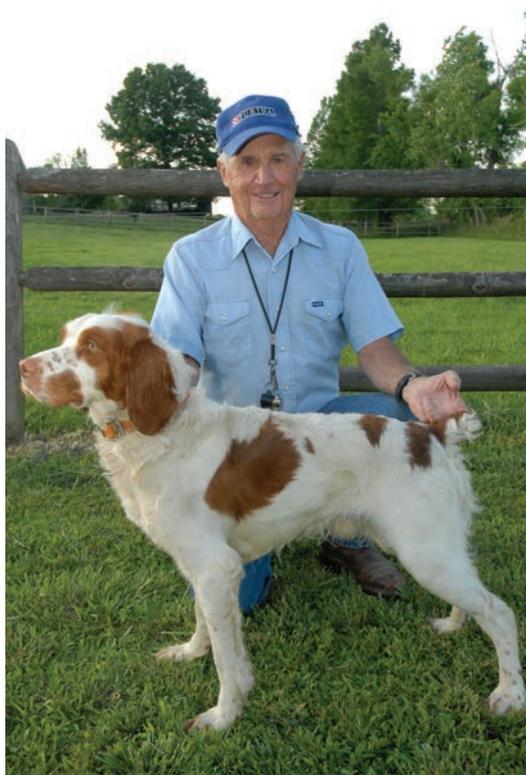
Their breeding program weaves closely related linebred dogs that complement one another's characteristics. A signature trait of the Hallmark Jolei Shih Tzu is lovely temperament. "Temperament is so important to us," says Diane Ehricht. "We try to breed dogs with engaging, friendly personalities. Sweet personalities are the mark of our Shih Tzu."

A LIFETIME OF ENJOYMENT WITH BRITTANYS

Catching up with Ray Trimble and his wife, Mary Jo, of Carterville, Illinois, who just returned in early December from the 2019 American Brittany Club (ABC) National Brittany All-Age Championship in Booneville, Arkansas, is energizing.

Trimble, who got his first Brittany around 1955, has attended all 33 National Championships and competed in nearly all of the one-hour open and amateur horseback stakes. At this year's event, Trimble handled from horseback his current competitor, FC-AFC Brendi Brooks Cowboy Up ("Tuff"). In 2017, the pair reached a milestone when they won the ABC Illinois Brittany Amateur All-Age Championship, making Trimble the oldest person at age 90½ to win a major American Field championship.

Trimble has placed dogs in six National Brittany Championships. In 1962 he placed NFC-AFC Crab Orchard Duke 3rd in the National Amateur, and in 1963 he won the National Open with "Duke" and was the first amateur to win this prestigious stake. In 1986 he won the National Amateur with NFC-AFC Crab Orchard Jet. This was followed by winning two Runner-



Brittany lover Ray Trimble, shown here with FC-AFC Brisco's Mr. Stubb in 2007, has attended all and competed in nearly all of the 33 National Brittany All-Age Championships.

SANTA BARBARA KENNEL CLUB TURNS 100 YEARS OLD

Celebrating its centennial year in 2019, the Santa Barbara Kennel Club lived up to its reputation as being one of the most picturesque shows in the country. Held in August at the Earl Warren Showgrounds, the Santa Barbara Kennel Club Dog Shows combine tradition with special attractions unique to the club. In its 11th year, the Breeder's Showcase sponsored by *Purina Pro Plan* features two dogs bred by the same person going for Group wins and Best and Reserve Best in Showcase. Bullygangza and the Sighthound Spectacular are competitions for the top "bully"

breed and hound winners, respectively.

The Foreign-Bred competition, open to imported dogs, draws entries from around the world. Santa Barbara also is known today for its "hat contest," a fun judging event of all donning hats and a throw-back to the club's early years when wearing hats was dog show etiquette. Happy 100th Birthday, Santa Barbara, and congratulations on keeping the jovial spirit of dog shows going!



Up National Amateur Championships, with NFC Franklin County Bandit in 1998 and "Frankie's" grandson, FC-AFC Brisco Buddy Boy in 2003. In 2010 "Brisco's" son, FC-AFC Brisco's Mr. Stubb, placed fourth in the National Amateur.

"Ray has always had one or two dogs that he stays with until they are too old to run," says Mary Jo, who served for many years as executive secretary of the American Brittany Club. "He works with them from puppy to all-age competition."

Giving back to the sport, Trimble helped found the Greater St. Louis Brittany Club in the late 1990s, has been a director and first vice president of the American Brittany Club, and is a charter member of the Illinois Brittany Championship Association. In 1993 he was among the first group of inductees into the Brittany Field Trial Hall of Fame, and he also is a member of the ABC Hall of Fame. The American Kennel Club bestowed its Lifetime Achievement Award for Performance on Trimble in 2000.

"Sometimes I wonder how I've done it all," Trimble says. "It's just been a life full of enjoyment with the dogs and people in field trials."

MALAGOLD'S STAMP OF CONSISTENCY

Tracking statistics on how many Malagold Champions she has bred is not a strength of Connie Gerstner Miller. She concedes that a friend helped compile the list.

A breeder for 56 years and former pro handler, Miller, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, combined her first breed, Alaskan Malamutes, and second breed, Golden Retrievers, to create her kennel prefix of Malagold. "It's easy to breed a pretty dog, but to breed a pretty dog that has the right health, background and temperament is a very hard thing to do," she says.

The breadth of accomplishments of Malagold Golden Retrievers is impressive. Miller co-breeds the dogs with her daughter, Geri Gerstner Hart, of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, who worked as a pro handler with her mother in the 1980s. They have bred 103 show Champion Golden Retrievers and 46 Golden Retrievers earning titles in obedience, rally and/or agility. Most are American Kennel Club Champions, and some earned United Kennel Club titles — a few are both.

Top Golden Retriever winners include: BIS/BISS CH Malagold Beckwith Big Buff, campaigned in the early 1970s, BIS/BISS CH Malagold Summer Encore SDHA OS, shown in the mid-1970s, and BIS/BISS AM/CAN CH Malagold Storm Warning SDHF OS, a winner in the 1990s.

Malagold began breeding English Cocker Spaniels in the 1970s because Golden Retrievers were too large for Hart to handle in junior showmanship. Among the 12 show Champion Cockers that Malagold produced was BIS/BISS CH Darcys JJ of Malagold CD, whose litter Hart bred as a teenager. Malagold has produced 22 show Champion Schipperkes and several Alaskan Malamutes that earned show Champion and obedience titles in the 1960s and 1970s.

Malagold's stamp of consistency in breeding exceptional dogs, particularly the highly competitive Golden Retriever, the third most popular breed in the country based on AKC registrations, lies in Miller's attitude. "Breeding dogs is really hard," she says. "Each one doesn't turn out to be a top dog. Litters are not always going to be what you are expecting. May everyone have such a golden life as I have had with my Golden Retrievers." ■



Connie Gerstner Miller, above, and daughter Geri Gerstner Hart have bred 103 Golden Retriever show Champions, plus nearly 50 earning titles in performance sports.

QUIET CREEK BLOODHOUNDS A LIFETIME OF CROWNING ACHIEVEMENTS

About an hour and half from Hollywood, tucked in the San Joaquin Hills of Laguna Canyon in California, is a kennel called Quiet Creek Bloodhounds. Many blue-ribbon hounds track their beginning to Quiet Creek and breeder Susan LaCroix Hamil. A famous movie star Bloodhound, “Rocky” (CH Quiet Creek’s Stand By Me), who was “Hubert” in the 2000 comedy “Best in Show,” came from Quiet Creek.

In a hilarious scene, Christopher Guest as owner Harlan Pepper takes Hubert on a walk in the woods before a dog show. “Bloodhounds have a great nose, and they can also talk,” says Pepper, scrunching the loose skin on Hubert’s forehead as the hound smooches his cheek. “His mind is like telepathy telling the judge, ‘Hey, judge, I know what you’re thinking. I am the best dog in the whole ring.’”

“I heard about auditions for Best in Show and took Rocky and several Bloodhounds for Christopher Guest to see, and when we took Rocky out, Mr. Guest went right to him,” says Susan, the 2006 American Kennel Club (AKC) Hound Group Breeder of the Year. “Rocky was a dog who could walk in a room and capture everyone’s attention. He acted like a star.”

Rocky was sired by a real Best in Show winner, CH Badger Creek Druid. Serendipitously, Susan brought the young male

to her kennel in 1991 after a visit to Switzerland to go to dog shows with her friend, Badger Creek breeder Dr. Marlene Zähler. “‘Druid’ was a life-changing dog whose temperament and conformation took us to a whole new level,” Susan says, of the pup who sat beside her the entire visit and prompted



Quiet Creek Bloodhound breeder Susan LaCroix Hamil cuddles a 7-week-old puppy.



A puppy enjoys a toy in the play yard.

a call home to husband

Dr. John Hamil to alert him she was bringing back a puppy.

A people pleaser with affectionate ways, Druid was a No. 1 Bloodhound and Best of Breed winner at the 1995 and 1996 American Bloodhound Club (ABC) National Specialties. He placed fourth in the Hound Group at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in 1996.

A 1967 movie, “Cool Hand Luke,” starring Paul Newman as Luke Jackson, a prison escapee who is trailed by Bloodhounds, inspired Susan, then a teenager growing up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, who adored showing American Quarter Horses, to want a Bloodhound. “I was first attracted to their long ears



Bloodhound puppies are born with a keen sense of smell and natural tracking ability.

and expressions, and then it was their personality that kept me involved with this breed,” she says.

Her uncle, a physician at the Angola State Penitentiary, helped Susan get a “Bloodhound” puppy from a litter bred there. Describing her hound “Luke,” Susan says, “He was a long-eared black-and-tan dog of some description, but not Bloodhound, more like a Catahoula leopard dog, which is Louisiana’s state dog.”

“I wanted a real AKC Bloodhound,” she says.

A REAL BLOODHOUND

The pursuit for a “real Bloodhound” took Susan to California where her father lived and the opportunity to get a female puppy sired by a male from the acclaimed Rectory Kennels of Jackie Sinkinson out of a dam from the Marx Bloodhounds of Dick and Mitsy Hiatt. Marx’s Matilda, whom she called “Sunshine,” did not finish but placed in the Open class back when Bloodhounds were so rare that the Open class combined dogs and bitches.



With mentoring from breeder-judge Jerry Watson of Savannah, Tennessee, Susan got her next Bloodhound, also out of the Rectory bloodline. Ali Pasha of Wrinkle Moor is the first show Champion Susan finished. Watson also urged her to get involved

Susan is shown with Hound Group winner and Champion Tracker “Honey” (GCH CT Quiet Creek’s Tupelo Honey BN RN TDU MX MXJ MXB CGCA TKN MT MTI), whom she co-owns with Evelyn Jones. One of Quiet Creek’s most accomplished hounds, the 7-year-old is a member of the American Bloodhound Club (ABC) Working Dog Hall of Fame and Performance Hall of Fame. Her sire is CH Badger Creek Druid, an ABC Sire of Merit and member of the ABC Stud Dog Hall of Fame, and the dam is GCH Badger Hill Lady at Quiet Creek, an ABC Dam of Merit.

Left: Honey enthusiastically tracks a scent trail.

with the American Bloodhound Club. A member since 1970, Susan has served the parent club as president, AKC delegate and member of the board of directors.

Moving to California after college at Louisiana State, Susan drove her sports car hatchback cross-country and her 100-pound “Ali Pasha” rode in the back, as they traveled at night when it was cooler. Recalling the thrill of titling her first dog, she says, “It was 1972. We were at the Silver Bay Kennel Club, and Garland Bell was judging.”

Ali Pasha ignited a lot of fun, though it would be 10 years before Susan bred a Bloodhound litter. Her Quiet Creek kennel

prefix is named for a small creek behind her and John's home. A male from her first litter, CH Quiet Creek's Excalibur, called "Cal," was a Hound Group and Specialty winner. Importantly, he was an ABC Sire of Merit, having produced more than 25 Champion offspring. Similarly, Druid, whom Susan brought back from Switzerland, is an ABC Sire of Merit. They weave in and out of Quiet Creek's bloodlines.

Since Ali Pasha in 1972, Susan has finished more than 100 show Champion Bloodhounds and is 10 titles away from being an American Kennel Club Platinum Breeder of Merit, a status reserved for those who produce 100 dogs earning titles, 60 of which are prefix titles. Quiet Creek has had eight Best in Show winners and multiple Top 100 dogs and No. 1 Bloodhounds. In 2018, Quiet Creek won the Hound Group at the Santa Barbara Kennel Club Breeder's Showcase with "Bob"

**"Bloodhounds
are personable
but independent.
I like a dog that is
independent in his
decision making
and in daily life."**

Dr. John Hamil

(GCH Quiet Creek's Limited Edition) and "Piper" (GCH Quiet Creek's Dance With Me) representing the breeding program.

Quiet Creek has produced seven American Bloodhound Club National Specialty Best of Breed winners, and many others that have won Winners Dog, Winners Bitch, Top Twenty, Best Stud Dog, Best Brood Bitch, and Puppy Sweepstakes. At the 2019 ABC National Specialty in Mesquite, Texas, the Best of Opposite Sex and Top Twenty winner was Piper, a 4-year-old bitch handled by pro Tara Schultz of Bonita, California.

A Best in Show winner and and No. 1 Bloodhound in all-breed points, Piper also won Best of Breed at the South Central Regional Specialty the day after the National.

The Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show Hound Group winner in 2001 was a Quiet Creek hound. "Fanny" (CH Ridge Runner Unforgettable), bred by Bill and Elaine Woodson and



Susan and her husband, Dr. John Hamil, are pictured with three generations of Quiet Creek Bloodhounds. From left are: CH Loamy Lane's Qalamity Jane of Quiet Creek ("Jane"), 2 years old, bred by Linda van der Sichel of Belgium; her sire, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Quiet Creek's Limited Edition ("Bob"), 7 1/2 years old; and his dam, CH Quiet Creek's Classic Rock ("Blondie"), 11 years old, sired by CH Quiet Creek's Stand By Me, or "Rocky," who was in the movie "Best in Show."

owned by Susan, is the top-winning Bloodhound bitch of all time. The No. 2 top-winning bitch is “Kiss” (GCH Quiet Creek’s Kiss And Tell), whose paternal grandsire is Druid and whose maternal line is laced with the prominent Heather’s Bloodhounds bred by Heather Whitcomb of Quebec, Canada.

“Our bitches have won over strong typey male dogs, though they’ve been smaller in stature and had less furnishings,” John says. “To do so well with bitches speaks volumes for Susan’s breeding program.”

The challenges of breeding standout Bloodhounds for all-breed competition is part of the fun. “It’s not just a beauty contest. They have to be sound physically and mentally,” she says.

“Bloodhounds, though very intelligent, are not as easily trainable in ways that we consider other breeds to be. They are not inclined to cheerfully obey commands to sit, down and stay. They are scent hounds and are always motivated to use their nose, being out in front and leading you. You have to find ways to motivate them to enjoy being in the show ring.”

Conceding that Bloodhounds are not for everyone, Susan says, “They slobber a lot and love to sit in your lap though they weigh 100 pounds or more. When you’ve got a Bloodhound, there’s a lot of dog hair everywhere. They are scent hounds, so they must smell everything.”

RAISING LIFETIME COMPANIONS

All the things that others may not fully appreciate about Bloodhounds attract Susan to the breed. John, the veterinarian in the family, agrees. “Bloodhounds are personable but independent,” he says. “I like a dog that is independent in his decision making and in daily life.”

The Quiet Creek Kennel is built into the canyon behind the house where the Hamils live. It is about 26 steps up a hill, reminiscent of the treehouse in Disney’s movie “Swiss Family Robinson,” especially since an 80-foot eucalyptus tree grows right next to the deck of the small maternity suite building. Adjacent to this building is the the adult dog kennel with individual dog houses and ample space for the large-breed hounds.

Seven-week-old puppies sired by Bob out of Legend’s Dubbel Althea were residing in the suite in late August, soon to



Quiet Creek puppies learn to eat from individual food bowls.



Dr. John Hamil, a retired veterinarian, is shown in the kennel with adult Bloodhounds.

transition to their puppy homes at 9 weeks of age. The puppies go back to Druid through Bob’s granddam CH Vodessa du Hameau Jouas. Hands-on attention and socialization is underway.

Right on schedule, the puppies have had their first vaccinations. They are growing rapidly and are eager to devour their meals of *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS Puppy Large Breed Chicken & Rice Formula* that Susan mixes with warm water.

“The nutrition our Bloodhound puppies get from *Purina Pro Plan* is optimal for supporting their growth, and they love the food,” she says. “We feed our adult dogs *Purina Pro Plan SPORT ACTIVE 26/16 Formula* and have had tremendous success feeding *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+ Large Breed Formula* to older dogs.”

Picking up two puppies and cuddling them close, Susan says, “We want to engender calmness in them. When they are 7 weeks, we start teaching them to sit before any barrier. Even before they learn to walk on a leash, they are taught to sit and down and to accept a belly rub. We touch their feet and look in their eyes. We want to instill in them behaviors that are conducive for being lifetime companions. Being patient is the most important thing.”

Choosing puppies for owners based on whether it is a potential show or training home is part of the ongoing temperament assessment. “We have some people who are on their third dog from us,” John says.



Shown with “Seven” (CH Quiet Creek’s All In At Heathers), Susan keeps a slobber towel handy, as Bloodhounds drool because of their deep hanging flews.



Taking in the sunset over Laguna Beach near their home in California, Susan and John relax with “Bob.” The 7 ½-year-old retired show dog lives with Bruce and Tara Schultz, as Tara fell in love with Bob while campaigning him. Bruce, and now his wife, Tara, has handled the Quiet Creek Bloodhounds for over 30 years.

“They come back because they like our dogs’ temperaments and good health. Breeding a lifetime companion is a real achievement.”

Health and health testing are paramount at Quiet Creek. Susan, who for many years worked as a registered veterinary technician, realizes the importance of using health tests as tools to help her breeding program. She is an AKC delegate representing the all-breed Shoreline Dog Fanciers Club and has been chair of the AKC Delegates’ Committee on Canine Health for 20 years. She also is a member of the board of directors of the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). Through these roles, she encouraged and supported the development of the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) public database for an individual dog’s health tests.

She also is a member of the board of directors of the AKC Canine Health Foundation. Recently, Susan was appointed by the AKC to an ad hoc DNA Committee that is working to educate

“Bloodhounds, though very intelligent, are not as easily trained in ways that we consider other breeds to be.”

Susan LaCroix Hamil
Quiet Creek Bloodhounds

breeders about genetic testing and terminology such as co-efficient of inbreeding and how it impacts their breeding program.

Susan’s deep love for Bloodhounds, which began 50 years ago, is inspirational. Along with her many commitments in the U.S., she has established Quiet Creek co-breeding relationships around the world, including with breeders in Italy, South Africa, Canada, and Brazil. She has judged the American Bloodhound Club National Specialty, as well as shows in England, Italy, Finland, and France. Quiet Creek Bloodhounds are known globally.

As John says, “The dogs have done so much for us. We’ve gotten to meet people and go places that we would not have otherwise.”

Much like her beloved breed, Susan is independent, determined and relentless when she believes in a cause. The Bloodhound breed without a doubt is better today, thanks to Susan Hamil and her Quiet Creek hounds. ■

WALK THE TALK

PURINA'S BREEDER-ENTHUSIAST TEAM TAKES THEIR DOGS TO HEART

There's an old saying that when you love what you do, you'll never work another day in your life. That holds true for members of the Purina Breeder-Enthusiast Group. All of us are passionate dog owners. Some of us are breeders, handlers, trainers, and/or exhibitors. Come meet us. We think you'll understand why we enjoy working with you, fellow enthusiasts who share our love for dogs.

Ann Viklund, Director of Conformation, is particularly fond of Norwich Terriers, a love that came early in her 23 years working at Purina. Her first Norwich show dog was CH Berry Ridge Cowgirl of Akila ("Zoe"), followed by her daughter, CH Berry Ridge Dance Hall Darling ("Trixie"). The third generation is represented by Trixie's son, "Hero" (CH Gaylord's Everyday Hero).

Ann's first love was field Labrador Retrievers as part of the Berry Ridge Labrador Retriever program with her husband, Max, helping to breed and train field competitors. Their breeding program produced Grand Hunting Retriever Champions, Hunting Retriever Champions as well as many excellent hunting companions and



Ann Viklund and 14-year-old Norwich Terrier "Trixie"



Karl Gunzer and Border Collie "Clark"

beloved family members. She is particularly proud of having bred FC-AFC Jet Black Bustin Thru the Brush MH.

Ann received the President's Award from the AKC Canine Health Foundation in 2017, and she has been a member of its board of directors since 2013, currently serving as secretary. In 2016, she was elected as the first woman member of the board of directors of the Kennel Club of Philadelphia after 142 years.

Prior to joining Purina in 2013, Karl Gunzer, Director of Sporting, owned and operated High Spirit Retrievers and built a successful business training and handling dogs to compete in retriever field trials. Karl had the top Derby kennel in the U.S. in 2007 and 2012, and won more than 40 Open stakes and 60 Derby stakes. Competing in eight National Championships with more than 24 dogs, he trained five National Finalists and a two-time Canadian National Champion, CNFC-CNAFC-FC-AFC Nightwings Marsh Leader. He also trained the 2013 Co-High-Point Derby dog, FC-AFC Creek Robbers Black Powder Mag.

Recently, Karl has been training his Border Collie, "Clark," to help him herd the Brangus cattle at his Kacy Ranch. The 4-year-old tricolor male has competed in the United States Border Collie Handlers' Association's National Nursery trials.

Connie Wagner, Senior Area Manager, Conformation, has been a passionate breeder-owner-handler of Dalmatians for 38 years. She has bred over 60 Champions under her Spotlight kennel prefix, including five Best in Show winners. Two of her Best in Show Dalmatians won the Non-Sporting Group at Westminster: CH Spotlight's Spectacular ("Penny") won in 1996 and 1997, and GCH Spotlights Ruffian won in 2012. Connie is particularly proud of the success of Penny, who finished her career with 66 Bests in Show, 286 Group Firsts and four Bests of Breed at the Dalmatian Club of America National Specialty. "I adore my job because I get to work doing something I love," Connie says.

Competing in field trials and North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA) tests was a hobby for Greg Blair, Area Manager, Bird Dogs, for 20 years before joining Purina in 2015. His passion for bird dogs began with a German Shorthaired Pointer, NSTRA CH Neenah Creek's Unanswered



Connie Wagner and Dalmatian “Teka” (CH Spotlight Tequila Sunrise Bret D), the Reserve Winners Bitch at the 2019 National Specialty



Greg Blair and English Setter “Guy” (FC Blair’s Witch Project)



Annie Balotti and Pembroke Welsh Corgi puppy “Olive” (Sundance Dirty Martini At Duet)

Prayer (“Rookie”), a National Shoot to Retriever Association Champion and Regional High-Point Dog of the Year.

Greg’s current star is an English Setter, FC Blair’s Witch Project (“Guy”), who won the National Bird Hunter’s Association (NBHA) National Amateur and National Amateur Invitational Championships as well as the NBHA National Open Championship and Northern Regional Open Championship. Guy was the Runner-Up Champion at the NBHA National Open Free-For-All Championship. “These bird dogs give you all they have every time you put them on the ground. It is such a pleasure to be able to handle and hunt behind such gifted animals,” Greg says.

It was a “pinch-me” moment for Purina Event Center Area Manager Annie Balotti when her puppy, Sundance Dirty Martini At Duet (“Olive”), took Best in Sweepstakes at the 2019 Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America National Specialty. A longtime owner and breeder of the herding breed, Annie also has Whippets and Labrador Retrievers.

“I feel so lucky to be able to interact with so many dog lovers who come to the Purina Event Center for their National Specialties and all-breed shows,” says Annie, who began working for Purina in 1998 at the former Ralston Purina Pet Care Center in Gray Summit, Missouri, where the Purina Event Center now stands. “I guess you could say I have come full circle with my career here at Purina being back where I started.”

The thrill of running gun dog Beagles as they bay with fervor while trailing across the countryside led to Mark Cascio, Area Manager, Hounds, getting his first Small Pack Option hound. FCGD Carter Creek

Lil Rehab was the 2018 Deep South Gundog Federation High-Point Hound of the Year. “Winning is always great, a validation of your successful efforts. For me the ultimate win is doing what you love and sharing your passion with amazing people,” Mark says.

Before joining the Breeder-Enthusiast Group, Mark worked 12 years as a Veterinary Sales Consultant for *Purina Pro Plan* Veterinary Diets. In his current job representing Purina at Beagle and Coonhound sporting events, Mark loves the excitement these hounds bring to their owners and handlers.



Mark Cascio and SPO Beagle “Kitty” (FCGD Lau Mor’s Kitty), the Reserve National Small Pack Champion in 2018



Marcie Sale and Labrador Retriever “Riser” (CH Tabatha’s Sunfest Sunrise)



Ray Voigt and "Stinger" (FC-AFC B. Bumble), a 2017 National Open Retriever Finalist



Dean Reinke and English Springer Spaniel "Cutter" (AFC Raintree Swift Sails)



Corey Benedict and Grand Basset Griffon Vendéen "Henley" (CH Sidekick's Life In The Fast Lane)

Marci Sale Crawford, Plains Area Manager, Conformation, already was a breeder-owner-handler under the Larkspur Labrador Retriever prefix when she began working for Purina as an Ambassador in 2007, followed by going full time in 2010. Marci first bred Pugs in 1988 and switched to breeding Labrador Retrievers in 1989 when her daughter was born due to the breed's friendly disposition with children. Marci has titled multiple Champion show Labradors. She continues to show her dogs when time permits and is planning a litter in the near future.

The newest sporting Purina Area Manager is Ray Voigt, who succeeds retiring Area Manager Dean Reinke, and will represent Purina at retriever and spaniel events. Ray has been involved in retriever field trials and hunt tests for 21 years and has worked for Mike Lardy at Handjem Retrievers for the past 14 years. He has handled 11 National Open Finalists and coached amateurs to 22 National Amateur finishes. Ray has trained a High-Point Open dog, a National Open Champion, three National Amateur Champions, and 46 dogs that attained their Field Champion and Amateur Field Champion titles.

"I'm looking forward to working for a great company that overwhelmingly supports sporting trials and championships across the country," Ray says. "I'm also looking forward to continuing old friendships and making new ones throughout the retriever community that has given so much to me over the years and the new spaniel community."

Having worked for Purina since 2006, Dean is planning a retirement that includes competing in spaniel field trials along with his wife, Cathy Lewis, and taking advantage of the many invitations from people he has met over the years to hunt wild birds throughout the U.S. Since 1980 Dean has finished six Field Champions and nine Amateur Field Champions and has placed in seven National Championships, having finished 25 Nationals.

He has served as president and vice president of the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association (ESSFTA), the parent club of the breed, and currently represents English Springer Spaniels on the Bird Dog Foundation board of governors. In 2012, Dean was inducted into the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Hall of Fame and in 2013 into the ESSFTA Hall of Fame.

Corey Benedict, Northeastern Area Manager, Conformation, began showing English Springer Spaniels in the late 1970s. He and his husband, Brent Humphrey, have bred numerous Champion and Best in Show springers. Fifteen years ago while attending the Nationale d'Elevage in France, they fell in love with the Grand Basset Griffon Vendéen (GBGV), a rustic French hunting hound.

"From that point, we were hooked and began our quest to establish the breed in the U.S.," Corey says. "We have bred numerous Champion and Best in Specialty Show winners, as well as the first GBGV Champion and Best in Show winner, GCH Palomino Du Greffier Du Roi, who in 2018 won 12 Bests in Show and Best of Breed at Westminster."

American Eskimo Dog breeder Diana Allen, Field Promotions Representative, Conformation, was featured in *Today's Breeder* many years before she began working for Purina. At her Sierra kennel, she has produced over 200 United Kennel Club (UKC) Champions and over 75 American Kennel Club (AKC) Champions. Her current Special is AKC GRCH/UKC GRCH Sierra's Hallmark ("Bentley"), who has just begun his campaign and already is a Multi-Group winner at AKC shows and a Multi-Best in Show winner at UKC shows.

"Dogs are my passion," Diana says. "I love that I learn something every day in my job about their nutrition and care, their genetics, and how to make their lives longer and healthier."

Heidi Kellerman, Field Promotions Representative, Conformation, has bred Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers



Diana Allen and American Eskimo Dog "Bentley" (AKC GRCH/UKC GRCH Sierra's Hallmark)



Heidi Kellerman and Labrador Retrievers, "Triton" (GCH Harbor Runs Art of Animation), left, and "Granger" (GCH Stoneleigh's Into Mischief TKN)

game. Keith recently was named to the board of directors of Pheasants Forever, a nonprofit organization devoted to promoting conservation of upland wildlife and habitat.

In retirement, Keith is looking forward to spending time with his wife, Kathy, on their North Dakota farm, Jadghund Ding, which is German for "Hunting Dog Thing." "I will continue to cherish the relationships and friendships I've developed in the sporting dog community over the past 34 years — both within Purina and outside," he says.

Another dog lover, Bill Etling succeeds Keith as Vice President of Corporate Public Relations. Bill often brings his favorite canine companion, "Luna," a Golden Retriever/German Shepherd Dog mixed breed, to work with him.

Today's Breeder editor Barb Fawver enjoys going to field trials with her husband, Del, and their Black Blanket brace beagles. She also is secretary of the Ozark Beagle Club. Her personal favorite breed is Rottweiler, and she takes pride in having done much of the showing and all the obedience training of her male, GCH Eternal Moon Quest of Augustus CD PCD BN. She is looking forward to showing and training her male puppy, "Tucker" (Ebony's Herr Tucker v BAAR).

under the Harbor Run prefix for 17 years. Her hobby began as a family activity supporting her daughter, Carolyn, who was involved in the AKC Junior Handler Program and featured in a story about junior handlers in *Today's Breeder*. Their Harbor Run breeding program has produced 15 conformation Champions, plus dogs that have titled in rally, obedience and hunting tests. Some have been involved in the Assistance Dogs of the West Therapy Program.

Keith Schopp, retiring Vice President of Corporate Public Relations, is a longtime contributing photographer and writer to *Today's Breeder*. During his 34-year career with Purina, Keith has always had a handful of sporting dog companions that accompany him on hunting trips for waterfowl and upland

their Black Blanket brace beagles. She also is secretary of the Ozark Beagle Club. Her personal favorite breed is Rottweiler, and she takes pride in having done much of the showing and all the obedience training of her male, GCH Eternal Moon Quest of Augustus CD PCD BN. She is looking forward to showing and training her male puppy, "Tucker" (Ebony's Herr Tucker v BAAR).

Surely, you'll agree we have the best jobs imaginable for people who love dogs as much as we do. If you see us at an event, please say hello and tell us about your dogs and the things you love doing with them. ■



Keith Schopp and German Shorthaired Pointer "Clair"



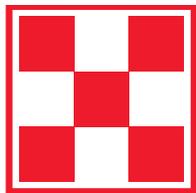
Bill Etling and Golden Retriever/German Shepherd Dog "Luna"



Barb Fawver and Rottweiler puppy "Tucker"

125
years

PURINA'S HISTORY TIED TO NUTRITIONAL SCIENCE



As *Today's Breeder* celebrates its 100th issue, Purina is toasting 125 years. A rich history that began in 1894 when founder William H. Danforth laid a foundation for producing the best and purest companion animal nutrition, Purina would soon be recognized worldwide by its iconic checkerboard square logo.

Life-changing advancements in dog nutrition are part of Purina's culture. Befittingly, dog breeders recognize Purina's reputation for providing reliable, trustworthy nutrition backed by feeding trials and a commitment to excellence. Looking back, here are highlights of Purina's history and nutritional science breakthroughs. These discoveries have helped to shape the landscape of canine nutrition and care and importantly help dogs live long, healthy lives.

Leading the way, in 1926 Purina introduced *Purina Dog Chow*, the first complete and balanced dog food. *Dog Chow* provided an easy, convenient way to feed dogs without the need for supplementation. Adding table scraps, meat, even vitamins and minerals potentially dilute the nutritional balance of the food and predispose a dog to undernutrition, obesity and/or finicky eating.

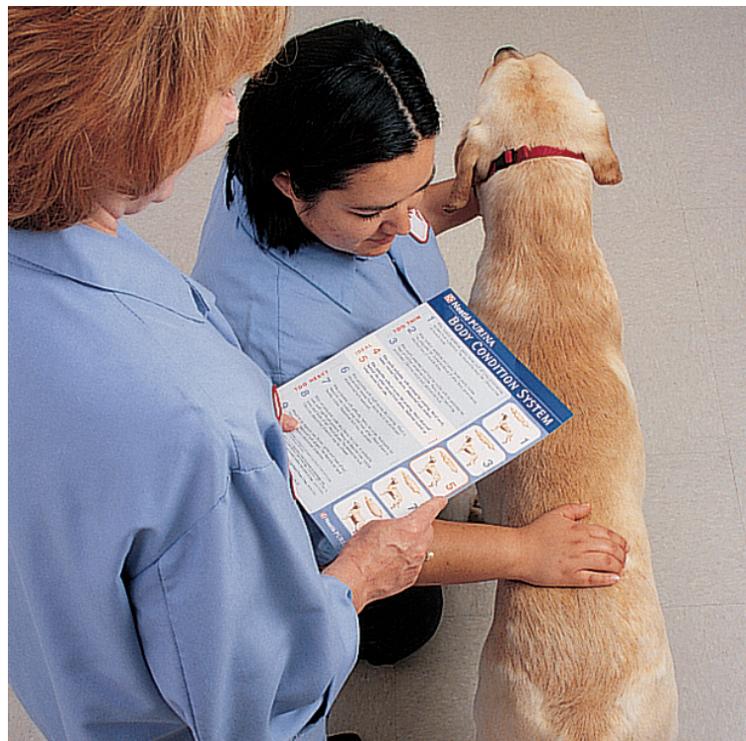


Introduced in 1926, *Purina Dog Chow* provides complete and balanced nutrition.

most physically demanding periods in a dog's life. Maintenance and all life-stage dog foods are studied, and the nutrient needs of dogs throughout their lives are evaluated in great detail.

Debunking protein myths, Purina nutritionists showed that healthy older dogs need as much as 50 percent more protein than

That same year, Purina opened what became the world's oldest and largest pet nutrition center at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri, dedicated to supporting nutrition and feeding studies on products in development. Validation of formulas for pregnant and lactating bitches and growing puppies ensures that *Purina* dog foods offer optimal nutrition during these



Purina technicians use the Purina Body Condition System to score the body condition of this Labrador Retriever.

young adult dogs to maintain protein reserves and support protein turnover and that protein does not harm the kidneys of older dogs, as once believed. Further, puppies have much higher protein requirements than fully grown dogs to support their growing muscles and other tissues.

The importance of maintaining dogs in ideal body condition, a state of energy balance, throughout changes of age, metabolism, reproductive status, activity, and environment would lead to the landmark Purina Body Condition System in 1993. This uniform scoring system for canine body condition provides a helpful tool for veterinarians and breeders alike.

Purina introduced its first pet specialty-exclusive brand, *Purina Pro Plan*, in 1986. Made with real meat, poultry or fish as the first ingredient, *Purina Pro Plan* offers formulas with high-density protein-to-fat ratios and low stool volume, especially popular among dog breeders and sporting and show influentials. This super-premium dog food would become the food of choice for the majority of the country's Top 100 show and sporting dogs.

PURINA HISTORY IN THE MAKING



William H. Danforth

1894

William H. Danforth founds the Robinson-Danforth Commission Co. in St. Louis. Although the company initially produces feed for farm animals, Danforth's vision is to provide the best and purest nutrition for companion animals in a convenient easy-to-use form. In 1902, the company is renamed Ralston Purina to reflect the business ethic that "Purity is Paramount."

1926

Purina opens what became the world's oldest and largest pet nutrition center at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri, about 44 miles from St. Louis. Dedicated to the study of pet nutrition and care, the pet care research center is pivotal in advancing Purina's role as a scientific leader in canine nutrition supported by nutrition and feeding studies.



A puppy is weighed as part of an early feeding study at the Purina pet nutrition center at Purina Farms.

In 2002, the first lifelong canine diet restriction study, conducted at the Purina pet nutrition center at Gray Summit, Missouri, showed that feeding dogs to an ideal body condition throughout their lives can significantly extend a dog's healthy years — by a median of 1.8 years for dogs in the study. And although the restricted-fed dogs in the study generally developed the same chronic conditions as they aged, the need for treatment of these conditions was delayed by an average of approximately two years compared to the control-fed dogs.

"The results of the life span study were monumental," says Melissa Kelly, PhD, Purina Senior Research Nutritionist. "For one thing, here was Purina, a pet food company, essentially telling owners to feed less food and keep their dogs in a lean body condition. Not only did the study show that dogs maintained in lean body condition experienced extended healthy years, they also had a significantly delayed need for treatment of long-term chronic conditions and osteoarthritis. We revised our feeding



Purina Dog Chow is the first extruded, or pressure-cooked, dog food.

1957

Purina applies extrusion technology in the making of pet food. The cooking process enhances nutritional quality, digestibility and taste by infusing steam and moisture into raw ingredients and converting them into distinctive, textured shapes known today as "kibble."

1993

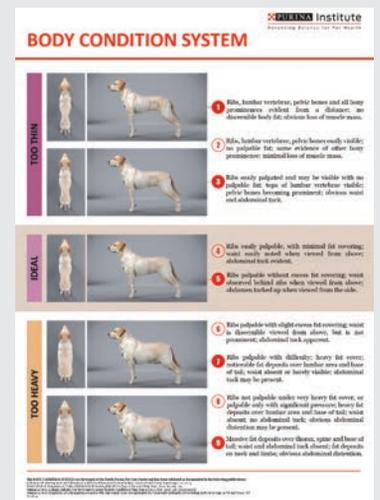
The Purina Body Condition System provides the first scientifically validated body condition score system applying a simple method for determining a dog's optimal body condition regardless of breed or body weight.

2001

Nestlé S.A., the largest food company in the world, based in Vevey, Switzerland, acquires Purina and forms Nestlé Purina PetCare Co.

2019

The Purina Institute launches as a global organization designed to communicate, educate and promote the nutritional science behind Purina products and play a key role in advancing understanding of the importance of nutrition in helping dogs live long, healthy lives.



A dog at ideal body condition has an hourglass shape when viewed from above.

recommendations across the board on puppy and dog food products to reflect the results of the lifetime feeding study."

Purina scientists studied the effects of aging in dogs to gain insights into how nutrition can play a role. For instance, reduced glucose metabolism in the brain leads to a declined energy supply to brain cells, which can affect memory, learning awareness and decision making in mature and senior dogs. After many years of studies, Purina scientists developed two nutritional tools to make a difference in these dogs.

"Behavioral changes due to aging happen so slowly that owners don't always recognize the red flags until dogs are well into their senior years," explains Yuanlong "Gary" Pan, PhD, Principal Research Scientist at the Nestlé Research Center in St. Louis. "Enhanced botanical oils rich in medium-chain triglycerides optimize blood ketone concentrations, which provides an additional energy source for the brain and when added to the daily diet of senior dogs can promote memory, attention and trainability.

"We also developed a brain-supporting nutrient blend that includes DHA, EPA and enhanced levels of B vitamins, arginine and antioxidants to support cognitive health in dogs. When fed daily, the blend will help support a dog's cognitive health throughout adulthood."

The breakthrough technology led to the rollout in 2015 of *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+ Formula*. Testimonials from owners convey heartwarming and uplifting experiences about how feeding *BRIGHT MIND* to senior dogs helped promote alertness and mental sharpness.

Two supplements that support enthusiasts with their dogs are *Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Supplements FortiFlora*, introduced in 2007, and *Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Supplements Calming Care*, new in 2019. *FortiFlora* contains a special strain of probiotic, *Enterococcus faecium* SF68, which promotes intestinal health and balance and has been particularly useful in managing the stress of travel or unfamiliar environments that can disrupt a dog's digestive system.



Calming Care contains a strain of beneficial bacteria, *Bifidobacterium longum* (BL999), which helps dogs maintain calm behavior and cope with stressors such as separation, unfamiliar people, novel sounds, and changes in routine and location. Importantly, *Calming Care* provides another option for dogs that exhibit anxious behaviors like excessive barking, pacing, jumping, and spinning. During stressful situations, *Calming Care* helps dogs maintain positive cardiac activity and helps promote a positive emotional state and healthy immune system.

THE EDGE OF PERFORMANCE NUTRITION

Hunting and working farm dogs benefitted from Purina nutrition sold as *Purina Dog Chow* through feed dealers starting in 1926. Admiral Richard Byrd fed the dog food to his sled dogs in 1933 during a two-year expedition to the South Pole on a recommendation from Massachusetts General Hospital. The dogs thrived in the harsh, cold conditions of the Antarctic expedition.

Purina's expertise understanding the role of nutrition as part of a training and conditioning program came from studies aimed at enhancing performance nutrition. A 12-week study in the late 1980s examined the effect of a progressive training program on unconditioned dogs. Adult Siberian Huskies and English Setters were exercised on a treadmill five days a week, and their health status was compared before and after the exercise program. After six to eight weeks, the dogs became more efficient at work and at using fat rather than carbohydrate as a primary energy source.

"Our work in canine performance has shown that physical exhaustion and stress could result if a dog is not properly conditioned and nutritionally prepared," says Purina Senior Research Scientist Arleigh Reynolds, DVM, PhD, DACVN. "When



Admiral Richard Byrd fed *Purina Dog Chow* to his sled dogs on his 1933 expedition to the South Pole.

stress takes a toll, injuries may be more common. Dehydration, diarrhea, vomiting, and infections may occur, and signs of physical fatigue and mental exhaustion are likely to be noticeable."

Insights and knowledge about how dogs use energy when they are working has provided the nutritional base of *Purina Pro Plan* performance diets with high levels of fat and protein and fewer carbohydrates. Working dogs have increased metabolism due to their physical activity, which in turn increases their need for energy.

"These dogs' energy requirements are best fulfilled by a high-energy, nutrient-dense food," Dr. Reynolds says. "Fat is the most dense energy nutrient, having 2 ¼ times more energy per gram than either protein or carbohydrate. Exercise metabolism for a hardworking dog works best when the body uses fat to produce energy for muscles because fat promotes and supports endurance exercise. Ideally, sporting dogs should be fed a performance food that provides from 28 to 30 percent protein and from 18 to 20 percent fat to sustain their energy demand."

Game-changing nutrition for hardworking dogs is the crux of *Purina Pro Plan's* performance dog food formulas. Purina experts have studied many aspects of exercise nutrition and physiology. These dogs should be fed after exercise and performance, not before, and healthy hydration is key to thermoregulation and reducing heat stress.

Purina has come a long way over the past 125 years. Besides providing nutrition for healthy dogs, *Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Diets*, introduced in 1990 as *Purina Clinical Nutrition Management* brand veterinary diets, offers foods for dogs with special health conditions.

Purina's scientific advancements are the work of more than 500 scientists worldwide who provide expertise in nutrition, veterinary medicine, behavior, immunology, biology, food science, palatability, genomics, and bioinformatics. Their significant contributions appear in over 500 published papers. Today, Purina conducts feeding trials and pet care studies at eight nutrition centers worldwide.

A passion instilled by founder Danforth to produce the best and purest companion animal nutrition products continues today. Purina is dedicated to helping dogs live long, healthy lives through our pet care advances and nutritional excellence. ■

PURINA BRACE BEAGLE AWARD WINNERS ARE 'CHOC,' 'LIONHEART' AND 'SLIM JIM'

Three Brace Beagles answered the cry of “tally-ho” with keen desire and spot-on tracking. Hounds in a league of their own, these 2019 Purina Award winners, along with their owners and handlers, were honored in October at a banquet in Pittsburgh.

A 2 ½-year-old chocolate Beagle named “Choc” showed remarkable talent and a steady disposition to capture the Purina Outstanding Field Trial Brace Beagle Award with two wins and a second place at Federation Futurity trials. The 13-inch female, FCB Steeler Town Boomin Business, won the Purina Derby Award in 2018. Co-bred and co-owned by Niki Happel of Pittsburgh and Marty Parker of Taylorsville, Kentucky, Choc, the youngest Field Champion they finished at 14 months of age, is also their first Purina Award Futurity winner. “To win this award requires an excellent dog and lots of luck,” Happel says. “Choc is one of those dogs who comes around once in a lifetime,” adds Parker, the handler. “She has always had a great nose and excelled at running a rabbit.”

A 3 ½-year-old tricolor male named “Lionheart” is a back-to-back winner of the Purina Field Champion Award, having also won in 2018. His accomplishments have made co-breeders and co-owners Danny Williams of Grass Lake, Michigan, his

son, L.A. “Larry” Williams of Jackson, Michigan, and Rob Dillon of Grass Lake, Michigan, very proud. Two field trial wins and two second places cemented the award for 2XNBC FCB Grass Lake Lionheart. “We’ve had a lot of fun running Lionheart,” says Danny Williams, the handler. “He always wants to please us.” Describing the hound’s style, L.A. Williams says, “He is such a smart dog, and he uses his intelligence to work a check and figure out where a rabbit went. He is very stylish with his careful and positive approach.”

The winner of three derby trials and a third place netted a 1 ½-year-old tricolor male called “Slim Jim” the Purina Derby Award. Owned by Scott Lynch of Monroeville, New Jersey, and handled by Fred and Karen Eurick of Frenchtown, New Jersey, Bare Down Slim Jim showed his tracking finesse in tough spots. “At the Heartland trial, Slim Jim tracked through water and continued running the rabbit,” Karen Eurick says. “He kept going, twisting and turning along the rabbit’s path.” Slim Jim was bred by Bob Coil of Char-Line Beagles in Bulls Gaps, Tennessee.

All three Purina Award winners were fueled to their wins by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula. ■



The 2019 Purina Brace Beagle Award winners are: front row, from left, L.A. “Larry” Williams and “Lionheart,” Marty Parker and “Choc,” and Fred Eurick and “Slim Jim,” and back row, from left, Danny Williams, Niki Happel and Karen Eurick.

PURINA HONORS AWARD-WINNING SHOOTING DOGS AND ALL-AGE BIRD DOGS

Standout bird dogs — the kind that drives excitement with exceptional bird-finding ability, hard-charging stamina and stylish stature — are the 2018-2019 Purina Award winners in all-age and shooting dog horseback stakes. At ceremonies held in June in Nashville, Tennessee, the country's best received top honors for their historical achievements.

Two Pointers rode the circuit with pro handler Shawn Kinkelaar becoming Purina Award winners and contributing to his being named the Purina Top Shooting Dog Handler. An 8-year-old white-and-liver female Pointer named "Bess" had 10 placements, including two first places and three championship wins, to become the Purina Top Shooting Dog. Bred by Keith Wright of Covington, Indiana, Hale's Southern Touch is owned by Dr. Jeffrey Hale of Russellville, Arkansas. "Bess is one of the best dogs I've ever seen. I can only dream to have another dog like her someday," Dr. Hale says.

A 2-year-old white-and-orange female Pointer called "Jill" went to the top with five wins out of nine placements to solidify her status as the Purina Derby Top Shooting Dog. Silver W Jill Z was bred by Brad Sadler of Chelsea Plantation in Ridgeland, South Carolina. Owner Debbie Ozner of Ochlocknee, Georgia,



Pro handler Shawn Kinkelaar wins his fifth Purina Top Shooting Dog Handler Award.

says, "I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to train with a legendary handler like Shawn." Handling his first Purina Derby Award winner, Kinkelaar says, "Jill is an outstanding, promising young dog. She is consistent, easy to run, willing to please, and has a strong desire to find birds."

Six shooting dogs, plus Bess and Jill, contributed to Kinkelaar winning his fifth Purina Top Shooting Dog Handler Award. "It is an honor to handle so many promising, outstanding dogs," says Kinkelaar, noting he puts about 47,000 miles a year on his truck traveling the circuit to field trials across the country. "I take pride in winning the Purina Award for myself, the dogs and their owners."

A hard-charging, consistent 5-year-old white-and-black male Pointer named "Billy Jack" gave his all to owner-handler Thomas Brigman Jr. of Rose Hill, North Carolina, to garner three first places in six placements and become the Purina

Amateur Top Shooting Dog. The win was particularly poignant for Brigman, as Waybetter Billy is the last dog owned by his father, the late Thomas Brigman Sr., who was an avid field trialer. "Billy Jack started and finished every trial the same way — cranked up and always to the front. There's no slowing



Purina Top Shooting Dog Award winners are, from left: Hale's Southern Touch, Silver W Jill Z, and Waybetter Billy.

down or quitting with him,” says Brigman, a three-time winner of Purina Awards. Billy Jack was bred by Carl Bishop of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania.

Winning the Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog Award, his third Purina Award in five years, a 6-year-old orange-and-ticked male Pointer called “Jack” was a strong player on handler Luke Eisenhart’s string, helping the pro win the Purina Top All-Age Handler Award. Dunn’s Tried N True took a strong lead by winning the 2019 National Field Trial Championship. “Jack is an all-around great dog who always gives an impressive performance with his impeccable style, seemingly endless stamina and natural bird-finding ability,” says Will Dunn of Lebanon, Kentucky, co-owner with his wife, Rita. Jack was bred by Chris George of Barnesville, Georgia.

As this year’s top handler, his sixth time to win, Eisenhart, of Leesburg, Georgia, notched a place in history as the winningest Purina Top All-Age Handler. He also became the third handler to score a trifecta by winning the Purina Top All-Age Handler Award and handling the Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog and National Field Trial Champion in the same year. “Winning the Purina Award means a great deal to me,” Eisenhart says. “It’s the mark of a successful season. This prestigious award takes a village to win — good dogs, good owners and good scouts. I wouldn’t be accepting this honor if it weren’t for them.”



Luke Eisenhart becomes the winningest Purina Top All-Age Handler with his sixth win.

A 6-year-old white-and-orange female Pointer called “Claire” took the Purina Amateur Top Field Trial Bird Dog with six placements, including winning a regional championship and placing first at an amateur all-age trial. Owner-handler Jim Pendergest of Lexington, Kentucky, who traveled 18 weekends chasing the award, says, “Claire has a precise talent for finding birds from a great distance.” Formally known as Dialed In, the female Pointer is the first Purina Award winner to whelp a Purina Award winner. Claire’s first litter resulted in the 2016-2017 Purina Derby Top Field Trial Bird Dog Award winner, a female known as Pendency’s Good Grace, handled by Pendergest’s son, Matt, who scouted for him and Claire this past season.

Five placements including winning the 2019 Continental Derby Championship led to “Bill,” a talented 2-year-old white-and-orange male Pointer, becoming the Purina Derby Top Field Trial Dog. Dogwood Bill was bred by Clint Hutchinson of Albany, Georgia, and is co-owned by George and Cindy Watkins and Ben and Jessica Stringer, all of Boston, Georgia. “Bill is a smart dog and consistent bird finder with a bright future ahead of him,” says handler Jamie Daniels of Bronwood, Georgia. “He wants to work for you, not against you. It’s an honor to win this award. It takes a tremendous team to accomplish this feat.”

It was a sweep for *Purina Pro Plan* on this year’s circuit, as all of the shooting dog and all-age winners were fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula on their way to winning. ■



Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog Award winners are, from left: Dunn’s Tried N True, Dialed In, and Dogwood Bill.

Circle of Champions

'HANK,' A CHESAPEAKE BAY RETRIEVER, WINS BESTS IN SHOW AND IS A MASTER HUNTER

A once-in-a-lifetime dog, a 6-year-old brown male Chesapeake Bay Retriever named "Hank" is the first of his breed to win Best in Show and be recognized as a Master Hunter and Qualified All-Age retriever. The No. 1 Chessie, Multi-BIS GCH Sandbar's Hardcore Hank MH QAA is handled at dog shows by pro handler Devon Kipp of North Prairie, Wisconsin, and in hunt tests by owners Andrew Barbouche and Adam Levy of Rochester, Minnesota. "Hank stood out from the beginning with his intense desire to retrieve and wanting to please," Levy says. "His true passion is being a hunting dog. He hunts waterfowl and pheasants in some of the toughest conditions in the Upper Midwest and Canada. On the show circuit, he is very animated and loves all people." Hank was bred by Diane Baker of Sandbar Chesapeakes in Oglesby, Illinois. The handsome Chessie is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

"Hank," a 6-year-old Chesapeake Bay Retriever, is an all-around achiever.



'GUY,' A VIZSLA, DOMINATES TO WIN THE 2019 BIG SKY OPEN SHOOTING DOG CHAMPIONSHIP



A big-hearted, forward-running 9-year-old male Vizsla named "Guy" took charge and won the 2019 Big Sky Open Shooting Dog Championship. With four finds on sharp-tailed grouse and pheasant, 2XNCH 2XNFC NAFC 10XCH 3XRUCH DC AFC CK Touchdown Guy prevailed over Pointers and English Setters at the one-hour horseback stake in May in Circle, Montana. Handler Brian Gingrich of Prewitt, New Mexico, who has trained Guy since he was 18 months old, says, "Guy works hard, and he has nice style and good manners." Guy is a two-time winner of the Vizsla Club of America (VCA) National Field Championship (2013, 2017) and of the National Vizsla Association Open National Championship (2014, 2019). At the 2017 VCA National, Guy also won the National Amateur handled by owner Ron Chenoweth of Paducah, Kentucky — a feat that has only been done three times in VCA history. The following year, his daughter, NFC FC CK Guys Hot N Spicy, won the VCA National Championship and placed second in the National Amateur. "Guy has met all our goals," Gingrich says. "We are proud of him." The talented Vizsla is co-owned by Chenoweth and his wife, Denise, with Jim Gingrich of Winnebago, Illinois. He is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* 30/20 Performance Chicken & Rice Formula.

A standout bird dog who perseveres when the competition is tough, "Guy," a 9-year-old Vizsla, has accomplished all the goals set for him.

CASCADE GERMAN WIREHAIR NAMED 'QUE' WINS 2019 NATIONAL AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP

In his first season as a fully trained bird dog, a 2 ½-year-old male named "Que" got down to business with three chukar finds, including two covey finds, to win the 2019 German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America (GWPCA) National Amateur Championship. Proud owner-handler Jeff Calkins of Baker City, Oregon, says, "This is a goal I have been working toward for quite a while. It was very exciting to win." Calkins also handled NAFC Cascade First Law, as Que is formally known, to his win at the 2018 GWPCA National Field Futurity. Whelped from a 15-year-old frozen semen litter sired by 2XNAFC DC AFC Cascade Jagd Freund, Que represents the fourth generation of National Amateur Champion Wirehairs bred by Calkins' father, Ray Calkins, DVM, of Wilsonville, Oregon. The recipient of the 2017 GWPCA Outstanding Sportsmanship Award and the 2014 AKC Lifetime Achievement Award for Performance Events, Dr. Calkins began his Cascade line in 1979. A high-achieving male out of that litter, NFC NAFC DC Cascade Rogue MH, who is Que's great-grandsire, became the foundation male, producing 3XNFC NAFC DC AFC Cascade Ike MH, Que's grandsire. Que was powered to his win by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

A fourth-generation National Amateur Champion, "Que," a 2 ½-year-old German Wirehaired Pointer, has an intense pointing style.



NO. 1 AMSTAFF IS 'PANCHE,' A TOP TERRIER

A top-notch show dog named "Pancho," the No. 1 American Staffordshire Terrier and No. 3 Terrier, has been winning dog shows since he stepped into the ring at the Montgomery County Kennel Club (all terrier) show in the fall of 2016 as a 6-month-old. Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Alpine's LBK Living On The Road BCAT DS CGC TKN took Best of Breed that weekend and placed second in the Best Bred-By Exhibitor competition handled by Ed Thomason, of Rochester, Washington, breeder and co-owner with his wife, Karen. "He started out with a bang," Thomason says. "Pancho has a lovely head and natural terrier drive, and he's happy and fun." The couple's top-winning AmStaff out of five generations, Pancho has won 41 Bests in Show and 143 Terrier Group Firsts. He took back-to-back Bests in Show last March at the Great Western Terrier Association of Southern California shows. The 3 ½-year-old red-and-white male is co-owned by Lacey Keller of St. Augustine, Florida, Kelly Townsend of Atlanta, and Amy Tighe of Seattle. Thomason attributes Pancho's excellent condition to the workouts he gets with assistant Shahntae Martinez. Pancho is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula.

"Pancho," the top winner out of five generations, took Best of Breed at the 2019 American Staffordshire Terrier Club of America National Specialty.

SCHIPPERKE NAMED 'COLTON' SETS BREED RECORD WITH 32 BESTS IN SHOW



The top-winning Schipperke in breed history is a handsome, outgoing 8-year-old black male named "Colton." Earning 38 career Bests in Show and over 200 Groups Firsts, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Rivendel's Barefoot Bandit surpassed the 2012 record of 20 Bests in Show held by his famous uncle, GCH Dante Fire When Ready HOF ("TJ"). Handling her first Schipperke after many years working with Boxers, Christa Cook of Edwardsville, Illinois, says, "Colton has a correct profile, a hallmark of the breed, which is created by the varying lengths of coat from the ruff around his neck to his thick culottes, giving him a gorgeous silhouette. He is well-built, with a compact, cobby, thickset body, and has a beautiful head and face." Colton became the first Schipperke to win the Non-Sporting Group at Westminster in 2019, though he was not able to compete for Best in Show due to a business conflict between the owners and partner of judge Peter Green. The friendly little Schipperke is owned by Sandra Middlebrooks of Fairhope, Alabama, Dr. William and Tina Truesdale of Seekonk, Massachusetts, and breeder Amy Halterman of Howell, Michigan. Colton is fed *Purina Pro Plan Sensitive Skin & Stomach Small Breed Formula*.

The winningest Schipperke in breed history, "Colton," 8 years old, is a two-time winner of the Schipperke Club of America National Specialty.

'TAM,' A 15-INCH BEAGLE, IS NO. 1 FOR TWO STRAIGHT YEARS

Effortless movement, correct conformation and the sweetest temperament imaginable has made "Tam" the No.1 15-inch Beagle and No. 3 Hound in 2018 and 2019. The 4 ½-year-old tricolor male is shown by longtime Beagle handler Doug Belter of Hastings, Michigan. The winner of 39 Bests in Show and two National Beagle Club Specialties in 2016 and 2018, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Gwencalon's Tam O'Shanter is his handler's top-winning Beagle. Tam also is the top-winning Beagle bred and owned by Dr. William and Kathleen Friend of Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada. "One of six puppies in his litter, Tam stood out when he was 8 weeks old," Dr. Friend says. "We knew he was going to be outstanding because he moved cleanly and beautifully and was very quiet and calm." Sired by GCH Just-Wright The Full Monty RN, the No. 1 15-inch Beagle in 2008 and 2009, Tam is out of the Friends' female, AM/CAN CH Gwencalon's Aster. The good-natured hound is fed *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS Small Bites Lamb & Rice Formula*.

A 15-inch tricolor male Beagle named "Tam" is a top Hound Group winner.



NATIONAL RETRIEVER CHAMPIONS 'FOXX,' 'LEXIE' & 'MONA' STAND OUT TO WIN



PHOTO: MARK ATWATER/UPCLOSEPHOTO.COM

NFC-FC-AFC Bayou Teche Swing For The Fence and owner-handler Lauren Hays Curtis win the National Open Retriever Championship.

Trained exclusively by Hays Curtis, an amateur who has competed in retriever trials since 2004, Foxx showed promise at an early age, running in 11 derby trials and earning 23 points. As a 3-year-old, he was inducted into the Texas Retriever Hall of Fame for Double Header Winners after winning the Open and Amateur Tejas Retriever Club trials. The gentle-natured Foxx, who is named for baseball great Jimmie Foxx, made Hays Curtis the third woman in history to win the highly competitive National Open, after Judy Aycock, the 1976 winner, and Laura Parrott, who won in 1997. The National Open, held in November in Corning, California, had 98 competitors. Hays Curtis has competed in five National Opens with two different dogs and had two Finalists — Foxx and his sire, FC-AFC Bayou Teche Eye On The Ball, a Finalist in 2012.

As the tests got harder, “Lexie” (NAFC-FC Kirkwood’s Ace of Lone Star), a 7-year-old female Labrador Retriever continued to get better, topping off her performance by winning the National Amateur Retriever

Championship. Handled by owner Casey Adams of Cottonwood, Arizona, Lexie outperformed 128 retrievers at the National Amateur in June in Ronan, Montana, “She was able to step up her game in the difficult eighth, ninth and 10th series,” Adams says. “Lexie is always trying to do the right thing and always gives you her best effort. She’s been that way since she was a puppy. From the first time I saw her at 8 weeks, she grabbed ahold of my pant leg and didn’t let go. We latched on to each other right then. We have a pretty neat bond.” During her derby career, Adams knew he had something special when 13-month-old Lexie won three trials in a row. They went on to win the 2013 Purina Outstanding Derby Retriever Award.

With her characteristic spot-on marking style, a 21-month-old female Labrador Retriever named “Mona” (NDC Spark Your Enthusiasm) won the National Derby Retriever Championship handled by owner Don English of Dallas. Mona delivered a solid performance and gave English his biggest career win since starting in retriever stakes in 2012. “It was

surreal to win,” says English, giving credit to his training partners, John Russell and Robby Bickley, both of Valley View, Texas. “They have a lot of experience competing at the national level and helped us stay focused during the championship.” English, who bought Mona at 8 weeks of age and began her basic training when she was 4 months old, says he also has learned the importance of allowing a retriever to advance at his or her own pace from watching amateur trainer Martha Russell of Valley View, Texas. Held in October in Sedalia, Missouri, the National Derby Retriever Championship included 34 derby-age competitors.

All three 2019 Retriever National Champions were fueled to their wins by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula. In addition, all 10 Derby Finalists, all 15 Amateur Finalists, and 15 of 18 Open Finalists are fed *Purina Pro Plan*. ■



NAFC-FC Kirkwood’s Ace of Lone Star and owner-handler Casey Adams are the National Amateur Retriever Championship winners.



PHOTO: DEANA WOLFE/COURTESY OF RETRIEVER NEWS

NDC Spark Your Enthusiasm and owner-handler Don English capture the National Derby Retriever Championship.

Please visit the Circle of Champions on the *Purina Pro Club* website at purinaproclub.com to read about top-performing show and sporting dogs powered by *Purina Pro Plan*.

PURINA OUTSTANDING COONHOUND AWARD WINNERS ARE ‘CROW’ AND ‘DIDDY’

Two English Coonhounds stood out in the pack and became the 2018 Purina Outstanding Coonhound Award winners. Honored Labor Day weekend 2019 at Autumn Oaks in Richmond, Indiana, these winners in the yearlong program qualified out of their respective regions for the Purina National Championship held April 2019 in Greencastle, Indiana, and advanced to win the overall awards.

A fast-moving 4-year-old bluetick male English Coonhound named “Crow” proved his natural tracking ability to win the Purina Outstanding Nite Hunt Coonhound Award. Handled by owner Asa D. Briggs Jr. of Morley, Michigan, GR NITE CH(2) ‘PR’ Main Street Wild Crow qualified for the Purina National Championship out of the North East Region 2, advancing to the semifinals and then the final cast of four hounds. His littermate brother, GR NITE CH ‘PR’ Coonvalley Blackjack, took Reserve National Champion to Crow’s National Champion. Bradley Ryan of Arab, Alabama, is the breeder.

“Crow is quick on the track and a good strike dog,” says Briggs, who bought the talented English Coonhound in March 2018 with co-owners Shane Cannon of Maysville, Missouri, and Troy Schellhorn of Rea, Missouri. “He opens with a chop mouth when he’s tracking and bawls once he trees.”

Building a bond with Crow came slowly, says Briggs, who was pleased to win his first Purina Coonhound Award after 32 years in the sport. Their success includes winning the National Grand Nite English Coonhound Championship at Autumn Oaks and the Michigan State Championship. Crow took third in the United English Breeders & Fanciers Invitational. “He’s my buddy,” Briggs says.

The Purina Outstanding Bench Show Coonhound is a 5-year-old tricolor female English Coonhound lovingly known as “Diddy.” Owned by Bruce Beland of Bedford, Pennsylvania, and handled

by his daughter, Amelia, GR CH ‘PR’ Will’s Mt. Katie-Did qualified for the Purina National Championship from the North East Region. The prestigious show dog was the Overall Bench Show Champion at the Purina National Championship in 2017, when it was an invitational event based on state championship wins.

Sired by the Belands’ male, GR CH ‘PR’ Will’s Mt. Bullberry, Diddy was bred by Joe D’Arco of Jackson, North Carolina. The hound was Amelia’s pick of the litter. Amelia’s love for bench shows evolved through the UKC Youth Coonhound Series, following in the footsteps of her older sisters, Amanda and Autumn, after first being inspired by her father’s enjoyment of pleasure hunting with coonhounds.

“Diddy has been my favorite dog to show because she wants to please me,” Amelia says. “She always watches me closely, and as soon as I take her in the ring, her tail goes up. I have won the most with her, too.”

These coonhound winners were fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula. ■



GR NITE CH(2) ‘PR’ Main Street Wild Crow, above, is the Purina Outstanding Nite Hunt Coonhound, and GR CH ‘PR’ Will’s Mt. Katie-Did, right, is the Purina Outstanding Bench Show Coonhound.



#1

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Breed Snapshot

GORDON SETTER: BEAUTY & BRAINS

A beautiful breed, hardwired with brains and bird sense, the Gordon Setter is a good-sized, sturdily built black-and-tan dog with the strength and stamina to work all day afield over the craggy terrain of his native Scotland. Early bloodlines are traced to 1620, but it was not until the late 1820s that the breed gained prominence when Alexander Gordon, 4th Duke of Gordon, established his kennel at Gordon Castle.

George Blunt of New York imported the first Gordon Setters to the U.S. These Castle Gordon Setters were named "Rake," a curly coated white setter with a black saddle and tan points, and "Rachel," a black-and-tan setter who was given to Daniel Webster. Charles T. Inglee helped to perfect American lines with his imports from Norway, Denmark and Sweden, producing 40 champions before he retired in 1935 and contributing to the breed's popularity as a faithful gun dog and companion.

The stylish Gordon Setter has a silky black coat, rich mahogany markings and well-feathered legs. A slow-maturing breed, the Gordon maintains a playful puppy enthusiasm well into middle age and has stamina and function well into old age. The Gordon Setter is a charming house dog that is happiest when being active, thus makes a formidable competitor in field trials, hunt tests, obedience, agility, and dog shows. A heavy-boned substantial dog, males are 24 to 27 inches at the shoulders and weigh from 55 to 80 pounds, and females are 23 to 26 inches at the shoulders and weigh from 45 to 70 pounds. All who know and love Gordon Setters adore their devotion and loyalty to their family, a characteristic that is mutually shared.

Sources: *The Complete Dog Book*, Official Publication of the American Kennel Club, and website of the Gordon Setter Club of America (gsca.org)

At right: DC/AFC Carolina's All Hat, No Cattle MH, owned by Bill and Jan Holloway, as photographed for *Today's Breeder* in 2009.



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