

The Importance of the CHIC DNA Repository to your AWS

From the Health and Genetics committee

The AWSC Health and Genetics committee is sponsoring a low-cost blood draw at the 2009 National Specialty in Alexandria, MN, Friday, August 7, from 1-4 pm. The site will be at the Elk Lake Heritage Preserve. Below is information about the DNA Repository and why the donation of your dog's blood is important to the entire breed.

The Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) DNA repository is jointly sponsored by the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) and the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). The repository will become a centralized, multi-generational DNA bank for each breed that participates. The objectives of the program are to:

- Facilitate more rapid research progress by expediting the sample collection process;
- Provide researchers with the optimized family groups needed for research;
- Allow breeders to take advantage of future DNA-based tests as they become available; and to
- Foster a team environment between breeders, owners and researchers to improve the likelihood of genetic discovery.

In the CHIC DNA registry each DNA sample will be associated with the dog's pedigree and medical history. (An application and health questionnaire is filled out and submitted with each sample.) Dogs with specific diagnoses can be identified in the database and their DNA tested by researchers interested in that condition. The stored DNA is coded so that the dog's identity is not disclosed to researchers. If further family history or follow-up is needed, contact with owners will be initiated by CHIC. If your dog develops a new health problem, you may update the information with CHIC.

We know that many of you have been asked to donate blood for DNA-based studies in the past. Because there was no centralized DNA repository in the past, progress was slow as individual researchers had to find their own canine families to study. The DNA they collected was not readily available to other laboratories and the samples they collected may have been thrown out after a period of time. The CHIC DNA repository serves as a place to store your dogs' DNA for generations to come. If a new, critical, DNA-based test is developed for our breed in the future, any owner can request and pay for any of their living or deceased dog's samples to be tested.

The CHIC DNA repository is strictly for research purposes. All samples provided to researchers are coded so that the identity of the dog is not known. If a researcher ever needs more information about a dog, CHIC will be the contact. All researchers requesting access to this DNA must apply to use it; their research proposal must be reviewed and approved by AKC/CHF and OFA prior to access. If you submitted blood/DNA samples to other studies in the past, you will have to submit a new sample for the CHIC DNA repository. *If you have submitted AKC DNA profile samples, these are only used for identification, litter verification, and frequent sire programs. AKC DNA samples cannot be used for any other purpose.*

The creation of the CHIC DNA repository makes it more critical than ever to ask everyone to AKC register their AWS pup. *Every dog is important because even if a dog has no health problems, it might be related to another dog in a study someday.* In familial studies, each sample increases the value of the others. The CHIC DNA repository can store enough DNA so that researchers and breeders will have it when they need it.

Because DNA extracted from blood provides the best quality sample, the Health and Genetics committee has worked with CHIC to bring you a reduced-fee blood draw clinic. The fee for a blood sample submission at the National Specialty is just \$10. We are requesting that anyone with an AKC-registered AWS register for the clinic ahead of time by sending \$10 per dog and the completed application and health form to:

Kathy Wiederholt; 1183 4th St. S; Carrington, ND 58421 email: katron@daktel.com

You can print a copy of the form from the Health and Genetics page at the AWSC website www.americanwaterspanielclub.org. You can also call Kathy at 701-652-1230 and she will send you the form.

Important:

- You can participate in this blood draw clinic for \$10. **Please register by July 15, 2009.**
- You can send a blood sample to the repository at ANY time for \$20 (plus your vet & postage fees)
- You can send in cheek swab samples at ANY time for \$5.
- **Any AKC-registered AWS is eligible.** *Notify AWS owners you know in the area!*

You can also read more at: www.caninehealthinfo.org/dnabank.html

See: An excellent article written by a breeder: http://www.akc.org/enewsletter/akc_breeder/2007/fall/dna.cfm