Basset Hound Club of America, Inc.

AKC Member Since 1937

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Basset Hound Club of America Health Policy (revised January 9, 2019)

The Basset Hound Club of America, Inc. (BHCA) is committed to improving quality of life for Basset Hounds and their owners by helping Basset Hounds live longer, healthier lives. The Club supports and encourages research on health issues of interest to Basset Hounds (and other breeds). Members are expected to ensure that their dogs are kept safe at all times. Dogs should be maintained with their good health in mind, including adequate and appropriate attention, socialization, grooming, feeding, veterinary care, housing, and exercise. Members who breed Basset Hounds bear the additional responsibility of working to reduce the prevalence of genetic disorders in Basset Hounds.

In 2016, the BHCA completed a comprehensive survey of the health of more than 7,500 Basset Hounds. This policy is informed by the results of that survey and by current science. It will be updated as new data and new diagnostic tools become available.

BHCA encourages responsible breeding through testing for the more common genetic disorders known to affect Basset Hounds where such testing is justified by evidence-based scientific research and validated test methods. Where proven genetic testing exists, the genetic status of the sire and dam must be known prior to undertaking a breeding, through one of the following:

- Examining test results previously completed; or
- Examining health registry database entries; or
- Completing testing prior to breeding.

If frozen semen from an untested, deceased dog is to be used and testing is not possible, the dam must test clear and resulting puppies must be tested to determine their status.
No affected dog should be bred. Breeding of a carrier should only be undertaken with a mate that tests clear, and any offspring should be tested.

BHCA has identified two conditions for which proven genetic testing currently exists:

1. Thrombopathia genetic testing is available through Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine and is strongly recommended. This test is determinative for the genetic status of the dog (i.e., clear, carrier, affected). Breeding must be avoided if both sire and dam are either

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affected or carriers. Breeders and owners who have had dogs tested through that laboratory should disclose their dog's results.

2. The BHCA has supported research on glaucoma. Progress has been made with the discovery of the genetic basis for one of the two forms affecting Basset Hounds with glaucoma. A genetic test for the less prevalent Primary Open Angle Glaucoma (POAG) is available and is strongly recommended. In the United Kingdom, approximately 15% of Basset Hounds carry the mutation and 6 in 1000 of their offspring are expected to develop the disease (data from Animal Health Trust). At this time, the prevalence of POAG in U.S. Basset Hounds is unknown. For more information and to order the test see https://www.ahtdnatesting.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/POAG-BaH-information-sheet.pdf .

To date, there is no determinative genetic test for the more prevalent Primary Closed Angle Glaucoma (PCAG), nor are there other tests that are able to reliably predict the onset of this disease. However, physical examination of the eye may be useful in identifying Basset Hounds at elevated risk of developing glaucoma. Breeders should consider a consultation with a board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist (Diplomate ACVO[1]) and follow their recommendations for care. While not predictive for the development of glaucoma, gonioscopy and high frequency ultrasound can be useful in dogs over the age of one year in determining the presence and severity of pectinate ligament disorders and assessing the individual dog's potential risk of developing primary closed angle glaucoma (PCAG). If, as a result of eye examination, elevated risk for glaucoma is suspected, a comprehensive monitoring regimen may be recommended by the examining veterinary ophthalmologist.

Breeders have a responsibility to research and understand basic genetics and common breed health problems. BHCA strongly discourages the use in a breeding program of any Basset Hound known to be affected by a genetic health disorder. To advance knowledge of the prevalence of health disorders and those disorders suspected to have a genetic basis, breeders are encouraged to voluntarily:

1. Permit their veterinarian to release the results of any health-related testing to the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) Database, http://www.caninehealthinfo.org/.
2. Allow disclosure of thrombopathia genetic testing results maintained in the Auburn University Basset Hound Thrombopathia Testing database or by providing proof of testing to interested parties.
3. Provide results of primary open angle glaucoma (POAG) DNA tests to interested parties.
4. Exchange test and screening results when planning matings.

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5. Discuss breed health issues with puppy buyers, providing full disclosure on puppies offered for sale and their parents.

Additional conditions that breeders may want to evaluate when planning a breeding include any history in the bloodlines of hip or elbow dysplasia or ununited anconeal process, and any history of temperament issues. If these are present, then appropriate tests would include:

- For screening for joint/skeletal disorders: radiographs (x-rays) evaluated by a recognized registry, e.g., Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), PennHip, Institute for Genetic Disease Control in Animals (GDC), Ontario Veterinary College (OVC).
- For temperament issues: temperament testing using the Puppy Aptitude Testing or American Temperament Test Society, Inc. (ATTS) certification, where appropriate.

Additionally, important health issues known to affect Basset Hounds, but for which no testing has yet been identified include lymphoma, hemangiosarcoma, gastric-dilatation/volvulus (bloat), and intervertebral disc disease. Breeders should discuss prevalence of these issues in their bloodlines as they plan breedings or sell puppies.

[1] ACVO: American College of Veterinary Opthamologists: http://www.acvo.org/

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