

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals and The Canine Health Information Center – Part 2

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THE CANINE HEALTH INFORMATION CENTER DNA REPOSITORY

One of the original goals of the Canine Health Information Center was to establish a canine DNA bank so that samples would be available for future research and testing aimed at reducing the incidence of inherited disease in dogs. In an article that appeared in the 2006 issue of *D – The Dog News Annual*, OFA COO Eddie Dzuik wrote: “With the recent completion of the mapping of the canine genome, canine health research at the molecular level will continue to increase exponentially. To date, research has been both delayed and hampered by a lack of appropriate DNA samples. Too often research projects have spent up to a year in the sample-gathering phase, before the real research efforts could even begin. The mission of the CHIC DNA bank is to facilitate the research process by collecting samples, along with the corresponding critical elements — pedigree and phenotypic health history — and making the samples available to approved research efforts up front.”

DNA Repository Pilot Program

The pilot program of the CHIC DNA Repository kicked off at the Golden Retriever National Specialty on Sept. 26, 2005, when CHIC collected more than 600 DNA samples. More than 250 samples were later collected, demonstrating the outstanding commitment of Golden breeders and owners. The Golden Retriever Club of America has been supportive of OFA efforts from the beginning, starting with their attendance at the original meeting with John Olin in 1964. Rachel Page Elliott, Golden breeder and author of the famous book *Dog Steps*, was an early supporter of OFA and served on its board of directors for 17 years.

Eddie Dzuik shared a story about collecting DNA at the Golden Retriever specialty for the pilot DNA program in the fall of 2005: “We were super organized and had volunteers to collect samples. We thought that if we were able to collect 100 samples we could consider this effort a huge success. We started about 9 a.m. and didn’t stop until the end of the show. We collected 300 samples on the first day. The cooler I had brought along to store the samples was too small and we had run out of blood tubes, so while I was out shopping for the tubes I purchased several bags of ice. I went back to the hotel room and filled the bathtub with ice and stored the DNA samples in the tub overnight until I could package and ship them out the next morning. We continued to collect samples the next day and ended up with over 600 samples. This is quite a testament to the Golden people and their interest in the health of their breed.”

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