

Breeder's Notebook

Health and disease registries offer hope

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"Sure, he's got good hips. You can ask anybody." Oh yeah? Like who? Even if I got permission for this owner's veterinarian to talk about his dog to me, who's to say this veterinarian is an expert at judging hips? What about people who may need to know about this dog's hips in years to come? The following are well-established health and disease registries that sought to answer these questions.

OFA: In the 1960s, inventor, investor, sportsman, and field-trial enthusiast John Olin found his own field dogs affected by hip dysplasia. Olin realized that this word-of-mouth record keeping was never going to help lessen the incidence of hip dysplasia, so he met with veterinarians and representatives of breed clubs to discuss a better alternative. The result was the formation of Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), in 1966, a not-for-profit foundation aimed at providing radiographic evaluation, data management, and genetic counseling for canine hip dysplasia.

Since then, more than a million dogs have been entered into the OFA database, which is searchable on its website. And the OFA has expanded its mission to include other hereditary diseases, including elbow dysplasia, patellar luxation, sebaceous adenitis, autoimmune thyroiditis, congenital heart disease, congenital deafness, Legg-Calve-Perthes disease, shoulder osteochondrosis dessicans, and 35 DNA-based databases. The foundation has contributed nearly \$3 million to research aimed at preventing hereditary health disease in companion animals.

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