



BULL TERRIER CLUB OF AMERICA, INC. TM

Founded 1897

The Board of Directors of the Bull Terrier Club of America have approved this health statement concerning health issues in Bull Terriers with their recommendations for health testing which also appears in the Club's Code of Ethics.

The following represents a basic minimum responsible approach to the application of screening health tests, which should be employed by responsible Bull Terrier Club of America breeder members. These recommendations represent the current best understanding of these issues at this time. As greater understanding of these issues become available, these guidelines will be revised to reflect the then current recommendation regarding these health issues, including adding specific guidelines and recommendations as the progression of science dictates. The breeding of purebred dogs is not an exact science. It is not always possible to prevent the occurrence of inherited diseases, as there are not yet definitive tests to identify carriers of genetic diseases in our breed. A breeder's obligation with regard to genetic diseases is to make every effort to prevent their occurrence and share openly and honestly all information available regarding the genetic health status of his/her dogs.

Both stud dogs and bitches should be health tested before breeding, and annually as required for certain tests. Minimally, these tests should include a physical examination, screening for parasites and evaluation of the following four specific areas:

Heart – Minimal testing for heart murmurs is by auscultation of heart sounds before and after exercise. This can be performed by a veterinary practitioner or a specialist. The BTCA prefers that an internist and/or cardiologist auscult all breeding animals. Optimally all breeding animals should have an echocardiogram (heart ultrasound) performed by a specialist for a complete evaluation.

Kidney – A urine sample should be checked for the presence of protein. This test is called Urine Protein Creatinine ratio (UP/C). All breeding dogs should be checked annually and bitches before each breeding. The recommended UP/C should be <0.5.

Hearing – An electronic test for congenital deafness (Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response or BAER Test) should be done on all puppies before the puppy leaves for its new home. This test is generally performed once in early puppyhood (over 35 days of age) and is usually stable throughout the life of the dog. The BTCA recommends that all animals used for breeding should be BAER tested and have bilateral hearing. Likewise, no bilaterally deaf dogs should be bred.

Patella Luxation – This test checks for chronic dislocation of the patella (knee cap). The test is performed by both veterinary practitioners and orthopedic specialists by manual palpation of the patella. The BTCA recommends that all breeding animals should be free of patellar luxation.

Submitted by:

*Susan Murphy
Corresponding Secretary
Health Committee, Chairman
Bull Terrier Club of America*