

DRAFT Priorities Survey Results for Long Range Planning

DRAFT Priority Area Goals

(June 15, 2011)

1. Health, Longevity, and Research Goals

General Comments

- Congratulations on the direction the club is keeping Health on High Priority.
- I feel the DPCA is very forward with researching the problems with the breed and does the best job that can be done.
- There are so many health issues with Dobermans. Many die way too young, we celebrate when one reaches 10! We need to make healthy dogs our primary issue.
- There is no point in protecting the breed from legislation if we cannot protect it from itself due to recognized health issues the breed has. There needs to be a balance.

DRAFT Long Range Goals

- Big-picture accomplishments within ~5yrs
 - Should be feasible and measurable
 - Intended to reflect and encompass the range of survey responses
1. Improve Doberman health and longevity and reduce the incidence of early death from DCM, cancer, and other Doberman diseases.
 2. Provide programs and incentives that motivate breeders and buyers to make Health and Longevity their top priority.
 3. Provide online tools, interactive venues, and learning opportunities that enable breeders and buyers to stay in front of the science and other challenges in making informed decisions on breeding and puppy selection for health and longevity that also advances their respective Sport(s) and the Breed.
 4. Attract funding and intellectual resources to Doberman research.

DRAFT Ongoing Goals

- Numbers noted at the end of line items (#) indicate multiple survey responses

Goals 1, 3: Keep members informed of latest advancements in health issues, testing, and treatments, and provide resources for basic health care.

1. Convey latest information on health issues, tests, and treatments to the membership (including pet owners) and, when appropriate and possible, to the general public, related organizations, and the veterinary community (2)
- a. Provide educational seminars with speakers on National and Chapter Club level throughout the year
 - b. Continue to use the National as a place where researchers present cutting edge research and inform the fancy on their progress and upcoming needs.(5)

Researchers funded by DPCA should be asked to present updates and results

- c. Provide a dedicated means for the Doberman community to stay abreast of the latest health issues and advances in a dynamic way as things change with them, *i.e.* an online forum for questions and comments with a database of meaningful links for additional information.

1) Provide Up-to-date information on Cardio testing and treatments.

- 2) We need to identify and get everyone talking about health issues that are killing our dogs, *i.e.* DCM, Liver

2. Develop a health and research **outreach package to new members** that provides information and a member contact to facilitate their understanding of issues and encourage their involvement.

3. Provide **yearly accumulation of research** regarding health problems and up and coming research and results of research in the Pipeline.

4. Provide **basic health** information (6)

- a. Improve overall health through appropriate, informed ongoing care.
- b. nutrition, bad foods
- c. dangerous items
- d. how to raise the perfect Doberman
- e. proper exercising
- f. alternative approaches and other cures/remedies
- g. Increase owner awareness of importance of early detection of heart issues through echo, holter, genetic testing.
- h. Build a database of basic care, health, and prevention information

1) Many Dobe owners are misinformed about DCM and do not know that annual echo and holtering is important to early detection and treatment.

- i. temperament issues: how to spot potential problems and deal with them

5. **Increase awareness of Doberman health issues** within the general public and veterinary industry

- a. Disseminate information on key health issues that is understandable by the general public as a primer followed by more clinical explanations.
- b. Convey health information to general public to help dogs in rescue

Goal 1, 4: Help make health testing more available.

1. **Provide information resources** to plan and participate in health testing / clinics

- a. Continue to provide and encourage health testing at the Nationals
- b. Foster and publicize prevention and testing to screen, reduce and/or manage major health issues
- c. Work with chapter clubs so research testing / health clinics can be done nationwide. Encourage same clubs to enlist local researchers/vets to speak at Doberman events throughout the year (3)

2. DPCA and Chapter Clubs spearhead **affordable testing** throughout the year.

- a. All health testing available at Nationals at a low cost - echoes, holter monitors, thyroid, vWD, *etc.*
- b. Subsidize health testing for members

- 1) DPCA offer partial payment towards the cost of research tests like the one Dr. Meurs has developed, *e.g.* if the test costs \$60, DPCA could match \$30 towards each test submitted by DPCA members, thereby making testing and research more successful and accessible.
- c. We need an affordable test that can be mandated so all people who want to breed their dogs can afford to test prior to breeding and can use the validated results to promote their healthy puppies

Goals 4, 1: Foster the development and expansion of Doberman research programs through effective sampling and collection initiatives, funding support, where possible, and outreach to researchers.

Encourage the membership to get involved in the various important studies. (3)

Provide contact information

Provide periodic reports and updates.

Get the word out more quickly on new areas of work and how to get involved.

- d. Provide a more interactive information exchange between research programs and the DPCA membership. The recent increase in requests to submit Doberman swabs, *etc.* is a great step.
- e.
 - f. Provide a central database of samples available to all validated research programs. This database would be sponsored and funded by DPCA.

2. Continue to fund and support research. Forward moving research should always be a top priority of the DPCA. (7)

- a. Donate a set amount each year.
- b. Allocate more money for research. (10)
- c. Part of the litter fee could go to research
- d. Fund research in areas voted upon by members and easily accessible by members on both coasts.

1) Much of the funding is left to do at the National rather than aggressively promoting year round.

- e. Continue to develop partnerships with other clubs/organizations sharing common goals with DPCA to more effectively advance research funding and sampling initiatives to combat health issues affecting the breed.

Continue to develop partnerships with universities

- f. Provide even more aggressive support of research initiatives. For those who are looking for ways to serve their club, man phone lines, hold raffles, support research (5)

Encourage **researchers to provide funding support** for sampling, where possible.

4. Develop resources to draw more researchers and intellectual resources to Doberman research.

- a. Fund the OFA DNA blood bank sample collections.
- b. Inspired by the success of the outreach to Drs. Meurs, Neff, Estrada, build an online and communication structure that researchers will automatically turn to for samples when submitting proposals and research plans. This may help draw academic and other funding to Doberman research.

Establish and expand sampling and collection outreach procedures

- 2) Develop a central database of samples available to all validated research programs. This database would be sponsored and funded by DPCA

- 3) The researchers may, in turn, develop articles, presentations, webcasts, *etc.* to help make the DPCA the GOTO Resource for Doberman health information.
- c. Expand volunteer positions on a new or existing committee to expand and maintain level of effort to accomplish goals

Goals 3, 1: Clarify the value and limitations of new tests and cutting edge research to breeders, all members, and when appropriate and possible, the general public. Do the same for well-established health tests.

- 1. **Provide information resources** to convey the value and limitation of new health tests. (4)
 - a. Our keystone should be open and continued Breeder education/updates on all aspects of medical, scientific and nutritional research and studies. We must never assume just because information has been available for some time, everyone knows about it, understands it, and is putting it into practice in their breeding programs. Some folks may not want to be embarrassed to ask or afraid others will talk about them and their lack of knowledge.
 - b. Convey and clarify information regarding the latest advancements in DCA treatment options, PREVENTION, and factors that may influence penetrance, *i.e.* diet, exercise.
 - c. Continue to educate members that one test is not the answer - does not mean their dogs are home free
 - d. I like the way the new cardio gene marker test was handled so far and the presentation at the National. I do wish the results were all made public however or at the very least all made available to the DPCA for archive purposes if nothing else
- 2. **Develop Brief Fact Sheets on both new and existing health tests** to increase understanding of their respective value and limitations. Post on website. (6)
 - a. Include value and limitations
 - b. Fact Sheets with GoToMeetings Q&A opportunities and presentations, allowing breeders/owners to put less than perfect results in the proper context, increasing full disclosure of results.
 - c. Increase understanding of vWD and the difference between affected and clinically affected.

[Range of survey comments regarding new tests, esp. WSU Dr. Meurs PDK₄ test:](#)

The DPCA has spent years going down the wrong path with respect to health testing, it will take years to undo the damage we have done

As a medical doctor and a Doberman breeder I am deeply concerned about DPCA's stance with respect to health testing. While well intentioned, it is clear that people making policy decisions hadn't a clue what they were doing, and the end result is that we endorse "tests" that are essentially worthless to breeders in a breeding context.

Nothing will change here....Some will jump on a bandwagon, stating we all need to do this and that with our breedings, or perhaps you will not be able to be a DPCA member if not....The testing is not a magic bullet for the breed....Nothing will stopped the progress in the breedings done today.

If we ever find a realistic test, then let's use it. Right now there is none. I'm all for a reliable test. Get one reliable and everyone will use it.

I think that this testing thing is being pushed way beyond belief. I have found and my veterinary specialist agrees that it is not a valid predictor of outcome. Someone is making major bucks in this area and keeping out those who don't agree.

I do not need somebody telling me how to test my dogs. We are aware.

The DPCA has no clue about medical science or the value of the test/evaluations they currently

endorse. The result is that we are not actually advancing the breed at all. We need medical professionals to review the tests we embrace and endorse, BEFORE we continue to endorse them. We need to be clear to the general public that it is not possible to guarantee a genetically perfect dog. The Washington civil action Skaar v. Babbitt should be a wake up call.

The new 'DNA' test for cardio was rushed to be marketed in my opinion so they could get more research dollars.... I am doing the test on my dogs. But! I am not so sure it will be a positive in the future in eliminated heart problems in the breed.

It seems to me that there is so much confusion about the new DNA test for cardio, and we all blindly sent in our DNA samples after the national last year. The issue seems more confused now than it ever was.

Goal 3, 2, 1: Clarify and increase awareness of what health testing is recommended

1. Provide information to the public of the diseases that affect Dobermans and the **tests that should be done** prior to breeding by responsible breeders.
2. **Increase awareness of available tests** to address priority health issues, including vWD, thyroid, CERF, cardiac soundless, hips, and skeletal, and others noted in this survey (*See Table at the end of this document*)
 - a. Increase awareness of the importance of health testing, *i.e.* written articles.
 - b. Test results should be accompanied by information clarifying the significance and limitations of each test, *i.e.* Dr. Meur's flyer sent with test results and her followup webcasts/presentations (3)
3. Promote breeder participation in **genetic screening** to improve the health of the Breed, and discourage irresponsible breeding, *i.e.* breeding too many dogs that have cardio. (5)
4. Encourage breeders to do better **pedigree research** so as to concentrate on lowering the risk of early deaths due to the diseases attributed to genetics. Search health throughout the pedigree, not just breeding pair. (3)

Range of Comments regarding testing and disclosure of results

- a. Hold all breeders to the same testing requirements, based on their respective lineage/pedigree, and the same test disclosure requirements. (3)
- b. Provide a mechanism that relies on a neutral party to report results accurately and consistently for everyone. (3)
- c. I don't believe any mandates should be made on DPCA breeders since this does abridge their constitutional rights relating to property ownership. I think the pressure to conform should come from the market of puppy buyers.
- d. Continue posting genetic testing results
- e. More breeders opting for open disclosure of complete health testing and records. (2)
- f. Encourage members to do at least minimal health testing without promising those tests will guarantee health.
- g. Encourage test and tell (6), especially to buyers.
- h. Exert more pressure to test and tell. Not enough breeders are testing and focusing on the results of those tests.
- i. Education for breeders that is honest. Let's not hide the test results. Do not make it a sin if you honestly report your dogs' test results.
- j. I would like to see more health testing done on dogs/bitches before they are bred. Not just tested but also NOT bred if the test results are not good.
- k. Health testing should have incentives and requirements placed upon breeders.

- l. In order to be listed on the Breeder's Referral Page, there should be certain minimal health testing criteria on sires and dams
- m. Some way to eliminate from the Doberman registry breeders who do not prescreen their litters. Similar to the efforts made to reduce albinism in the breed.
- n. Sanctions for those breeding dogs with no health testing or breeding without regard to health
- o. Require breeders in DPCA Breeder Directory to do minimal health tests (hips, vWD etc.) on any stud or brood bitch (2)
- p. Encourage buyers and breeders to test and/or insist on testing on all breeding stock. (2)
- q. Mandatory health testing prior to breeding/inclusion of litters in Futurity.
- r. Require testing of all breeding stock, if all are held to the same standards.
- s. Require members to disclose all results for breeding stock ex on Dobequest. (5)
- t. Make testing mandatory for all bitches and dogs that are to be bred and that the results MUST be published.

Goal 3, 1: Help breeders and buyers identify dogs and bitches with good health and longevity

1. Tested dogs should be **titled** in their records for ease of identification. (2)
 - a. ROM should require health testing results be submitted and acceptable (3)
 - b. ROM program should include a public listing of ROM dogs 12 years or older.
2. Make the **CHIC program** more efficient and meaningful, *i.e.*, require the information to be updated annually or bi-annually for a dog to remain in the CHIC database. (2)
3. Use **Bred for Longevity Lists** as practical evidence of longevity
 - a. Although testing is essential, it is not a guarantee. Pay attention to health throughout the pedigree and identify blood lines with merit (5)

Improve and develop **registries, databases**, and information resources to provide health and longevity information.

- a. Dobequest is a very convenient tool for buyers/breeders, however most profiles have incomplete data and it is freestyle entry. (3)
 - b. Prompt breeders and owners to complete and update Dobequest records, especially date and cause of death, and health information (5)
 - c. Explore options to help ensure only accurate information presented.
 - d. Strive for 100% breeder participation in registries
 - e. Develop a health registry like they have for horses, noting birth, death (from what), offspring, etc., to undercut BYB (2)
 - f. Provide a resource that shows health reports for sires, dams, and lineage. Provide more information on what lines carry the genes, *i.e.* cardio in pedigree. (3)
 - g. Develop a database showing genetic testing results and clinical diagnoses for cardiomyopathy to make more informed breeding decisions and puppy buying decisions (2)
 - h. Provide an easily accessible list of stud dogs, if semen has been collected, cost/contact information, and completed health tests.

Goals 2, 1: Provide rewards and incentives to make longevity the top priority for breeders (2)

1. Create a Health and Longevity **Awards Program to Feature and Reward Breeders**
 - a. Make it THE most sought-after award

- b. Develop a breeder rewards program with incentives that exceed the notoriety and respect afforded Top 20 Conformation at Nationals.
- c. Make it a competition, incorporate it in shows, publications, and other venues throughout the year. Honor the previous winners throughout the year.
- d. Have a Health and Longevity Banquet at Nationals or make it the FEATURE at the Awards Dinner, honor the top breeder awardees as well as other health/longevity accomplishments, possibly researchers.
- e. Find a way to express the appreciation of the full membership, possibly including members in the selection process.

2. Offer **new titles of substance and meaning, and tie to existing ones.** (2)

3. The longevity of our breed is in SERIOUS decline. Make the COE a meaningful incentive to help turn that around. **Set health and longevity standards to breed within and include those standards in the Code of Ethics.** (3)

- a. Not all DPCA breeders are tending to the health issues of the breed. Cardio is increasing, being bred back and forth going back to certain dogs and dogs are dying from breeding vWD affected to carrier...and the beat keeps going on in our pedigrees.
 - 1) Remove dogs from breeding programs that are known producers of DCM.
 - 2) Consider cardiomyopathy breeding standards. (3)
 - 3) I would like to see breeders penalized for breeding dogs with all pedigree and testing evidence showing hereditary problems would be carried forward. In my opinion it is no different than any other kind of criminal fraud. (2)

b. I would like to see breeders required to meet the DPCA COE. Average people call a breeder listed on the DPCA directory and think the breeders are on the up & up because they appear on the DPCA website. Many are NOT. Some don't test at all, some test but breed regardless of health results.

- c. I think Doberman breeders need to be held to a higher standard. Stricter rules need to be made and enforced with breeders. (3)

Breeders should disclose health and temperament problems in their line to potential buyers(2)

Breeders should accurately report causes death and get necropsy on dogs that die of a sudden death or undiagnosed issues (5)

DPCA should help members convey problems in their lines by providing background information that explains the issue with clarity and balance, such as Dr. Meurs did with her webcasts, presentation at Nationals (2)

No breeding before two years to remain a member

Goal 1, Get all members focused on breeding healthier Dobermans and extending the longevity of the Breed. Too few live beyond age 10. (2)

Representative responses noting what should be done:

- Develop a list of conditions we want to eliminate from our breed and get serious about doing so. Do not issue full registration status to those who carry the traits unless they are spayed/neutered.
- Encourage/Require breeders to follow the Mission guideline – Do not breed unless it is to better the parties involved.
- Breeders should have to get all available tests for Dobermans and maintain better history records with the DPCA. The breeders need to start being accountable for knowingly breeding Dobermans with

hereditary issues. The DPCA needs to start keeping track of what Doberman has what and where they came from. I've had two Dobermans from reputable DPCA breeders, yet I lost one to DCM and another to liver disease. [Where do I go to get a healthy Doberman?](#) It is very heart breaking.

Representative responses noting The Challenge and Dilemma:

- What can we do with testing and breeding since cardio is in the [background of all of our dogs](#)?
- A breeder/judge said to me years ago - Once you introduce something in your pedigree (gene pool) it will always be there....20 years or so down the line, looking into the whelping box, saying to yourself, where did that come from? Oh yea, now I recall some dog(s) having this. Nothing with testing will undo the damage we humans have done to our breed.
- Gene pool is small. When removing a dog/bitch from the breeding pool, must weigh what strengths are being removed as well as problem genes.
- Limit number of dogs being bred to a sire who has sired known multiple numbers more than 5 then stop using him. It has to start somewhere.
- [Breed out](#) to healthy animals including dogs other than Dobermans. Investigate the Basenji and Dalmatian breeders work in this area to improve their overall health. Don't listen to "It can't be done" find a way to make it happen. This will take many years of forward thinking and the will to save the breed despite attacks from those who will not do it. Early death and the eventual loss of our breed from multiple illnesses secondary to too small a gene pool.

Goal 3, 1: Provide resources to help breeders and buyers make informed decisions.

1. **Add/Increase budget line item** for health education.
2. Develop and expand online resources and interactive communication opportunities that focus on increasing **Doberman longevity**. Get everyone talking!
3. Provide information resources and workshops/discussion opportunities for breeders and relevant experts to discuss **impact and use of existing and anticipated genetic testing in making breeding decisions that advance health and longevity. (5)**
 - 1) How to weigh tradeoff of breeding a negative trait OUT, *i.e.* PDK4 mutation, and a positive trait IN, *i.e.* a yet-to-be identified protector gene.
 - 2) How to factor in future tests, *i.e.* Dr. Wiess' test in Germany
 - 3) Discuss problems (or not) with continued use of homozygous dogs in breeding programs
4. Provide information and interactive resources to help breeders develop **strategies that maintain their line's winning attributes while also improving longevity over time. (3)**
5. Host GoToMeeting/Webinars for members with Q&A with breeders and researchers and/or provide support for researchers to host webinars with **research/test updates** and open discussions as Dr. Meurs has done.
6. Provide guidance for a path of health testing that **balances "costs" with best time for testing, etc.**

Actions to be moved to more appropriate Priority Areas

Internal - Financial

The National Club supports many worthy activities. These should be itemized with the goals noted and support level/value itemized. Planned duration and results to date should be noted.

Internal – Breeding/Standard

Address issues with temperament and working capabilities (9)

Member Outreach

Expand member benefits to include possible support for affordable treatment, diagnostics, and a pharmacy plan:

- DPCA and Chapter Clubs spearhead affordable treatment support throughout the year.
- Provide/Encourage affordable patient support for those affected by inheritance factor cardiomyopathy (2)
- Improve access to increasingly affordable and accurate diagnostics.
- Provide treatment support in dollars, discounted medication, and a pharmacy plan for being a member.

Public Outreach

Showcase accomplishment in Doberman health and longevity to the general public so to increase their awareness that these advances were made possible due to a purebred gene pool and breeder/owner focused commitment to and love of one breed

Showcase distinction of ethics, knowledge, and credibility that separates DPCA Breeders from Puppy Mills and Pet Shops:

- Increase general Public's awareness of the DPCA Breeder's commitment to the health and longevity of the Breed, distinguishing DPCA Breeders from puppy mills / pet shops:
 - Do puppy mills and pet shops test their puppies to help ensure good health and low vet bills?
 - Are puppy mills and pet shops aware of state-of-the-art advances in research to improve and prevent health issues?

