

GSP Public Education **Guide to Help Pick Out Puppies**

We are fortunate that the GSP is basically a very healthy dog. Beginning with healthy parents and forgoing any mishaps, your pup should live a long healthy, productive, happy life. Breeders cannot guarantee everything, but good ones do all the testing available.

NUMBERED and LETTERED TESTING RESULTS CAN BE FOUND ON THE (OFA .Org.)WEBSITE.

The most common causes of early death include Cancer, Gastrointestinal and Heart problems. There are several Health Clearances that are important when making your decision to work with a breeder in selecting your new family member. Each breed has some health concerns and there are general health clearances for every breed. Conscientious GSP breeders make every effort to screen all their breeding stock for the following:

Hips and Elbows through the Orthopedic Foundation Association (OFA.Org)

Qualifying letters in the middle of the numbers are:

(E) Excellent (G) Good (F) Fair

If one of these qualifying letters is missing, the dog did not pass this test.

Cardiac Disease through a Board Certified Canine Cardiologist

Cerf. (eye test)Through a Board Certified Canine Ophthalmologist

Thyroid – Normal, Blood Panel through individual Veterinarians

Cone Degeneration (CD) (eyes) – Blood work sent from local veterinarian to the Optigen Clinic for screening in Ithaca, NY. A certificate of (Normal), (Carrier) or (Effected) will be issued when the testing is complete and results forwarded to OFA.

Sometimes breeders won't know about seizures, epilepsy or allergies in the dogs. Usually, these won't come up until the dog is mature, but can occur in dogs as young as one year. Certain bloodlines carry more than others. It helps greatly if.....*Only mature dogs are bred.*

After dogs are tested for any of the above, paperwork is submitted to the OFA database. For a fee, each clearance is added to the records for each dog and published, so the public can use this database as a reference tool.

Based on OFA database after a breeder has completed all the testing his/her breed requires and for another fee a CHIC number is issued. *“A CHIC number is issued when test results are entered into the database satisfying each breed specific requirement, and when the owner of the dog has opted to release the results into the public domain. The CHIC number itself does not imply normal test results, only that all the required breed specific tests were performed and the results made publicly available”.*

Example: a dog may have a number for a hip x-ray that shows that dog to be dysplastic but the breeder has gone to the trouble of paying for the reading and putting it on file. Don't be misled by CHIC numbers in thinking that this animal is totally clear. See the CHIC section of the OFA website for full details. Follow up by checking each health area provided by the OFA website and then asking questions from the breeders.

Temperament and behavior problems, aggressive behavior toward other dogs, cats or family are affecting a significant number of GSPs. Per the GSP Journal Health Survey published in March 2007 it had risen to 13%. This is higher than any of the health problems! Is it bad breeding, yes, sometimes it is! Can it be environmental, after leaving the litter i.e., lack of socialization by the new owners, yes, that could be part of the problem too. But, genetics are more important.

It is a California State law that puppies cannot be sold until they are EIGHT WEEKS. Good breeders have been doing this before for years but now it is a mandate. It allows for more socialization among the littermates.