



AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB®



IN SESSION

AKC'S CONGRESSIONAL NEWSLETTER

The American Kennel Club's Newsletter for Members of Congress and their Staff

PERSPECTIVES

In our hectic daily lives we're bombarded with so much information that we can lose focus on the larger picture. It's easy for perception and hype to undermine substance and expertise. When this happens, the voice of true experts and the real issues are marginalized. This truth is evident in the debate over the regulation of dog breeders in the United States.

Consider this: It is the responsible breeders – not the animal rights activists – who have years, often generations, of practical experience with their breeds and bloodlines, and who utilize this expertise to provide the best care for the current and future generations of their dogs.

Responsible breeders study pedigrees, health, and temperament before making breeding decisions. Often they responsibly maintain numerous dogs, including beloved retired dogs that hold a place of honor and young dogs being "grown out" to assess future potential. Maintaining multiple generations and keeping dogs intact until their merit can be determined enables good breeders to select the best dogs to breed.

A responsible breeder can own many dogs and take excellent care of them. An irresponsible person can own just one dog and be cruel and neglectful. Responsibility is not about the number of dogs a person has – it is about the care and environment provided.

Responsible breeders love dogs and care about their future. They care enough to breed good dogs so that our children and grandchildren will be graced with the same kind of canine companions we enjoy today. Responsible breeders devote their lives and resources to dogs. They put in all-nighters and sleep for weeks on a cot to be near new puppies or an ill dog.

Responsible breeding is key to the wellbeing of

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Congressional Canine Spotlight- Congressman Dennis Ross

In each issue of In Session, the AKC profiles a dog-loving member of the Capitol community. This issue features Congressman Dennis Ross (FL-12).



PHOTO COURTESY OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN DENNIS ROSS

Congressman Dennis Ross enjoying a Florida day with Jack, Cider, and Lightening

There are few friendships as endearing as a boy and his dog. Growing up in Lakeland, Florida, Congressman Dennis Ross enjoyed the constant companionship of "Ginger", who was the family dog from the time Ross was four years old until she passed away when he was 18.

"As a kid...I did a lot of exploring in other neighborhoods and nearby woods. Wherever I went, my dog Ginger went with me," the Florida Congressman explained.

The mixed-breed dog was also fortunate enough to accompany the family on trips around the country. "She travelled the United States with me... [when] our family took

summer vacations in a 19-foot Airstream travel trailer. Ginger and I would stay together at night in the station wagon."

And as he got older, Ross wasn't about to allow a "no pets allowed" policy to deter him from letting Ginger travel with him. As a teenager, he drove to visit his parents at the Walt Disney World® campground, which did not allow dogs at that time. "In order to get [Ginger]...past security, I put a coat around her as she sat in the passenger seat, [as well as] sunglasses and a hat," he confessed. "I waved at the security guard and drove on in without incident!"

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all dogs. The future of dogs is too important for us to let it be defined by activists who have no real expertise or knowledge. This is why the AKC stands up for the future of dogs and responsible breeders and advocates for strong enforcement of negligence and cruelty laws for all dogs – regardless of whether they are part of a breeding program, in a shelter, in a kennel, or in a private home.

In this issue, we discuss some of the ways in which the AKC takes the lead in promoting the health and welfare of dogs and responsible dog breeding. The AKC is the only all-breed, non-profit dog registry in the country with a significant kennel inspections program (p. 4). Our newly enhanced Care and Conditions Policy (p. 6) is just one way we demonstrate our commitment to promoting responsible dog ownership.

Good policy, properly enforced, doesn't arbitrarily limit responsible breeding programs or assume that the number of dogs owned directly correlates to quality of care. Most important of all, good policy, developed with input from breeders, can protect all dogs – and the future of responsible breeding.

We are pleased to work with you to develop reasonable solutions that protect the rights of responsible dog owners and the welfare of our beloved dogs for generations to come.

All the best,

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AKC MISSION STATEMENT

The AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its Registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Founded in 1884, the AKC and its affiliated organizations advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion, advance canine health and well-being, work to protect the rights of all dog owners and promote responsible dog ownership.

Continued from page 1, "Congressional Canine Spotlight - Congressman Dennis Ross"



PHOTO COURTESY OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN DENNIS ROSS

Now married with two sons, the Congressman has continued the tradition of vacationing as a family with their three dogs "Lightening", "Jack", and "Cider". All the dogs, including Lightening's now-deceased sister Thunder, were named by the Ross's sons. "Thunder was our son Shane's dog," Ross' wife Cindy explained. "So after our loss, he set out to find a dog special enough to fill the hole in our hearts. He found Jack and we just couldn't leave his pretty little sister at the [Lakeland, FL] SPCA, so we adopted them both and gave Cider to [our son] Travis."

Lightening is a 14-year-old black Labrador Retriever, and Jack and Cider are 4-year-old Labrador Retriever/Mastiff mixed-breeds (it is believed that Jack may also have a hound breed in his mix). Ross explained that the two younger dogs "rule [the] home."

"All of our animals travel with us when we embark on an RV adventure in our 40-foot motor home," Ross explained. According to the Congressman's website, the family has been to each of the 48 continental United States, and most of these trips have been with their dogs.

When not travelling the country, the dogs enjoy life at the Ross family's Florida home. "Chasing elusive squirrels and wrestling with each other are their favorite activities – other than sleeping!" the Congressman told AKC. The family is also known for having a very "dog-friendly" home, and guests are encouraged to bring their dogs when they come to visit.

The dogs also enjoy playing with the family cats "Blondie", "KC", and "Buddy". "However, Jack and Cider like to play cat and mouse with them," Ross' wife explained, "to be sure they show

them respect." The Congressman agreed that these two dogs "rule [the] home."

The congressman's wife lovingly described each of their family pets and then said, "Our dogs and cats are much more than colors and breeds. They are truly part of our family."

Congressman Ross is also dedicated to promoting responsible dog ownership and care in his district. He has served on a local SPCA Advisory Board, which he describes as "a great group of Polk County (FL) volun-

teers who give of their time to raise money to fund an animal shelter, a veterinary clinic, and education programs [teaching] responsible dog ownership."

When asked how he would define responsible dog ownership, he answered, "Treat your pet as you would want to be treated."

This is advice he takes to heart. "I would not mind being one of my dogs," he admitted.

"Treat your pet as you would want to be treated."

DID YOU KNOW?

- The AKC Canine PartnersSM program was established in 2010 to enable spayed/neutered mixed-breed dogs and other dogs not eligible for AKC registration to receive special benefits and participate in certain AKC events such as Agility and Obedience. Since the program's inception, "All-American dogs" have accounted for over 30,000 entries in AKC events.
- The AKC Canine PartnersSM program also conducts outreach to local shelters to help promote responsible dog ownership and training.
- The AKC has compiled a series of helpful tips for owners wanting to travel with their dogs. For more information, visit akc.org/public_education/travel.cfm

American Kennel Club Announces Most Popular Dogs in the U.S.

*Beagles Have Their Year! Curious and Comedic Breed Overtakes Yorkies
to Place Third on Most-Popular List
Lovable Labs Hold Top Spot for 21 Years While Rottweiler Moves Into the Top 10*

Look out Labrador Retrievers, the American Kennel Club® (AKC) has announced that the Beagle has overtaken the beloved Yorkshire Terrier to become the third most popular dog breed in the U.S., according to AKC registration statistics recently released. The Golden Retriever also made a strong push into the top ranks – advancing from the fifth to the fourth most popular dog breed – and the Rottweiler made news by unseating the Shih Tzu – which had been in the top 10 since 2000. But fans of the Labrador Retriever need not fear: the beloved Lab remains the champ – a spot it has now held for 21 consecutive years



LABRADOR RETRIEVER ©MARY BLOOM-AKC

– thanks to its well-earned reputation for playfulness and loyalty and its use as a police and search-and-rescue dog.

“While the Labrador Retriever has proven once again to be a family favorite, this year clearly belongs to the Beagle,” said AKC Spokesperson Lisa Peterson. “The Beagle’s merry personality combined with his love of outdoor activities make him such a wonderful family pet that I wouldn’t be surprised to see this spunky breed sniff his way to the top of the list next year.”

“The Beagle’s merry personality combined with his love of outdoor activities make him...a wonderful family pet...”

2011 Most Popular Dogs in the U.S.	2010 Ranking
1. Labrador Retriever	1. Labrador Retriever
2. German Shepherd Dog	2. German Shepherd Dog
3. Beagle	3. Yorkshire Terrier
4. Golden Retriever	4. Beagle
5. Yorkshire Terrier	5. Golden Retriever
6. Bulldog	6. Bulldog
7. Boxer	7. Boxer
8. Poodle	8. Dachshund
9. Dachshund	9. Poodle
10. Rottweiler	10. Shih Tzu

Article originally published online at AKC.org

Learn More:

- To view the full list of AKC registration statistics, as well as the most-popular breeds in major U.S. cities, visit akc.org/reg and click on “Registration Statistics”
- For more information on finding a responsible breeder in your area, go to akc.org/breederinfo/breeder_search.cfm
- For information on purebred rescue, visit akc.org/breeds/rescue.cfm

AKC Inspections Program Helps Educate Responsible Breeders

The American Kennel Club® (“AKC®”) is passionate about dogs and believes that their care and welfare is of paramount importance. We pride ourselves on the integrity of our registry and the quality of the care afforded the dogs registered with us. The AKC is the only all-breed, non-for-profit registry that has a significant kennel inspection program to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the dogs it registers.

In 2011, the AKC’s Investigations and Inspections Department (“I & I”) conducted thousands of inspections of breeders across the United States who register dogs and litters with the AKC. A typical inspection includes an examination of the care and conditions of the dogs and kennel facilities, an inspection of the breeder’s record-keeping and dog identification practices, and random DNA testing to ensure the integrity of AKC pedigrees. While most inspections are conducted based on the number of litters registered each year with the AKC, any breeder may be inspected if the AKC receives a written, signed, and substantiated complaint.

A key component of AKC’s Investigations and Inspections Department is enforcement of the AKC’s Care and Conditions Policy. The policy reflects the AKC’s values in promoting the responsible ownership and maintenance of dogs. These guidelines are meant as a basis for helping individuals ensure that dog care practices are performed and housing facilities are maintained in a safe, humane and responsible manner. In addition to guidelines set forth in the policy, individuals are expected to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the ownership and maintenance of dogs. If during an inspection it is determined that an individual is not maintaining their dogs or facility in an acceptable manner, in accordance with AKC’s Care and Conditions Policy, federal, state, or local agencies will be notified of unsanitary and/or unhealthy conditions found during the inspection.

The purpose of the I & I Department goes far beyond inspections and issuing penalties. The AKC believes strongly that education is in the best interest of both breeders and the animals in their care. Therefore a typical inspection will include



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“Our inspectors’ approach is to be proactive and positive... The overall result is an improvement in the lives of dogs.”

more than just a checklist of approved items and areas requiring improvement. Each inspector assesses the overall situation of the kennel being inspected and provides helpful advice, suggestions, and relevant information about the numerous beneficial programs AKC offers—all as a way to help educate breeders and continuously strive for even better care standards and practices. This attention to the care and well-being of dogs goes a long way to maintaining the high standards and integrity of the AKC’s registry.

Often breeders contact the AKC Government Relations Department (GR) regarding pending legislation in their state. One such breeder had been inspected by the AKC and enthusiastically relayed to GR how they were incorporating into their dog care practices the many helpful tips and recommendations that they had received from their Inspector. This breeder knew the thoroughness with which an AKC inspection is conducted and they took great pride in the positive report they received. AKC Inspectors also take great pride in their work and the vital role they perform for dogs in communities throughout the United States.

“Our focus over the last couple years has been increasingly to educate people more about the AKC, better care and maintenance practices. We focus on helping people improve,” said AKC’s Director of Compliance Support Jack Norton. “Our inspectors’ approach is to be proactive and positive, and they have seen breeders embrace this change in attitude. The overall result is an improvement in the lives of dogs.”

DID YOU KNOW?

- The AKC conducts thousands of inspections each year
- AKC’s Inspections and Investigations team carried out a major disaster relief program effort after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, including visiting animal shelters and meeting with shelter coordinators and government leaders in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi to provide expertise and hands-on support.
- The AKC has adopted a detailed Care and Conditions policy by which all breeders who register dogs with the AKC must abide. To read this policy and learn more about AKC’s Investigations and Inspections Department, visit www.AKC.org and type “inspections” in the search box. Also see page 6 of this issue for more details on AKC’s Care and Conditions policy.



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AKC KENNEL INSPECTIONS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

BACKGROUND:

The American Kennel Club is the only purebred registry in the United States with an ongoing routine kennel inspection program. The AKC has a dedicated team of field inspectors who visit kennels to help breeders while ensuring the proper care and conditions of dogs and verify that breeders are maintaining accurate records for their dogs. Additionally, the Inspections Program has been proven to be a successful tool in promoting responsible dog ownership and breeding, and market research demonstrates the public's positive perception of the AKC's kennel inspection program. The AKC's current policy regarding care and conditions was passed by the Board of Directors in 1996, and enforced by the AKC Inspections Program since that time, makes clear that the AKC will not tolerate substandard treatment of dogs.

FACTS ABOUT THE AKC INVESTIGATIONS AND INSPECTIONS PROGRAM

BUDGET: Over \$1.5 million annually

THE NUMBERS: The AKC employs 9 inspectors spread throughout the United States. On average, the AKC Inspectors conduct thousands of inspections annually. The AKC's inspection protocol applies equally to all types of breeders; the AKC does not conduct different types of inspections or apply different rules based on the number of dogs maintained or litters registered by a breeder.

PURPOSE OF AN INSPECTION: The AKC conducts inspections to ensure that care and conditions of the dogs and the facility in which they are housed are in compliance with AKC's extensive *Care and Conditions Policy* and to review records in order maintain the integrity of its registry,

During an inspection, the AKC Inspector reviews the care and conditions of dogs and the facility in which they are housed. This includes ensuring that dogs have access to adequate food and water, are in good physical condition, and have access to daily exercise. The inspector also makes certain that the facility is constructed in such a way as to maintain the safety of the dogs, and that it is clean and of a sufficient size so that overcrowding does not exist. The AKC Inspector also reviews the registrant's individual dog ownership records, breeding records and litter records to make certain that the registration applications that have been received from the breeder are properly supported. The AKC Inspector may also take DNA samples under certain circumstances.

EDUCATION: AKC Inspectors educate registrants about the AKC's *Care and Conditions Policy*, its record keeping and dog identification requirements, and other AKC programs.

If the inspection determines that the registrant needs to make improvements to their record keeping and dog identification practices, the Inspector will provide the breeder with information and recommendations on how to make improvements so that the breeder can achieve compliance.

ENFORCEMENT: If an individual fails to consent to an inspection or fails to correct areas identified as needing improvement during an inspection, the AKC will suspend the individual's ability to register dogs with the AKC and compete in AKC events. Typically, a suspension includes a fine. AKC privileges will only be reinstated after an inspection is conducted to confirm that the registrant is in compliance with AKC's rules and policies. In addition, if AKC inspectors find unsanitary and/or unhealthy conditions during the inspection, proper federal, state, and local agencies will be notified.

For information about these and other AKC programs working to support responsible pet ownership, visit www.akc.org.

AKC Enhances *Care and Conditions of Dogs* Policy

For over 125 years, the American Kennel Club® has remained committed to promoting responsible dog ownership and quality breeding. AKC policies embody that mission by advocating for responsible dog ownership and ensuring that the welfare and care of dogs is at the very heart of everything we do.

This challenge is more complex than it may appear. Few species are as varied as the domestic dog. The AKC currently recognizes over 170 distinct breeds of dogs. The needs of these dogs, the size of the kennels, and methods used to ensure quality care are as varied as the breeds themselves.

When it comes to ensuring the well-being of dogs, the AKC's extensive experience, through generations of on-the-ground breeding, kennel inspections or a multi-

titude of other programs, have demonstrated that strict "one size fits all" care policies tend to be both inefficient and ineffective. This is the reason that the

AKC often raises concerns when strict facilities engineering – rather than performance-based protocols—for kennel and dog care are proposed in law.

Still, it's not unusual to regularly see new recommendations to impose the same kennel engineering requirements on large, commercial kennels as on small hobby breeders who occasionally breed a litter of puppies in their home. Problems with such policies typ-



BEARDED COLLIES ©ISABELLE FRANCAIS FOR AKC

ically include arbitrary facility engineering requirements such as specific cage sizes, inappropriate temperature ranges (i.e., requiring snow-loving Siberian Huskies be housed in facilities whose temperatures may never drop below 60 degrees), and a host of other arbitrary requirements. Such policies may be unreasonable or incompatible with the operations of many responsible, smaller, specialized breeders. More importantly, such policies are

“These policies...focus on the quality of care and welfare of the dogs, rather than on [arbitrary] standards”

not often in the best interest of dogs, whose care and welfare should be at the forefront of any discussion on these issues.

AKC concerns about specific proposed policies stem from our dedication to the wellbeing of all dogs. Likewise, the AKC believes that there are certain guidelines to which all dog owners and breeders should adhere. To clarify these concerns, the AKC has

implemented a new, enhanced version of the AKC's *Care and Conditions of Dogs* Policy. These policies are centered around a performance-based outcome – meaning they focus on the quality of care and welfare of the dogs, rather than on stringent engineering or arbitrary numbers standards that may not be appropriate for every situation.

The policy, which can be viewed in its entirety on the opposite page,

provides an easy-to-understand affirmative guide for responsible dog ownership, including care of dogs, kennels, and housing and operations. Anyone from a single dog owner to a large kennel manager can follow these guidelines to ensure best practices of keeping and maintaining dogs.

Along with record-keeping and dog identification, this policy serves as the core of the AKC's inspections program, and is the basis for the more

than 55,000 inspections the AKC has conducted since 2000. Each time an AKC inspector conducts an inspection, they have the opportunity

to educate owners and breeders about this policy.

- View the AKC's *Care and Conditions of Dogs* Policy in its entirety on Page 7
- For more information on the AKC Investigations and Inspections Department, see Page 4



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AKC's Care and Conditions of Dogs Policy

The Care and Conditions of Dogs Policy, effective June 1, 2012, reflects the American Kennel Club's values in promoting the responsible ownership and maintenance of dogs. These guidelines are meant as a basis for helping individuals ensure that dog care practices are performed and housing facilities are maintained in a safe, humane and responsible manner.

The guidelines are not intended to be all-inclusive or definitive, but rather are intended to serve as a working basic outline that can be expanded and refined as needed while lending uniform application of this policy. In addition to guidelines set forth in this policy, individuals are expected to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the ownership and maintenance of dogs.

Care of Dogs

- Dogs should have access on a daily basis for play and exercise.
- Dogs must have access to fresh water as appropriate.
- Dogs must have access to fresh food provided at appropriate intervals to maintain a healthy weight.
- Appropriate health care, including routine and preventative care, must be provided for all dogs.
- Dogs should be provided with daily positive human contact and socialization.
- Each dog should have its overall health and behavior assessed daily. Any deviation in health condition must be addressed expeditiously and appropriately.
- Dogs should be free from internal and external parasites.
- Dogs should be afforded regular grooming to ensure health and comfort.
- When euthanasia is necessary, it must always be performed humanely.

Kennels and Housing

- The primary enclosure must be large enough so the dog(s) can sit, stand, lie down, or turn around comfortably, with no overcrowding.
- The primary enclosure shall be constructed and maintained so that dogs are securely confined and does not cause injury to the dogs.
- Protection from adverse or extreme weather conditions must be provided.
- While flooring that provides solid footing is preferred, if wire is used as flooring of a primary enclosure, it should be comprised of a material featuring a protective coating, be of an appropriate size to prevent injury (especially to feet), and must be kept in good

repair. If wire is used, a solid platform of sufficient size should be provided to allow the dog(s) to attain solid footing and to offer a space for resting.

- Facilities must be lighted to provide a regular lighting cycle for the dogs.
- Bedding material made available to dogs should be clean and not pose a risk to the dogs.

Operations

- A sufficient number of staff must be provided to carry out appropriate levels of care and conditions for the number of dogs kept.
- Facility and primary enclosures should be clean, free from debris and odor, and feces should be picked up and disposed of as frequently as necessary so as not to pose a threat to the health of the dog(s).
- Each kennel should maintain an emergency preparedness plan adequate for the type of facility owned and breed(s) of dogs maintained therein.

The above is in addition to the policy adopted at the July 1990 Board meeting to notify federal, state or local agencies of unsanitary and/or unhealthy conditions found by AKC Inspectors during inspection of kennels; that the US Department of Agriculture (APHIS) will be notified when such conditions prevail at kennels regulated by that department under the provisions of the U.S. Animal Welfare Act; and that other state/local governmental or humane agencies will be notified when such conditions are observed at kennels not regulated by federal law.

In instances when dog(s) are found in conditions that place them in immediate danger, the Inspector will immediately notify agencies with jurisdiction regarding the danger to the dogs.

During the course of an inspection, if an AKC Inspector determines that an individual is not maintaining his/her dogs or facility in a manner that is compliant with the AKC's Care and Conditions Policy, the individual's AKC privileges may be placed on temporary referral. The individual will be notified, in writing, of specific deficiencies and what steps need to be taken to come into compliance with the Care and Conditions of Dogs Policy. The individual shall be given 45 days to correct deficiencies and request a re-inspection. In cases where deficiencies are not corrected or re-inspections are not requested, the AKC may proceed with disciplinary action leading to suspension of all AKC privileges.

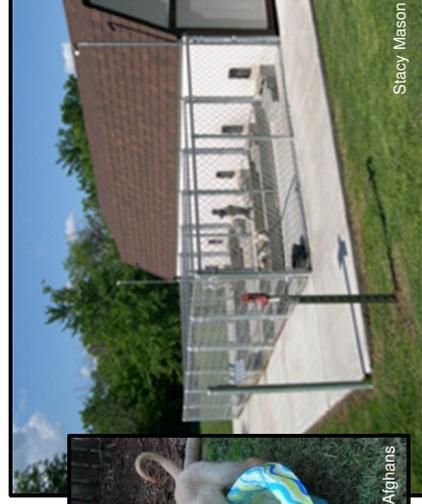
Effective June 1, 2012



Dogs come in all shapes and sizes.

So do dog facilities.

Responsible dog breeders utilize a variety of creative indoor and outdoor solutions to provide safe housing and exercise areas for their puppies, adult and senior dogs.



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