

D & M Farm Kennel Newsletter — March 2012

D & M Farm Kennel

What's the Dental Health of Your Chow ?

Many of us have accepted doggie halitosis as the norm. Since dogs lick and clean themselves and often find things to chew on that are not very appetizing to us, it's no wonder they have bad breath ... correct? Wrong! Bad breath is not the norm for dogs. If they have healthy gums and teeth, they should not have bad breath.

Dental disease can affect your dog's overall health. Starting a home dental health program is important. Many of you have seen the doggie toothbrushes and toothpaste in the pet section of the local stores. They are often met with an, "Are you kidding me?" reaction. Unless you start this when your dog is still a puppy it may turn into a wrestling match with most of the toothpaste getting on you! Puppies will acclimate to just about anything if it is done with patience and especially if

there is a reward at the end. Older dogs however tend to resist a new procedure such as this. There are alternatives.



They now have sprays and gels that react with the dog's saliva and dissolve the plaque and tartar. Dogs will typically tolerate you spraying this into their mouth. Many like the taste and they do come in different flavors for the discerning pet.

Chew toys are also beneficial in cleaning the teeth and gums. There are dental chews as well as some chew toys.

Whatever method you choose,

a regular routine will benefit your pet and save you money in the long run.

If a veterinarian is required to clean your pets teeth, anesthesia is required. As we know, Chows do not do well with anesthesia and should not be subjected to it unless absolutely necessary. Gum disease is preventable. Therefore, putting your Chow under anesthesia for a dental cleaning is preventable. These procedures can be dangerous for your dog and can be very expensive.

Pets are like having children. They have to rely on us for their care. They no longer live in the wild and cannot be treated as though they are self-sufficient. They do not chew on things they would in the wild that keep their teeth clean without us providing it for them. Be a responsible pack leader!

Miss Izzie Bella

Miss Izzie Bella is right at home in her new environment. She has two, four-legged siblings to play with, so she is busy all the time.

She has begun her puppy classes and has received all A+s. What a little smarty!

Miss Izzie Bella is a puppy from Izzie and Hagrid.



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Special points of interest:

- Dental Health
- Choosing a Breed
- Bloat
- Are They Old Enough

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Our Beloved & Best Friend ... Buck ... 2000 — 2012

We got Buck, our German Shepherd, when he was six weeks old. We wanted a shepherd as a farm dog and we couldn't have gotten a better dog.

We went to a breeder to look at a litter of puppies. We picked a male, but she had another litter at another place that she wanted us to see. So, she brought the puppy we chose and we drove to her brother's house. We looked at the litter, but decided we liked the one that we had originally chosen. I started walking to our van to get my purse. Darrell called my name and when I looked around the puppy we had picked out was following me to the van. I believe Buck chose us as much as we chose him.

Buck was a good puppy and a wonderful dog. He just wanted to be with you, laying nearby as you worked so he could keep an eye on you. He would occasionally come up for a scratch behind the ears and then return to a shady spot where he could watch us work.

Once Darrell retired, he and Buck became very close. Buck went just about everywhere with Darrell. The guys at Lowes came to know Buck. You could tell Buck was proud to be in the truck and receiving attention.

He loved to ride in the truck. If you left the truck door open he would jump in. You couldn't get him out until you took him for a ride. Sometimes it was just to the end of the driveway, but that was enough. He would happily jump out of the truck.

When Ohio still had an annual E-Check requirement, Darrell took our old truck to be inspected. Buck went along for the ride. When they arrived at the inspection station, Darrell got in line and then got out and went to the office to fill out paperwork. There was a large window that looked out over the bay where they did the inspections. One of the inspectors went to the bay door and motioned the next vehicle forward. A minute or so later he did it again. By now he had the attention of the

people in the waiting area.

Becoming irritated, he went to the door again and stood there with his hands on his hips. Then he emphatically motioned for the vehicle to move forward. Darrell realized he was motioning the truck forward. Buck had moved behind the driver's wheel of the truck. Darrell headed out to the truck and grumbled as he passed the inspector, "damn dog, he just won't mind when you tell him to do something." The red-faced inspector went back to his sta-



tion and the people waiting all got a good laugh. Buck provided us a lot of humorous moments unbeknownst to him.

When our grandchildren were babies he was very watchful of them. We were watching our two grandkids one time. Our granddaughter was still in a baby seat. We were working outside so she was setting in her seat. I was working in a flowerbed and was approximately ten feet away. Buck stationed himself next to her seat. When she began to cry he immediately went on alert. He kept looking from her to me as if to say, "Aren't you going to do something?" When I stood to come over, his tail began to wag. You could see the relief in his eyes.

Buck was always good with all the puppies. When we would put them down in the yard he would have to check them out. Of course they would run under him. He would then pick up his feet really high trying not to step on them. It was so comi-

cal to watch. He would always look at us with concern, wanting us to get the puppy.

Buck was the greeter for the farm. He would wait until the drive gates opened and would run ahead of the entering car to show them the way. He was such a big shepherd he was often intimidating to those who didn't know him. Little did they know, our biggest concern was that he would jump into their vehicle.

At age 9 1/2 Buck began to show signs of hip problems. He would occasionally limp on the right side. As time passed we would have to give him anti-inflammatory medication to make him comfortable. In his eleventh year his hip degenerated to the point that he required pain medication along with the anti-inflammatory to keep him comfortable. Our vet diagnosed him with Degenerative Myelopathy and told us that one day his hips would just not work anymore, as the paralysis progressed. The muscles were atrophied. We weren't sure he would make it to his 12th birthday, but he was still with us on Feb 2. One day early this month he could no longer get up. We provided him food and water where he could reach it but it was evident after a few days that he would never get up again. The sad part was that he was fine from his middle forward. It was just the hips. Without any movement pneumonia was setting in and we knew we had to make the decision to have him put down. Never an easy decision for a beloved family member as Buck was. Fortunately, our vet came to our house so Buck was in his familiar surroundings until the end.

Buck was a gentle soul that we know can never be replaced. He was one of a kind. We loved him and will miss him terribly.

We know you are no longer in pain Buck and you are now playing & running like you did when you were young. All those who have gone on before you were happy to see you come across the bridge. We look forward to seeing you again someday. Until then, know how much you were loved here on earth.

Azul in Pennsylvania

Azul has hit the bigONE! Happy Birthday Azul! What a beautiful boy he is. Look at his spectacular mane!

Azul is a puppy from Shadow & Kaiser.



Choosing the Right Breed for You !

Many of us are driven by the looks of a dog to determine which breed we are going to adopt. But instead, we should consider the characteristics of the breed to determine if it will fit in with our lifestyle or our family's lifestyle.

AKC lists all breeds and actually places them into eight separate groups. Some groups such as Sporting, Working, and Herding tells you off the bat that these dogs require jobs. They are bred to accomplish tasks. Dogs of this nature often develop unwanted behaviors when left to their own devices; i.e. barking, digging, chewing, etc. So, if you do not have a lot of time to work with your dog and actively play with them you are asking for trouble.

Some dogs are high energy, some low, and

some in the middle. Size matters when choosing a pet for small children. You want one that is sturdy enough to withstand being laid on, fallen on, set on, etc.

Older individuals really don't need a dog that is weaving in and out of their legs which could cause a fall. You also don't want a large dog to jump on you and cause you to lose your balance.

There are lots of things to be taken into consideration before choosing the best dog for you. When you make the right selection your relationship will flourish.

Of course, we feel Chows can fit into any family setting or environment. They are sturdy enough for children. Love to go on walks, but aren't much for running. Very loyal, and independent, but love attention.

Very healthy dogs without many known predispositions to diseases. They can acclimate to a very active family as well as a sedate lifestyle. They do not require a lot

“Choosing the right breed will allow your relationship to flourish!”

of exercise, but love to play and go outside. Chows are a very versatile breed requiring low maintenance.

However, we just might be a bit biased!

Meet Amber and Brandy

Here are our two newest female additions to our breeding stock. They are sisters. Brandy just had her first litter and Amber should have her first litter in the May/June timeframe.

Brandy is the outgoing, can't get enough attention, personality. Amber tends to be more shy. I think that is because Brandy

would always push Amber aside to get all the attention. Both are beautiful girls and we expect beautiful puppies from them. Brandy was mated with Yogi and Amber will be mated with Frosty.



Amber



Brandy

Bloating & Chows

One of our clients lost her 9-year old Chow to bloat. She provided the following article and we felt it would be beneficial for our readers.

The normal stomach sits high in the abdomen and contains a small amount of gas, some mucus, and any food being digested. It undergoes a normal rhythm of contraction, receiving food from the esophagus above, grinding the food, and meting the ground food out to the small intestine at its other end. Normally this proceeds uneventfully except for the occasional burp.

In the bloated stomach, gas and/or food stretches the stomach many times its normal size, causing tremendous abdominal pain. For reasons we do not fully understand, this grossly distended stomach has a tendency to rotate, thus twisting off not only its own blood supply but the only exit routes for the gas inside. Not only is this condition extremely painful but it is also rapidly life-threatening. A dog with a bloated, twisted stomach (more scientifically called gastric dilatation and volvulus) will die in pain in a matter of hours unless drastic steps are taken.

What are the Risk Factors for Developing Bloat?

Classically, this condition affects dog breeds that are said to be deep chested, meaning the length of their chest from backbone to sternum is relatively long while the chest width from right to left is narrow. Examples of deep chested breeds would be the Great Dane, Greyhound, and the setter breeds. Still, any dog can bloat, even dachshunds and Chihuahuas.

Dogs weighing more than 99 pounds have an approximate 20% risk of bloat.

Classically, the dog had eaten a large meal and exercised heavily shortly thereafter. Still, we usually do not know why a given dog bloats on an individual basis. No specific diet or dietary ingredient has been proven to be associated with bloat. Some factors found to increase and decrease the risk of bloat are listed below.

Factors Increasing the Risk of Bloat

Feeding only one meal a day Having closely related family members with a history of bloat Eating rapidly Being thin or underweight Moistening dry foods (particularly if citric acid is listed as a preservative) Feeding from

an elevated bowl Restricting water before and after meals Feeding a dry diet with animal fat listed in the first four ingredients Fearful or anxious temperament History of aggression towards people or other dogs Male dogs are more likely to bloat than females Older dogs (7 - 12 years) were the highest risk group

Factors Decreasing the Risk of Bloat Inclusion of canned dog food in the diet Inclusion of table scraps in the diet Happy or easy-going temperament Feeding a dry food containing a calcium-rich meat meal (such as meat/lamb meal, fish meal, chicken by-product meal, meat meal, or bone meal) listed in the first four ingredients of the ingredient list. Eating two or more meals per day Contrary to popular belief, cereal ingredients such as soy, wheat or corn in the first four ingredients of the ingredient list does not increase the risk of bloat.

"Considered the Mother of all emergencies!"

In a study done by the Purdue University Research Group, headed by Dr. Lawrence T. Glickman, the Great Dane was the number one breed at risk for bloat, the St. Bernard was the #2 breed at risk, and the Weimaraner was the #3 breed at risk.

A study by Ward, Patonek, and Glickman reviewed the benefit of prophylactic surgery for bloat. Prophylactic surgery amounts to performing the gastropexy surgery (see below) in a healthy dog, usually in conjunction with spay or neuter. The lifetime risk of death from bloat was calculated, along with estimated treatment for bloat, versus cost of prophylactic gastropexy. Prophylactic gastropexy was found to make sense for at-risk breeds, especially the Great Dane, which is at highest risk for bloat.

How to tell if your Dog has Bloat

Radiograph showing typical gas distension of the stomach in a case of bloat

The dog may have an obviously distended stomach especially near the ribs but this is not always evident depending on the dog's body configuration.

The biggest clue is the vomiting: the pet appears highly nauseated and is retching but little is coming up.

If you see this, rush your dog to the veterinarian IMMEDIATELY.

What has to be Done

There are several steps to saving a bloated dog's life. Part of the problem is that all steps should be done at the same time and as quickly as possible.

First: The Stomach must be Decompressed

The huge stomach is by now pressing on the major blood vessels carrying blood back to the heart. This stops normal circulation and sends the dog into shock. Making matters worse, the stomach tissue is dying because it is stretched too tightly to allow blood circulation through it. There can be no recovery until the stomach is untwisted and the gas released. A stomach tube and stomach pump are generally used for this but sometime surgery is needed to achieve stomach decompression.

Also First: Rapid IV Fluids Must be Given to Reverse the Shock Intravenous catheters are placed and life-giving fluid solutions are rushed in to replace the blood that cannot get past the bloated stomach to return to the heart. The intense pain associated with this disease causes the heart rate to race at such a high rate that heart failure will result. Medication to resolve the pain is needed if the patient's heart rate is to slow down. Medication for shock, antibiotics and electrolytes are all vital in stabilizing the patient.

It is crucially important that owners of big dogs be aware of this condition and are prepared for it. Know where to take your dog during overnight or Sunday hours for emergency care. Avoid exercising your dog after a large meal. Know what to watch for. Enjoy the special friendship a large dog provides but at the same time be aware of the large dog's special needs and concerns.

Also First: The Heart Rhythm is Assessed and Stabilized There is a very dangerous heart rhythm problem called a "premature ventricular contraction" or "pvc," that is associated with bloat and it must be ruled out. If the dog has it, intravenous medications are needed to stabilize the rhythm. Since the rhythm problem may not be evident until even the next day, continual EKG monitoring may be necessary. Disturbed heart rhythm already present at the beginning of treatment is associated with a 38% mortality rate.

Bloating & Chows — *Continued*

Getting the bloated dog's stomach decompressed and reversing the shock is an adventure in itself but the work is not yet half finished.

Surgery

All bloated dogs, once stable, should have surgery. Without surgery, the damage done inside cannot be assessed or repaired, plus bloat may recur at any point - even within the next few hours- and the above adventure must be repeated. The surgery, called gastropexy, allows the stomach to be tacked into normal position so that it may never again twist. Without gastropexy, the recurrence rate of bloat may be as high as 75%.

Assessment of the internal damage is also important to recovery. If there is some dying tissue on the stomach wall, this must be discovered and removed or the dog will die despite the heroics described above. Also,

the spleen, which is located adjacent to the stomach, may twist with the stomach. The spleen may need to be removed too.

If the tissue damage is so bad that part of the stomach must be removed, the mortality rate jumps to 28 - 38%.

If the tissue damage is so bad that the spleen must be removed, the mortality rate is 32 - 38%.

After the expense and effort of the stomach decompression, it is tempting to forgo the further expense of surgery. However, consider that the next time your dog bloats, you may not be there to catch it in time and, according to the study described below, without surgery there is a 24% mortality rate and a 76% chance of re-bloating at some point. The best choice is to finish the treatment that has been started and have the abdomen explored. If the stomach can be surgically

tacked into place, recurrence rate drops to 6%.

It is crucially important that owners of big dogs be aware of this condition and are prepared for it. Know where to take your dog during overnight or Sunday hours for emergency care. Avoid exercising your dog after a large meal. Know what to watch for. Enjoy the special friendship a large dog provides but at the same time be aware of the large dog's special needs and concerns.

How Old Should Puppies at time of Pickup?

Recently we had a client question if six weeks is old enough for a Chow puppy to leave its' mother. The interchange became quite heated when she insisted that if we let the puppies go at six weeks when airlines demand they be eight weeks to fly, then we must be operating a puppy mill ! Needless to say, this potential client will not be adopting one of our puppies!

What she hasn't taken into consideration is that the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) .. not the airlines, has made their ruling based on the shipment of all breeds. It is a broad-brush approach. It would be too difficult for them to make their ruling based on the individual breed, so all canines fall into one category.

Smaller breeds often must stay with their mother longer due to their diminutive size. Larger breed dogs, on the other hand, are often weaned after five weeks. The reasons are threefold. First, is because the puppies are eating dry kibble & wet food and drinking fine between 3-4 weeks.

Secondly, it is for the sake of the mother. Large puppies take a lot of nutrients from the mother. As the puppies age and are nursing more and more milk, the mother will begin to lose weight. This happens regardless of how much food we pump into her!

Lastly, there is the teeth issue. When the puppies get their teeth it becomes very un-



comfortable for the mother when the puppies nurse. She gets to the point she only wants in with the puppies to allow them to nurse. This is when she has become uncomfortable due to her milk coming in.

Once she has relief from that she is ready to go back outside.

Puppies will nurse as long as their mother has milk. In large litters the mother rarely gets a break. There is always a puppy nursing. We gradually wean them off by leaving mom outside for longer and longer periods. This also allows mom to gradually stop producing milk. Eventually she is only in at night and then not at all. This transition makes it easier for the puppies as well as mom. This typically occurs after the 5th week.

When we have a large litter and feel the puppies are a bit undersized, we may keep them another week. Larger litters don't have the available milk supply that smaller litters do so the puppies may not gain weight as fast. Every litter is evaluated on an individual basis. Younger mothers do better with a large litter than do older mothers.

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Quality Chows with Exceptional Temperament



"The goal of D & M Farm Kennel is to breed the highest quality Chow Chows with exceptional temperament. We want all of our puppies to be good ambassadors of the breed"

D & M Farm Happenings

The month of March didn't start out well with the death of our German Shepherd, Buck. That was followed by Tucker, our young shepherd getting injured, by what we do not know. But, there was a lot of blood and stitches were required.

We are hoping the rest of the month fares better.

We are still working on finishing a room in the horse barn that will contain our hot water heater and sink. We have to insulate it to ensure the pipes don't freeze in cold weather. Darrell and I are the carpenters in this endeavor. He leads and I help.

The weather continues to be unseasonably mild and warm. We're loving it and so are all the animals. I just

hope we don't have a sudden freeze that kills off all the new buds on the trees.

I bought most of my garden vegetable seeds the other day. Getting in the mood to work the soil. It won't be long before



you start hearing people mowing their grass!

All the dogs are doing well. Onyx has a litter of eight puppies. And our new female, Brandy, had a litter of seven. This was Brandy's first litter! We still have two previous litters so the kennel is a busy place.

The chickens are starting to lay more, which is always a sign of spring. The peacocks have their beautiful long tail feathers on display. The turkey gobblers are showing off too. Our calves are six months old now. We have moved them to the field where they run with their tails raised like a flag.

Yes, spring is in the air and we can't wait for all the good things it will bring!