

PWDCA Puppy Information Packet

Getting a Puppy



THE PORTUGUESE WATER DOG CLUB OF AMERICA, INC.

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Is this the time for a puppy in your family?

Is this the time for a puppy in your family?

The first question you need to ask yourself before you begin this journey is, do you need a puppy (or dog) at all. A dog is a lot of fun and a lot more work than many people realize. Having a family dog means caring for it in every way, from the physical to meeting the dog's need for mental stimulation as well. Hopefully this dog will be with you for the next 10 to 15 years, so this is a big decision.

Doesn't every family need a dog?

It seems that very often a family gets a dog "for kids". [Kids and dogs can be a great thing!](#) However, it is the rare child who keeps up with that pledge to "take care of it all by myself." Even the most dedicated and sincere of children soon find friends, sports and their own social life interfering with the daily needs of the family pet. Primary care for a dog must be something the adults in the household want and are willing to take responsibility for.

Do you have the time now?

Puppies are like babies. They have accidents, they don't sleep through the night, and they can destroy things. They are not doing this on purpose; they are learning the rules of life in your family. It isn't fair to become angry with the puppy for this. Do you have the patience to work through this time of life? What other commitments do you have in life now? A demanding, full time job? Small children in the home? What do you do when the puppy needs to go out, now, and your toddler is sitting and playing? Do you take the time to put the child somewhere safe and secure or call a family member to attend the puppy? That's all the time it takes for an "accident" to occur with the puppy. Not its fault, just a baby with a small bladder and little control. A puppy takes a lot of time out of your schedule. An adult dog can make less demand of your time, but still needs attention.

When you add a dog to your family you want it to be a well behaved and happy addition everyone enjoys being around. A well mannered dog doesn't "just happen." It is the result of [training](#) and patience, over time. Every dog requires exercise. The Portuguese Water Dog's exercise requirements are higher than many other breeds.

Your PWD will need to be groomed on a regular basis as well. This is a weekly job for the brushing, and less often but just as important for the more extensive [grooming](#).

Can you afford to be a responsible pet owner?

Aside from your initial purchase price there are many other expenses to pet ownership. When you first get your puppy there is the initial series of vaccinations, purchase of the equipment (bowls, collar, lead, crate and toys) and a good [puppy kindergarten class](#). After these start up costs, maintaining a dog can add up to a significant amount annually with food and vet bills. With a Portuguese Water Dog you also have grooming costs, or the expense of purchasing equipment and learning to groom the dog yourself.

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What will your future hold?

What will your life bring in the upcoming years? Are you childless now, but planning a family soon? Will you have time for the dog when your baby arrives? Will your children soon be grown, off to school or otherwise out of the home? Will the adults then want to be able to travel, and not be tied down to a pet? The American Kennel Club coined the phrase, "A Dog is for Life; not just for Christmas" on a bumper sticker many years ago. This was created to describe why dogs should not be purchased on a spur of the moment gift whim, but given long term consideration. A dog is for life. It is a sad fact that many people don't seem to realize this. This is why so many dogs end up in shelters across this country.

Please take the time to think seriously about the above questions before deciding to add a dog, any dog, to your family. Then answer these questions in regard to owning a Portuguese Water Dog in [particular](#), and be honest with yourself in your answers. It can save you and your family possible heartache in the future.

-Lisa Baird

How to select a breed

You are willing to commit to a dog

Okay, you've decided that you want a dog, and that you want one enough to train it, clean it, watch it, exercise it, and love it every single day. So the next question is: what kind of a dog will make it easier for you to do all those things? That brings us to breeds and breed standards. This method may help you decide.

What are your expectations?

First of all, make a list of the things you and your family do. Decide which ones you want to include the dog in (if you don't want to include the dog in your daily activities, stop here. Consider a stuffed animal instead). Be specific: for example, when you are hanging out at home, do you want the dog hanging out with you—in your lap, on the sofa, or at your feet—or one that is snoozing in another room, or staring out the front window at the big, wide world. When you go to the beach, do you want a dog that loves the water or are you happier leaving the dog at home or at a kennel if it's to be a longer trip? Think about things like the size and energy level you are looking for, too.

Breed differences

Here's a true fact: dogs don't just look different, they are different. Different breeds tend to have different personalities and different preferences. This is similar to humans, with one important difference: in dog breeds, parents with those same preferences and skills have been bred together for many generations. The result is that the tendencies of a breed are pretty well locked in. Your chances of success in dog ownership are higher if you start out with a dog whose genetic background steers it towards the type of life you have and the things you want to do with your dog.

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Breed standards describe the general behavioral and size tendencies of dogs of that breed. The problem is that breed standards are written by folks who already love the breed, and so they tend to describe behaviors in glowing and positive terms. You need to be a bit more critical. When you read various phrases in a breed standard, ask yourself "what is the 'dark side' of this trait?" What would this trait be like if left unchanneled?" For example, if a breed standard says the dog is brave, that could mean a dog that is very pushy with strangers unless taught consistent greeting manners. Ask yourself how you feel about a dog that tends to jump up on people.

A dog with a "strong retrieving instinct" is a dog that will tend to want to chew things—anything in sight, as a matter of fact—to a much higher degree and for a longer period of time than the average puppy. Ask yourself if you are willing to constantly supervise the dog, crate it when you are gone, and buy lots of chew toys. A "determined" dog may mean harder to train. An "aloof" dog may not want to be the cuddler you have been dreaming about.

So what about a Portuguese Water Dog?

They are an active, energetic, extremely bright and creative breed. They are not a dog to just lay by the fireplace and doze. This does not mean they are constant activity in the home or "hyper". A properly [exercised PWD](#) certainly can understand "that's ENOUGH, now go lie down!" when need be. They seem to do well in homes with another, active dog, well behaved children over the age of 5 to 7 or, if a petless, childless home, people who are willing to go on walks, take them for a swim, play Frisbee, etc. Obedience training for the first year or so is practically mandatory. Continuing on is recommended. PWDs are remarkably well suited to the sports of dog agility, obedience and, of course, the PWDCA's water trials.

Coat and the "hypoallergenic" aspect of the Portuguese Water Dog

The low shedding quality that attracts many to this breed also means that they need [grooming](#). They should have a single coat of hair (most breeds are "double coated"), that keeps on growing. It needs to be brushed and combed regularly, and clipped periodically. How often, depends on your desires, and the growth rate for the individual dog. No matter what, a Portuguese Water Dog will require a good bit of grooming time from you.

Since they shed little (but they do shed, all mammals shed at least a little.) they are often better for people with allergies than other breeds. It is suggested though, that you spend time with adult PWDs before getting one, if you have severe allergies. Many people are allergic to Portuguese Water Dogs, please be careful. Look up "hypoallergenic" in the dictionary; "Having a decreased tendency to provoke an allergic reaction." It does NOT mean nonallergenic. People can be and are allergic to all breeds of dogs. Nothing is more upsetting, to the buyer, breeder and pup, and then having to return a pup because of a family member's allergy! It's tough for all concerned. Spend time with the breed before bringing on into your home as a family member. Allow the allergic person to bury their nose in the dog's fur and really give it a chance for a reaction.

-Lisa Baird and Kathryn Monroe

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What IS a Portuguese Water Dog, really?

The following is a humorous, but pretty accurate description of what an owner can actually expect from life with a PWD. First the actual words of the standard, and then a look at those words in another light.

--- The Real Standard ---

General Appearance - Known for centuries along Portugal's coast, this seafaring breed was prized by fishermen for a spirited, yet obedient nature, and a robust, medium build that allowed for a full day's work in and out of the water. The Portuguese Water Dog is a swimmer and diver of exceptional ability and stamina, who aided his master at sea by retrieving broken nets, herding schools of fish, and carrying messages between boats and to shore. He is a loyal companion and alert guard. This highly intelligent utilitarian breed is distinguished by two coat types, either curly or wavy; an impressive head of considerable breadth and well proportioned mass; a ruggedly built, well-knit body; and a powerful, thickly based tail, carried gallantly or used purposefully as a rudder. The Portuguese Water Dog provides an indelible impression of strength, spirit, and soundness.

Expression - Steady, penetrating, and attentive.

Temperament - An animal of spirited disposition, self-willed, brave, and very resistant to fatigue. A dog of exceptional intelligence and a loyal companion, it obeys its master with facility and apparent pleasure. It is obedient with those who look after it or with those for whom it works.

--- What It Really Means ---

General Appearance - Notorious as a brawler for centuries along Portugal's coast, this seafaring breed was prized by fishermen for a pushy nature and a robust, medium build that needed the mental and physical demand's of a full day's work in and out of the water to reduce it's energy level to one that allowed it to hear and obey it's master's commands. The Portuguese Water Dog seeks and loves to splash and wallow in mud, water bowls, toilets with open lids, and any liquid--water, paint, etc. It does this with great finesse and stamina, unendingly, while aiding his master by retrieving any item that it sees and wants to carry, regardless of size, delicacy, or ownership. Its incessant retrieving instinct leads to a dog that must have something in it's mouth to carry, chew on, or swallow, whether that item be edible or decorative, such as furniture.

He is a clinging companion and an incessant alarm barker. This highly manipulative breed is distinguished by two coat types, either curly or wavy, which require

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extensive grooming, bathing, brushing, combing, detangling, etc. far in excess of the time that would be spent vacuuming up dog hair if it were to shed, which it does not (carrying dirt, twigs, dust, mats, etc. around with it until groomed). It has an impressive head of considerable breadth and well proportioned mass, which it uses for head and body rams; a ruggedly built, well-knit body which enables it to counter-surf and jump onto tables and over fences; and a powerful, thickly based tail, carried gallantly or used purposefully as a rudder or to clear items off coffee tables and destroy Lego constructions built by children on floors.

Expression - Direct, rude, and demanding. The Portuguese Water Dog likes to be at eye level with humans, resulting in an almost un-extinguishable jumping-up greeting behavior.

Temperament - An animal with a mind of its own, brash, and ADHD. A dog of exceptional ability to manipulate people and its environment, and a strong desire to lead that makes it incessantly desire to be around humans that it can bend to its wishes. If trained by a person with patience, superior intelligence, and unilateral focus, it will obey its master with facility and apparent pleasure until it decides to test or until it devises an alternative to try.

Makes you think, doesn't it?

- Kathryn Monroe

PWD Grooming Needs

The six steps of a complete grooming:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Brushing and combing | 4. Bathing |
| 2. Nail trimming | 5. Blow drying |
| 3. Ear cleaning | 6. Clipping/scissoring |

Introducing You and Your Puppy to Grooming

Steps 1 - 3 should be done on a weekly basis, although brushing and combing can be needed more frequently, depending on coat length and activities. Bathing and drying are best done every two to three weeks. Clipping is done as needed or desired, depending on your personal preference for your dog's appearance.

Equipment

- The Portuguese Water Dog, like Poodles and other low shedding breeds needs to be clipped or scissored on a regular basis. Their coat will continue to grow longer and longer, until it becomes unmanageable otherwise. You can learn to clip your dog yourself, or take them to a professional groomer regularly. The latter can become costly; so many owners opt to learn to groom themselves. It pays, in the long run, to purchase a good **dog**

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clipper, and keep it maintained. Even if you choose to have your dog clipped by a professional, you will find a good pair of scissors at home for tidying to be useful. Expect to pay \$500 and up annually if your PWD will be professionally groomed.

- A **grooming table** is not necessary, but is very helpful. It can make you and your dog more comfortable during the grooming process. Your dog does need to be on a solid, steady surface where it feels secure.
- **Brushes and combs** are a must for every Portuguese Water Dog owner. Your breeder should be able to help you decide which ones, of the wide variety available, are appropriate for your needs.
- **Nail trimmers or a nail grinder** are another necessary item. Even if you choose to have your dog groomed by a professional, nail care needs to be done at home, on a regular basis. There are several types of nail clippers available. Another choice for many pet owners is an electric grinder. Some of you may have such a grinding tool already, sold under various names such as Dremel.
- **Styptic powder**, such as Kwik Stop is a good addition to your grooming tool box as well. Careful as you try to be, at some point you will cut too close and get the dog's quick (the live part) and the styptic powder stops the resultant bleeding.
- The Portuguese Water Dog, like many drop eared breeds, can be prone to ear problems. Cleaning them out regularly can help prevent these. There are many good **ear cleaners** available over the counter, and from your vet.
- Your dog will need bathed on a regular basis. A human shampoo is not appropriate for bathing your dog. Their pH levels and needs are different than your own. Again, your breeder can help advise you on a good **dog shampoo**.
- **Conditioners** can be very helpful to reduce matting and keep coat from splitting when being brushed.
- After a bath, your dog will need dried. There are a number of very good **blow dryers** on the market. An item many Portuguese Water Dog owners find very helpful is the "forced air": type dryer. This literally blows the water off of the dog. Once most of the water is out of the coat, a traditional **hand held dryer** can be used to finish.

-Lisa Baird

PWD Exercise Needs

How much?

Many people don't realize that a Portuguese Water Dog is a working dog. Their historical purpose was to assist the Portuguese fisherman and do a day's worth of work. In order to have an efficient worker, breeders selected animals that showed potential for drive and stamina. Breeders continued to breed for the active, intelligent, strong working dogs. The traits were nurtured until today we have a breed of dog that is active and inquisitive. This means, to the average pet owner,

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that their PWD needs to be exercised effectively each day to keep mind and body healthy. **An under-exercised puppy can be very destructive as they try to work off the built up energy. They can be very annoying, demanding attention from their owners. If left to their own devices a Portuguese Water Dog will undoubtedly get in trouble.** All PWDs at an early age should be monitored carefully to avoid unwanted behavior.

At the very least a PWD should have a minimum of two 20 minute sessions of free running a day. They prefer to do things with their guardians rather than left to their own devices. A fenced in yard is great for a PWD owner. Your dog can have their own secure area to zoom around or chase a ball and stretch those legs preferably in the company of a human. Some owners who are away all day take their dog to dog day care where they are able to get plenty of exercise. These dogs become model citizens at home after a day of exercise.

Note: Controlled strenuous workouts such as long jogs should be done only after the growth plates on a puppy are finished growing, at about one year.

- Verne Foster

Training

Why Train?

Puppies grow very quickly. Before you know it they are one year old and equivalent to a teenager. There is a lot of essential learning and socialization that will need to happen in those early months.

The Portuguese Water Dog is an intelligent breed which means they learn "the bad" as fast as they learn the good. You can direct that learning by starting your puppy's training early and taking him to school. Find a facility that has instruction in puppy manners as well as the important lessons of Come, Sit, Down, Stay and walk on leash. These classes will not only teach your pup control it will also be beneficial for the socialization that all Portuguese Water Dogs need at an early age. A good set of classes will also teach you how to teach your dog.

When to start?

Begin the training as early as possible. Waiting until the dog is six months old will only result in having to get rid of bad habits. Early training allows you to start your PWD off with good habits. Once you learn the basics of how a dog learns and how to train on your own you can continue to teach your dog after the sessions are completed. You will find that a PWD loves to learn. He will be open to new experiences and there is a huge variety of canine activities that you can enjoy with your PWD. From Water Work and Agility to Flyball and therapy work, a Portuguese Water Dog is often talented in a multitude of disciplines.

Finding a [Trainer](#)

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To find a trainer or obedience school you can go through your veterinarian. If there is a Kennel Club in your area they may have classes available for puppies. Your local shelter may have names of qualified instructors, or go on line to www.APDT.com (Association of Pet Dog Trainers) for a list of dog instructors in your area. Private lessons are fine but group classes are invaluable for the socializing your puppy needs. Observe a class before you enroll. Ask yourself if the dogs are enjoying the class? Is the instructor available for questions after the class? Will you be comfortable with the teaching methods that the trainer utilizes? If the answer to any of these is "no", you may want to keep looking.

- Verne Foster

Choosing Training Classes

There are several different types of classes available for puppies. There are basic pet classes which are for any dog who needs to learn basic obedience. Check to see what age they will start your puppy. You will want to get into classes as early as possible. There is puppy kindergarten (not to be confused with a puppy play group) which usually includes pups from 8 weeks up to 6 or 8 months. These classes are ideal for puppy socialization. Look for PK classes which will start you on some of the basic commands such as "come", "sit", "down", and walk on leash. These classes should give insightful information on living with your new puppy. Then there are classes which specialize in specific competitive events. For example: puppy training for agility or starting obedience training for competition may be offered in your area. It's best to start with a basic set of classes where you will gain control before you step into the specialized classes.

To find a trainer or obedience school try to contact other PWD owners in your area. You can also find classes through your veterinarian. If there is a Kennel Club or training club nearby they may have classes available for puppies. Your local shelter may have names of qualified instructors, or go on line to www.APDT.com (Association of Professional Dog Trainers) for a list of dog instructors in your area. Private lessons are fine especially to help you learn but group classes are invaluable for socializing your puppy. Today there are many different ways of training dogs. Some are called motivational methods and utilize treats and lures to gain success. There is a method which uses a clicker much like dolphin trainers use. Then there are the older methods involving corrections and praise. In general dogs will learn with all of these methods but many PWD trainers find they prefer the more motivational approaches using food rewards or clicker training. Picking a suitable class and instructor will require you to observe a class before you enroll. If that is not possible find someone who has gone through the full course and can recommend a set of classes. When observing, ask yourself are the dogs enjoying the class? Is the training advice presented in an understandable way and seem sensible to you? Is the instructor available for questions after the class? Are there enough assistants so that help can be given to each student? Will you be comfortable with the teaching methods that the trainer utilizes?

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Most obedience classes are there to teach you how to teach your dog. Once you have committed to a class you will see amazing progress, but only if you stick with it and do your homework away from class sessions.

- Verne Foster

Biting and Nipping

Why does my puppy bite me?

One of the jobs the first Portuguese Water Dogs had was to retrieve things. This required the breed to use their mouths. It is a breed trait. Whether it is retrieving, ripping, tearing and destroying, nipping or simply carrying something things around, it is their nature to use their mouths. When you look at the breed you find an intelligent dog who likes to explore their environment. This is done very often with their mouths as they taste chew and carry things. It is important for the owner to establish rules as to what can be mouthed and what can't.

Rules

Nipping and biting on humans must obviously be stopped. However at an early age showing the puppy how hard is too hard when biting on hands is an essential first lesson. It is the same lesson taught to a puppy by other litter mates and the mother dog in the whelping box. A simple way to get this message across, when being mouthed and nipped on the hands, is to give a high pitched yelp as if you were another puppy telling your PWD, "Too hard!" This testing of the bite is important. Then from 11 weeks on the rules will change there should no longer be any biting on humans at all.

How to stop it

Substituting a toy or bone, employing a time out in a crate or simply walking away from the game may be all that is needed to stop the mouthing. Some PWDs are more persistent than others and will need firmer handling to stop this unwanted behavior. You may need to ask your breeder for suggestions on how to stop the overly mouthy, older PWD or in rare cases a behaviorist may need to be contacted.

Many Portuguese have retrieving talents. This can be nurtured especially if you want to go on to performance events such as water work. When a PWD retrieves something inappropriate, a basic trade works wonders to get it away from your pup. Avoid chasing after your PWD. That becomes a game that will be frustrating and possibly dangerous. Have the pup bring you the object and then reward by giving something back that is better than what they brought you.

Your PWD will teethe during the first year. To relieve the pain of teeth breaking through the skin they tend to chew. Even after permanent teeth are in they chew as these teeth are being set in their jaws. They chew on anything that they can get their mouths on. This is when you provide safe and satisfy bones and toys just for

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your PWD. Sticks are probably not a good choice as your dogs can get splinters caught in their mouth as well as enjoy the feel and taste of wood, any wood, including chair legs. Plush toys at this time will often be destroyed and stuffing possibly eaten. This is another reason why your puppy should be monitored well in the first year of his life.

By being observant and directing appropriate mouth behaviors you will have a dog with a very manageable breed trait. A PWD who will show his inherited retrieving nature can be trained to use this talent in the many performance arenas available to him

- Verne Foster

Portuguese Water Dogs and Kids

PWDs and Children together

Portuguese Water Dogs get along great with children. You need to understand, however, that dogs are not human. PWDs will often consider a child as a canine litter mate and could play harder than you would want and they play with their mouths. Therefore it is important that you never let small children be unsupervised with your dog. If something were to happen you would have no way of knowing whose "fault" it was. Did the child tease the dog, pull the tail, or hurt the dog in a way the precipitate a nip. An accidental bite will always be blamed on the dog. In all fairness, some PWDs are tolerant beyond normal limits with overly rough physical play. But accidents can still happen.

Just as you will be training your new pup, rules should also be set for children in regard to your PWD. A child needs to be told what is allowable and what isn't. And if a child is unable to be part of a puppy's guidance, do not let him have any of the responsibilities. If a child is too young to understand how to pick up a puppy, then don't allow it. If a youngster can't be trusted to help with house breaking then don't make that a child's responsibility. If a child won't pick his toys up off the floor then he should realize they will be fair game for destruction by any PWD.

Children and PWDs can be best of buddies. But expect slip- ups with kids and PWDs and try to instill reliability in both. **Always** keep a sharp eye on them when together. **Never** leave your dog and child alone together.

- Verne Foster

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Housebreaking with a Crate

What is it?

What is "crate training"? The main reason new pet owners often oppose the use of a crate is that they do not understand it. It is not a "cage" used for punishing the puppy. A crate is a useful training tool, just like a collar and leash, if used correctly. It has proven itself over and over again, in many different home situations to be the fastest and easiest way to potty train a puppy. Understanding this before you start will help you through this training process.

Our dogs are certainly not wild canines but they do still share some traits. Canines need a safe place, out of the way of every day hustle and bustle of life. Many people will notice their dog or puppy choosing to lie under a chair or low table, watching the world go by. They are looking for a den. All puppies, and Portuguese Water Dogs more than many, can be very destructive. **A crate is a place that can keep your puppy and your possessions from harm when you are busy.**

Why?

In our homes, we can give our dogs a den of their own, and it can be comforting and useful for both dog and owner. Dogs will instinctually keep their den clean. This is an important point for you to understand. Use this information. This is the why a crate works for housebreaking your dog. Your puppy will learn to enjoy his crate and want to keep it clean.

There are times you can be fairly certain your pup will need to potty: when he wakes up from a nap, after he eats, after a play session, or anytime he hasn't been out for awhile. Like a small child, a puppy can not "hold it" for very long, so you must be aware and ever watchful.

When your pup cannot be under your watchful eye, he should be in his crate. When he is napping, he should be in his crate. While you are eating, cleaning or working, your puppy should be in his crate. This may sound excessive to some. It doesn't need to be. You need to schedule time to spend with your pup. (See the "Do you have the time now" section of the ["Is this the time for a puppy..."](#) article.) Have short training sessions throughout the day. Play with your puppy. Go for short walks around the neighborhood.

When you are casually moving about your home during the day and can do so, practice "tethering". This is simply attaching the puppy to your body. The easiest way to do this is to attach the leash to your belt or something similar. This keeps the pup with you, and yes, takes some of the pressure off of you to keep the pup from wandering away and getting into trouble.

Schedule

Following is a sample day for you and your new puppy:

Morning:

Puppy wakes up in his crate and you get up immediately and take the puppy outside on leash*. Puppy goes potty, praise the puppy. Puppy comes back into the house for breakfast. After breakfast you both go back outside for the puppy to go

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potty. Puppy goes and you praise the puppy. Now the puppy can be left loose in the house, under your watchful eye, to play for awhile. Maybe have a short training session. Then back outside to potty (don't forget the praise!) and into his crate for a nap.

Noontime:

Puppy wakes up from his nap and you immediately take him outside. Puppy goes potty, you praise, back into the house for lunch. Puppy eats lunch, goes outside with you and goes potty, you praise. Now is a good time for a short walk. Incorporate training into this as well. Ask puppy Sit while you reach for his collar and put the leash on. Good Puppy. Give a treat as a reward, outside for a quick walk around the neighborhood. Back home, potty before you go into the house if needed, praise. Playtime with puppy. Puppy goes back outside to potty, praise, back indoors for a well deserved nap in his crate.

Evening:

Puppy wakes up from his nap, you both go outside, puppy goes, you praise, back in the house for playtime. Time to go back outside, puppy goes, you praise, maybe time for an evening walk. Back into the house, play, dinner, potty, praise, back inside.

Bedtime:

Puppy has had playtime, training time and walks with his adored humans today. Outside to potty, into the crate for a well earned sleep period!

Now, you don't have to follow the above exactly. It is to give you an idea of how to work the puppy's schedule into your own life. Puppies, like children, need a routine.

If you work outside the home be fair to the puppy. He cannot "hold it" all day while you are gone. If you can, try to get home at lunchtime. Arrange for a friend or neighbor to visit during the day, don't expect the puppy to wait all day. He cannot. Make sure whoever visits the pup during the day understand the importance of taking the puppy outside as soon as he comes out of his crate and praising when he goes potty. You must expect to spend more time in the evening with your puppy than if someone were home with him all day. Be prepared for this. You are the center of this young, living creature's universe. He has waited all day for you to come home. Enjoy it, and even on days you don't feel like it, you must spend time with the puppy.

Consistent and fair crate training as a puppy can make your entire life with your pet easier. When you are visiting in someone else's home or a hotel, your dog may be welcome if he will sit quietly in his crate when needed. When you need your dog out of the way during special occasions in your own home, you have a pet who will behave while in his crate. If your dog should need to spend time in the veterinary hospital he will not be nearly as frightened if he is used to being in a crate for periods of time. Your dog has a place he can choose to go when he needs time on his own.

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Some people choose to not crate their dog while they are out once he is an adult. This can work for many dogs. With your Portuguese Water Dog however, please know that a mentally and emotionally mature dog may not appear in your home for three to five years!

**Having the puppy on a leash for potty time can help keep him "on task". An off leash puppy is more likely to wander, sniff and want to play. After he has done his business you can certainly remove the leash, in your securely fenced yard, and play.*

- Lisa Baird

Where should you get your puppy?

You've decided on the breed of dog for you. What's your next move? It's finding a puppy. This purchase should receive thoughtful consideration; after all, it's not a loaf of bread you're buying. This little bundle of energy will be a member of your family for a decade or more. Choosing a reputable source for your puppy is your primary objective. Because it's almost impossible for you, the buyer, to know what any of the puppies will grow into physically and emotionally, you must rely entirely upon your faith in the person from whom you are purchasing your pup.

If you want a dog in your life, please don't buy a puppy mill puppy. These pups are not properly socialized and their parents will not have had the health testing recommended by any good breeder and breed clubs to increase the odds of you having a healthy, happy, well adjusted pet. Pet store clerks and other sellers will never admit their dogs come from puppy mills. How do you separate fact from fiction? The facts:

Pet stores cater to impulsive buyers and consumers seeking convenient transactions. These stores don't interview prospective buyers to ensure responsible, lifelong homes for the pets they sell, and the stores may be staffed by employees with limited knowledge about pets and pet care. **Their puppies come, without exception, from puppy mills or irresponsible breeders.**

A "USDA-inspected" breeder does not mean a "good" breeder. Be wary of claims by pet store staff that they sell animals only from breeders who are "USDA-inspected". The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) enforces the federal law called the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which regulates commercial breeding operations. But the act doesn't require all commercial breeders to be licensed, and the USDA establishes only minimum-care standards in enforcing this law. Breeders are required to provide food, water, and shelter—but not love, socialization, or freedom from confining cages. **Many USDA-licensed and inspected puppy mills operate under squalid conditions with known violations of the AWA.**

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Puppy mill puppies often have medical problems. These problems can lead to veterinary bills in the thousands of dollars. But pet retailers count on the bond between families and their new puppies being so strong that the puppies won't be returned. Guarantees are often so difficult to comply with that they are virtually useless. In addition, poor breeding and socialization practices at many puppy mills can lead to behavioral problems throughout the puppies' lives.

Many disreputable "breeders" sell their dogs directly to the public over the Internet, fancy dog magazines and through newspaper ads. They often sell several breeds of dogs, but may advertise each breed in a separate place and not in one large advertisement or website. These breeders are not required to be inspected by any federal agency and, in many states, are not inspected at all. Recently, even the American Kennel Club web site has started a "Breeders Classified" page. Scrutinize these breeders just like you would any other. There are really NO criteria for being listed here, other than breeding dogs purported to be purebred. Responsible breeder may also advertise in some or all of these sources and it is up to you, the buyer to question and screen breeders.

Responsible breeders care where their puppies go and interview hopeful adopters. They don't ever sell through pet stores or to families they haven't thoroughly checked out for this reason. They usually are found through National Breed Clubs and word of mouth. They may advertise on the internet or in print ads as well.

Purebred "papers" do not guarantee the quality of the breeder or the dog. Even the American Kennel Club (AKC) readily admits that it "cannot guarantee the quality or health of dogs in its registry."

-Lisa Baird

How do you know if you are talking to a responsible breeder?

Who they are

Serious and dedicated hobby breeders do not really expect to make a profit from selling puppies. They breed dogs for the enjoyment and pride that comes from producing high quality, happy, healthy puppies that become cherished family companions. These breeders acknowledge responsibility for each and every puppy produced and stand behind every dog they breed.

Unequivocally, you should choose your puppy from a responsible hobby breeder. You deserve a pet that was the result of careful planning, a puppy who was bred and carefully raised to be happy and healthy. Only the established breeder, with a selective breeding program, can offer you predictability and consistency of quality, health, and temperament. And you won't pay more for this good quality. Pet shops and backyard breeders often sell their poor quality puppies at prices that are equal

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to, or higher than those charged by hobby breeders.

Finding a responsible breeder

How does one recognize the serious, dedicated hobby breeder? The list below identifies many of the attributes and characteristics of the serious hobby breeder, though no breeder will have all of these. Don't be afraid to ask questions or to confront the prospective source with these requirements. It is your right, and a dedicated and reputable breeder will respond positively and with pride.

1. Each breed of dog has a national breed club and, in many areas of the country, local specialty (single-breed) clubs exist. Also, throughout the country, there are local all-breed dog clubs. Ideally, your breeder will belong to all three types of clubs, and possibly to other dog-related organizations as well, although sometimes not all the options will be available to them. Usually, participation in dog clubs indicates depth of involvement. The breeder is exposed to other points of view, learns more about their breed and is kept up to date about general dog care and modern breeding practices.
2. Breeders should be involved in showing their dogs, so that they aren't breeding in a vacuum. Breeders who don't show may have no idea how good their dogs really are and are deprived of the opportunity to share information and ideas with others. Showing provides competition which encourages breeders to produce better dogs. Breeders who show are not relying solely on a pedigree to indicate quality. The show ring is the forum that indicates the degree to which a dog conforms to the standard for its breed. Breeders who show are known by others, have a reputation to uphold, and will be as careful and honest in selling you a pet as they are in selling show dogs.
3. Your breeder should give you a reasonable period of time after purchase to have your pup examined by a veterinarian to determine its state of health. If a problem should arise, it can be quickly resolved. Most reputable breeders will also have the puppies vet-checked once prior to placement to check for things like heart murmurs which aren't easily identifiable by visual inspection.
4. Breeders should give you written instructions on feeding, training, care and grooming. Breeders should also supply you with basic information about the breed, either as a gift, or to purchase at a nominal cost. You should also receive the pup's health and vaccination records. Breeders should provide a contract or some written, signed conditions of sale. You should also get a copy of your puppy's pedigree and you should be able to see a copy of the AKC Registration Application Form.
5. The breeder should supply you with proof that the pups' parents have had their hips X-rayed and certified by the OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals). Also, the breeder should show you that the pups' parents have been eye checked within the last 12 months by a CERF (Canine Eye Research Foundation) ophthalmologist and are clear of hereditary eye defects. For the most part dogs less than two years old should not be used for breeding and OFA final ratings are not given before a dog is two years old.
6. Make it clear that you expect the breeder's responsibility to continue after you have taken the puppy home. Many dedicated breeders will ask that the pup be returned to them or placed with new owners that meet their approval if, for some reason, you are unable to continue ownership.

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7. Be prepared to answer a few questions yourself. Reputable breeders are genuinely interested in [finding quality homes for their puppies](#). Don't be offended if the breeder asks whether you have a fenced yard or what kind of dogs you have had in the past and what happened to them. A serious breeder will want to know what kinds of situations their puppies will be subjected to and what kind of care they will receive. Some breeders may seem a bit hesitant to sell you a pup until they know a bit more about you.
8. Breeders should be willing to have you visit their premises. You should see a clean environment, well-socialized pups, and a dam with a good temperament. Puppies should be happy and self-assured. It is desirable to have the puppies living somewhere in the house rather than in a separate building or kennel. This allows the puppies to become socialized to the ordinary sights, sounds, smells and activities of a household.
9. Breeders should be willing to give you references - their veterinarian, or the names of people who have purchased puppies from them in the past.
10. Breeders will often require that your pet be spayed or neutered when it reaches the correct age, and may withhold registration papers until proof is provided. The most important reason for this is to ensure a healthier animal. Spayed or neutered dogs are far less prone to many serious maladies. In addition, serious breeders spend a lot of time and effort planning a breeding program designed to improve the breed by using only the best breeding quality dogs. Pets should be loved and enjoyed as pets.

- Jane Harding

Puppy on a String: Read and Understand Your Contract

by Maryanne Murray

(Reprinted with permission from The Courier Magazine, Sept/Oct 2010, Portuguese Water Dog Club of America, Inc.)

Congratulations! You've decided you want a puppy, you've done your homework on different breeds and you're convinced it has to be a Portuguese Water Dog, or you've already had a PWD and want another one. You don't need a fancy show dog or a performance dog nor do you want to breed your dog. You want a happy, healthy and loving companion in your life. You just want a family pet!

You've made your decision on the puppy you want to live with...

but can you live with the contract that comes with the puppy?

Hopefully, this puppy will be with you for the next dozen or more years. You're adding a family member who will share your home and your heart – it's a big decision – choose wisely. If you want a family pet then be sure you get just a family pet. If you don't want to show a dog then don't agree to show the dog. If you don't want to breed the dog then don't agree to breed the dog. Showing and breeding can be wonderfully exciting and gratifying activities but they are not for

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everyone. They can also be extremely emotional experiences, both positively and negatively, and financially burdensome. If you can't find a breeder who will sell you a family pet without requiring you to show and breed it, then keep looking! If you are considering showing and breeding, then know what you're getting into and discuss all the implications and contractual obligations with your breeder.

Concerned for their puppies, responsible breeders will always have a contract which will always come with varied basic requirements, let's call them strings – must return puppy to breeder if you can't keep it, spay or neuter puppy if a pet, must attend obedience classes, must agree to specified vaccination schedule, must agree to specified diet, must have hips x-rayed and other important but not oppressive requirements. Not all breeders though are created equal and not all puppies are sold for the same price nor on the same contract terms. Different breeders breed for different reasons, different breeders have different requirements of puppy buyers and different breeders follow up on their puppies in different ways. Can you read between the contract lines? ***The future well-being of the puppy always forms the basis of a responsible contract.*** If you suspect that the future well-being of the breeder is also entwined, then it's time to read carefully and understand precisely what you are signing. When basic good-for-the-puppy strings become unwieldy, complicated and entangling **STRINGS**, it's time to think with your head and not your heart. If you just want a family pet, there's no reason to sign on for anything more. ***Read and understand your contract.***

When buying a puppy, you promise a breeder you'll do whatever you've agreed to in the contract in exchange for that puppy. In the emotion of the moment and when you've got that adorable little bundle in your arms, it's not unusual for people to agree to things they don't fully understand. "Finish" the dog? Sure! "Special" the dog? No problem – she is totally special! "Collect semen for AI's"? Whatever! "Breed the bitch"? Ok – can't be that hard! "Return puppies to breeder"? Why not? "Co-own"? Sure, any reason not to? Ok, now sign on the dotted line and you're on your way home with the new, warm fuzzy love of your life – and, if you're not paying attention, some of those very consequential **STRINGS** in the contract you signed.

"Finishing" a dog means showing it and getting its AKC Championship. It can be fun, exciting, ego boosting, educational and a thrill a minute when you're winning. It can also be disheartening when you lose, extremely expensive, time consuming, and may involve large blocks of time, like months, away from home for your new family member. Are you prepared for it? Can you afford it – often thousands of dollars? Is your breeder going to share in or pay all of the expenses? Will you be able to handle the separation from your pet and vice versa? Know the answers to these questions before you sign on to show your dog! Promoting your dog in public promotes your breeder as well. There's absolutely nothing wrong with doing that – just be sure you understand and agree to how it will be done and who pays for what. ***Read and understand your contract.***

"Specialing" your dog means showing it after it gets a CH and involves much more time and much more money. Be sure of what you're getting into if it's a requirement in your contract. It's a major commitment in money and time away

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from home for your dog. Winning is wonderful but, win or lose, it's who signs the bottom line on the expense checks. Will that be you? ***Read and understand your contract.***

"AI" stands for artificial insemination. Semen is collected from a male dog and artificially rather than naturally placed in the bitch's uterus to get her pregnant. It's an everyday occurrence in the dog world but is it so in yours? Many breeders require that a male PWD be kept intact, not neutered, so that he will be available to them for breeding. Not unusual and totally acceptable. Is that what you want? Are you prepared to live with an intact male – one who has been exposed to breeding? What you need to know if this is a part of your contract is who pays for the collections to be done, how many collections do you "owe" the breeder and how long will the dog need to be kept intact. Often a breeder will collect semen from a dog, freeze it for future use and allow you to then neuter your dog. That's not unusual either and again, totally acceptable – just be sure who pays the bills, how many collections there will be and how long you must keep the dog intact. Maybe the breeder gave you the dog with no monetary exchange and expects payment in this form. That's fair. Maybe the breeder doesn't want to lose the valuable genes your puppy carries. That's a worthy consideration. Also consider this - if you paid \$2,000 upfront for your new puppy and you now contractually "owe" the breeder five semen collections when he matures, how much are you really paying the breeder for your dog? Usually, the owner of a stud dog, in this case the owner of the semen, gets a fee to impregnate a bitch – often as much as \$2,000. At the least, the breeder will probably get five stud services from your dog's semen. So, you do the math! When the numbers become significant, the significance of those numbers is revealing. ***Read and understand your contract.***

"Co-ownership" with the breeder is exactly what it implies – you own the puppy and so does the breeder. There are certain requirements and even some AKC rules which apply to co-ownerships. For many it can be a great way to go and can be the beginning of a long-lasting mentorship and friendship. For some, it can be convoluted and lead to misunderstandings and undesirable interactions. Know what you're getting into with a co-ownership. Discuss it with the breeder if it's a condition of sale. What happens if...? Who pays for what and when? Is it a 50/50 thing...? ***Read and understand your contract.***

"I'm so sorry, he's no longer available to you – unless you show him and give me breeding rights to him" is the way some breeders may inform you that the plans have changed. That darling pet puppy you chose, had your heart set on and already had a name picked out for has been reevaluated as a show and breed quality prospect. If you want him, it's going to cost you. Are you surprised? Certainly. Do you want that puppy? Desperately. Are you going to sign on to show and breed him? Think about it. It's not unheard of for this to happen and it may be an honest mistake on the breeder's part. The pet puppy you were promised has just been upgraded, the kids have their hearts set on him and if your head doesn't take over on this decision, your heart may just sign that new contract agreeing to show and breed him or her. Now, step away from the puppy, put the pen back on the table and think about it. ***Read and understand your contract.***

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Breeding dogs should be a labor of love, full of personal satisfaction and a heartfelt commitment to a breed and to producing exemplary puppies. When done properly, it is labor intensive, time consuming, emotionally draining and enriching, physically demanding and mentally both daunting and uplifting. If you're shopping for a puppy, you've seen what's involved. Ask yourself – are you ready and willing to take on such a responsibility? Do you understand all that's expected of a breeder? Could you handle twelve puppies if that's what Mother Nature gave you and could you find wonderful homes for all of them? Do some serious soul-searching before you commit in writing to breed your new puppy. If breeding is not something you aspire to, then don't agree to do it.

Many breeders will require a bitch be bred and some of the puppies returned to them. This could be in consideration for a lesser upfront price or a mentoring relationship where the breeder becomes your teacher and guides you through the world of dogs or perhaps it's in payment for the breeder show-ing the dog. It could be that the breeder just gives you the bitch puppy in return for some puppies back when she's bred. There are all sorts of possibilities and reasons why a breeder would want puppies back. If you're willing to breed and understand all of the implications of such an agreement, then go for it. Having puppies can be wonderful if you're prepared. However, if you just want a family pet then hold out for a good pet without the complications of those imposing **STRINGS**. ***Read and understand your contract.***

There are also situations where the buyer of a female puppy is required to breed the bitch multiple times and give all of the litters back to the breeder. Sound reasonable? Do the math on this one! Are you buying a new puppy or signing on to an undesired new job? There have been cases of breeders taking puppy buyers to court for breach of contract when they don't want to breed their bitch again or refuse to breed her for any additional litters, or won't pay a comparable amount of money which that litter would have generated for the breeder or, as it might say in a contract, "the owner will return the bitch to the breeder – permanently". What? Say goodbye forever to your adored pet? Would you have agreed to a requirement like that? Would your breeder ever enforce such a deal? Think again! It happens. These contracts can be legally binding. Know what you're getting into when you agree to something like this. ***Read and understand your contract.***

Another scenario is the breeder who takes a bitch back into their own home, has the puppies there, and when the bitch is no longer needed for nursing, sends her back to the owner. This often happens for more than one litter. Is that what you want for your new puppy's future? Do you want a reproductive machine or do you want a family pet? Did you sign a contract with the future well-being of the puppy at its core or has the future well-being of the breeder also been woven into the contract? Again, do the math! You know what puppies are selling for. If you're required to return multiple puppies or litters to your breeder, be sure you understand why the breeder has this requirement, why you're agreeing to it and what happens to the puppies. Will they be sold to someone just like you on a contract just like you signed? Remember, when the numbers become significant, the significance of those numbers tells a tale.

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Breeders have different reasons and different motivations for everything in their contracts. Whatever you agree to, be sure you understand it completely and how it will impact your new puppy and you in the future. If you just want a family pet, then get just a family pet. If you want to show and breed then get a puppy you can show and breed. Just be aware of all of the contractual obligations and decide for yourself if they're basic strings you can agree to or are they burdensome **STRINGS**, the kind you'd rather not be obligated to fulfill. ***Read and understand your contract.***

With the difference between basic strings and the other **STRINGS** in mind, another thing to consider about contracts is breeders who don't have one at all or who consider the cashing of your check as their contract. There are no strings or **STRINGS** here, just one important line – the one at the bottom of the check. Be very careful in this case. Concerned, responsible breeders will always have a contract with the future well-being of the puppy at its core. Their puppies are their main concern and their contracts will reflect their sense of responsibility for these little lives. These same breeders will interview you as if you were being vetted for a Supreme Court position or trying to adopt a baby. If a breeder's only concern is how soon can you pick up the puppy and don't forget your checkbook, it's time to step back and reassess the situation. ***Read and understand your contract.*** No contract? You have your first clue that this may be an undesirable situation.

Whatever situation you find yourself in as you shop for your new puppy, remember, get what you want – not what someone else wants. Don't be talked into something you don't understand. Don't believe that everybody does it this way. Don't think you'll never get a puppy if you don't take this one. Be aware, be smart and above all, ***read and understand your contract.*** Go with your gut if you sense something is not right for you or for your new family member. Puppies should come with leashes, not a tangle of heavy **STRINGS**.

Puppy Placement

You have found a breeder you are interested in getting a puppy from, now what?

Call the breeder and let them know you are interested, discuss your situation. In order to find the right puppy for you, they will need to know about your family, lifestyle, living arrangements, reasons for wanting a puppy, and any preferences you might have about the puppy's gender, color, and coat type. After that discussion, if they both believe one of their puppies is right for you, they will discuss when litters might be available and what additional steps you need to take.

We've heard people mention "show/breed" homes and "pet" homes. What do these distinctions mean?

While all of our dogs should be placed in homes where they are members of a family, a show/breed quality puppy is one that has been evaluated as potentially having qualities worth preserving through breeding once they are mature. A "pet"

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puppy may have a slightly bad bite, a low-set tail or some other characteristic that we do not wish to continue. But a "pet" is still a healthy and happy dog that makes a fine companion. A responsible breeder should have a long-term goal: To perpetuate and improve all the good qualities that make the PWD a lovable companion and stable working dog. The only way they can achieve that goal is to have access to show/breed quality puppies from their downline breeding program. The breed will not improve if they spay and neuter show/breed quality puppies, or if they only breed pet quality animals. A litter will normally have one or two breeding quality puppies, and an equal or much higher number of pet quality puppies. It would be rare for a litter to have a very high number of breeding quality puppies, but it could, and has, happened. In such a case, "pet" homes, buyers who are not interested in showing or breeding, may have to wait just a little longer for a puppy.

How do we select our puppy?

You will need to be able to trust in the breeder's years of experience to guide you in the selection process. This is one of the many reasons you have spent so much time researching and looking for a responsible breeder. Multiple factors must be evaluated in order to get the right puppies into the right homes. The most important factor is temperament. From your discussions the breeder will know if a particular puppy's personality will match your needs. After temperament, they will evaluate the puppy's structure and quality to determine whether it should be placed in a show/breed home or a non-breeding home. Finally, after sorting through these considerations, the breeder will try, as best they can, to match your preferences in coat, gender, and color. Regarding gender preferences: unlike some breeds, where gender-specific personality issues are often seen, there is very little difference between PWD male and female personalities. For the average pet owner a neutered PWD male makes the perfect family companion, as does a spayed female. Please remember that temperament is the most important consideration. You cannot live with a dog, no matter how beautiful its coat or markings are, if it does not have the right personality for you.

When will we know which puppy is ours?

While breeders observe all of their puppies throughout their development, they do not complete the evaluation process until they are seven weeks of age or more. At that time they will likely conduct a Temperament Test. This test is a formalized and widely-accepted method of judging a puppy's personality. The test indicates factors such as independence, dominance, willingness to work with people, and sound sensitivity. Identifying these traits is very important. The dominant puppy might be too strong-willed for a home with very young children. The sound sensitive puppy would be physically and mentally miserable in an urban situation. The independent puppy, which can amuse himself, will probably be happy in a household where everyone is gone all day. These are the types of conditions and temperaments that must be weighed, balanced, and matched.

Additionally, structural evaluations, and sometimes certain health test results, are not complete until the puppies are at least seven weeks old. These test and evaluation results must also be used to determine the type of home needed for a particular puppy.

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As soon as all the testing is completed they will usually call you about the results and the availability of a puppy for you. They cannot promise you a puppy from any litter until all of the test results are known. It would be irresponsible of them, and possibly heartbreaking for you, if they promised you a puppy prior to the completion of the testing. For example, suppose they promised you, prior to all the testing, a show quality puppy and then, later, the structural evaluation eliminated all the available puppies? Or, what if they allowed you to pick out a specific four week old puppy for your New York City home, and then, at seven weeks, discovered that the puppy was sound sensitive and thus, inappropriate for an urban setting? In both instances, you'd be very disappointed. Testing may delay some of the fun and gratification of planning for your new family member, but it insures that you get the right puppy for your home.

A responsible breeder wants you and the puppies they place to be happy. You and your dog will hopefully be living together, and loving each other, for the next twelve to fifteen years. That's a long time. They adhere to conscientious placement standards so that you will enjoy the years you spend together. They will also want you to know that they will always be available for help and guidance with your Portuguese Water Dog. They don't just place puppies; they begin long and valued relationships with their puppy buyers.

- Based on an article by Jane Harding

Portuguese Water Dog Health Issues

All purebred and mixed breed dogs are prone to hereditary health problems. The Portuguese Water Dog is no exception. The Portuguese Water Dog Club of America encourages its members to be aware of health issues and responsible breeding practices to reduce or eliminate hereditary health problems. The information provided herein should help you in your quest for a responsible breeder.

PLEASE NOTE: The PWDCA, Inc. strongly recommends that any dog used for breeding be at least two years old, be examined for and evaluated free of hip dysplasia, individually tested for GM-1 status, Optigen rated for PRA status, and have an annual CERF test to determine overall eye health.

Orthopedic

Hip Dysplasia:

Hip dysplasia occurs in most breeds of dogs including mixed breeds. A dog that has hip dysplasia is said to be dysplastic and has hip joints that are not formed perfectly. The imperfection can be slight or severe. The dysplastic dog may experience no pain or problems from its condition or it may experience mild to severe discomfort and have difficulty moving. Veterinary prescribed anti-inflammatory medication can control the symptoms in milder cases. Aging, arthritis

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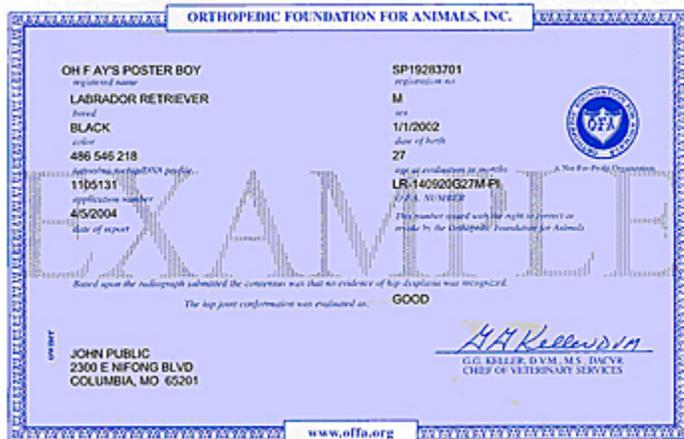
and obesity can aggravate the condition. Surgery, which is costly, may be done but only in the most severe cases. Hip dysplasia can only be diagnosed by an x-ray.

OFA Hip Rating (sample below):

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) is an organization of veterinary orthopedists that evaluate hip x-rays for signs of dysplasia. The service is provided for a modest fee. An x-ray taken of the dog less than two years old will receive only a temporary "Preliminary" rating. An x-ray of a dog two years old or older, evaluated as not dysplastic, will receive a permanent certificate with an OFA number. Along with the number will be a rating status of Excellent, Good, or Fair. Dogs determined to be dysplastic, only a rating (no number) as to the degree of the dysplasia from Mild to Severe will be provided. All dogs should have their hips evaluated by OFA for a final rating prior to breeding. Those dogs too young for a final rating or not receiving a passing hip rating should not be used for breeding.

Some breeders submit elbow joint x-rays to OFA for evaluation to rule out the possibility of elbow dysplasia. The rating for elbow joints is either normal or not normal.

-Sample Orthopedic Foundation for Animals Certification-



Cardio

Juvenile Dilated Cardiomyopathy (JDCM) is an inherited fatal disease in young Portuguese Water Dogs that is caused by a recessive gene (both parents of a puppy must carry the gene to produce the defect). Puppies affected with JDCM die suddenly or with very little warning usually between the ages of six weeks to seven months old. There have, however, been cases reported younger than six weeks as well as older than seven months. The signs and symptoms of JDCM include a 12 to 48 hour onset of loss of appetite, decreased energy level, vomiting, and difficulty breathing. Some pups have no physical signs or symptoms at all, may just collapse and die, or are found dead by the breeder or new owner. At this time, there is no known cure but there is a way to prevent producing JDCM affected puppies.

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We now have a DNA gene based test, based on a cheek swab or a blood sample, which will determine if a dog is Normal (not carrying the gene) or is a Carrier of the JDCM gene. All breeding animals can be tested to determine their status, thus avoiding the breeding of two JDCM carriers and producing puppies which will die of this deadly disease.

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania have recently developed this DNA test for detecting dogs who do not have the JDCM gene and dogs who are carriers of the JDCM gene. Breeders are now able to have their breeding animals tested for Normal or Carrier status. Never breed two carriers together or you will produce puppies which will die.

The PWDCA highly recommends that dogs used for breeding be DNA tested for JDCM status and that one of a breeding pair, either the sire or the dam, be tested as Normal.

It is important that all prospective puppy buyers discuss Juvenile Dilated Cardiomyopathy with breeders. Ask if the parents have been tested for JDCM and what their status is, Normal or Carrier. A puppy from a JDCM DNA tested Normal sire or dam will not be affected with this fatal disease.

Hair loss

Some Portuguese Water Dogs are affected with patterned hair loss or follicular dysplasia. This condition, which is believed to be hereditary, generally presents itself at between two and four years of age. The hair may fall out and grow back, or it may never grow back. **It appears that most of the dogs that exhibit hair loss have curly coats and are the product of curly to curly coat breedings. However, it must be remembered that most dogs with curly coats do not have hair loss.**

Addison's disease

Addison's disease is a disorder found in both humans and animals and is caused by adrenocortical insufficiency. This means that the adrenal glands stop producing the hormones that control metabolism of sugar and maintain the balance of salt and water in the body. This disease can be difficult to diagnose, but once diagnosed, it is treatable. The cause of Addison's is still being researched. It is likely hereditary, but the mode of inheritance is not known. Stress is thought to be a trigger for Addison's symptoms. These symptoms include weight loss, vomiting, depression, lethargy, weakness and shedding of hair. Untreated Addison's disease may lead to death.

GM-1 Storage Disease

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GM-1 Storage Disease is a rare disease, which affects humans and Portuguese Water Dogs. It is a genetically transmitted fatal metabolic disorder. Affected puppies will not reach adulthood, and are only produced by breeding of two carrier dogs. Non-carrier, Carrier and Indeterminate Portuguese Water Dogs have a normal life expectancy. There is a direct gene test available which determines the GM-1 status of the dog. NYU Department of Neurology issues certificates designating the rating of dogs as GM1 normal or GM1 carrier. In addition to these ratings, dogs that were blood assay rated before 9/1/99 may have a rating of N95L, N99L, N95A, N99A, C95, C99. In the GM-1 assay Rating "N" means Non-carrier and "C" means Carrier. The number following the letter indicates the probability of accuracy in rating. "L" or "A" following the number indicates the rating is more accurate because it is ancestor or litter confirmed. **All dogs must be tested before breeding except for dogs listed GM-1 AP which is a permanent rating indicating that both parents are N95A or N99A.**

Eye conditions

There are various inherited and congenital eye problems found in all breeds of dogs including the Portuguese Water Dog breed. Some of these problems are expressed at an early age (eight weeks) and others cannot be diagnosed until well into adulthood. It is recommended that all pups have their eyes examined by a Board Certified ophthalmologist before going to their new home and that the owner receives a copy of the eye exam form from the breeder before the sale is finalized.

Some problems that may be diagnosed at eight weeks are: entropion, ectropion, distichiasis, PPM (persistent pupillary membrane), microphthalmia, cataracts, and a few others. Some of these diseases may need to be surgically corrected. And for some there is no cure.

Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) is an eye disease that will eventually cause blindness. Unfortunately it cannot be diagnosed by an eye exam until the dog is an adult. For a dog to be affected with PRA they must get a copy of the gene from each parent. We have a DNA marker gene test that can determine dogs that are NOT carrying the gene. These dogs receive a pattern "A" rating. A pup that has at least one parent with an Optigen "A" rating will never have PRA. Dogs that may be carriers are rated "B", and dogs that are rated "C" may be affected. Dogs with a "B" or "C" rating should only be bred to "A" pattern dogs to be sure that no pups will be affected with PRA. **All pups from a litter that does not have at least one pattern "A" parent should be Optigen tested so that information can be available to the buyer before purchasing a pup.** Pattern "B" pups will never be blind from PRA.

To ensure the overall health of the eyes, an annual eye exam by a Board Certified member of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists is recommended for dogs to be used for breeding. The Canine Eye Registry Foundation, CERF, issues a certificate to owners for dogs with normal eyes. The evaluation is only valid for one year. Both parents should have a current CERF exam and Optigen rating, and a copy should be shown to the prospective buyer.

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Gastrointestinal problems

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

Currently, the cause of canine IBD is unknown, but is believed to have an autoimmune basis. Genetics, nutrition, infectious agents and abnormalities of the immune system can all be underlying factors. There currently is no cure for IBD. However, strict diet changes and anti-inflammatory drugs will help in the control and stabilization of the dog. Early detection is of the utmost importance and can be very difficult because the symptoms can mimic other diseases. A positive diagnosis usually occurs after performing an endoscopy exam with biopsy.

Lymphangiectasia (Protein-losing Enteropathy - PLE)

Lymphangiectasia (PLE) is the excessive loss of plasma and proteins into the gastrointestinal tract. This condition can be a result of damages to the GI tract mucosal lining. PLE may have an inherited component and the inheritance may be autosomal recessive. The symptoms of PLE are non-weight gain or loss of weight. Laboratory tests and an intestinal biopsy are necessary to diagnose the specific cause. There is no cure for PLE, but it can generally be controlled through diet and medication.

Hemorrhagic Gastroenteritis (HGE)

An inflammatory disorder of the intestinal tract, HGE is characterized by hemorrhage and production of a "raspberry jam" appearance to the stool. Symptoms can be a sudden onset of vomiting, bloody diarrhea, rapid dehydration, and depression. Dogs affected by HGE get very sick, very fast. The exact cause of HGE is unknown, but Clostridium species bacteria may be part of the cause.

Colitis

Canine colitis is an inflammation of the large bowel known as the colon. The inflammation may be acute or chronic, disrupting your dog's normal bowel habits. Acute colitis occurs most commonly in dogs and frequently responds to one to three weeks of therapy. Chronic colitis can go on for several years or perhaps a lifetime. Some dogs may have minor clinical signs; others have severe and sometimes disabling or fatal signs. Symptoms include diarrhea with small quantities of mucus and/or blood, frequent defecation, abdominal pain, depression, fever, weight loss, and a dull coat may also be present. Treatments vary depending on whether the colitis is acute or chronic. Among many of the tests to diagnose colitis are colonoscopy exam, fecal exam, and ultrasound.

Megaesophagus

Megaesophagus is a condition, where there is dilation of the esophagus due to a loss of normal peristaltic function. Peristalsis is the process by which waves of muscular contraction move along the contents (food in this case) of tubular organs. Animals with megaesophagus regurgitate undigested food shortly after eating. Dogs may be born with esophagus or they may develop it later in life. Although it may not be noticed until young adulthood, megaesophagus is usually first recognized in puppies around the time of weaning. Affected pups regurgitate food, fail to thrive, and may develop respiratory difficulties associated with

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aspiration pneumonia due to inhalation of food particles. Signs include labored breathing, fever and lethargy, and nasal discharge. Regurgitation of undigested food shortly after eating is the main sign of Megaesophagus. Veterinarians will take chest x-rays to determine if your dog has this disorder, and will perform other laboratory tests since there are several conditions that may be associated.