

Maremma Sheepdog Club of America



The Maremma Guardian

March 2016 second edition

www.maremmaclub.com

MSCA Newsletter

YOU AND YOUR CLUB

MSCA BOD Meeting Minutes – Summaries

The MSCA Board of Directors continues to work towards the preservation and protection of the Maremma Sheepdog breed, as well as how the Club can best serve the MSCA members.

September 14, 2015

1. Began discussion of the MSCA sponsoring a Nationwide Maremma rescue network.
2. Board approved the final revision of the MSCA Bylaws for submission to the members for voting.

October 21, 2015

1. Voted to waive the one-year membership qualification to six-months membership in good standing for candidates to run for the Board of Directors for the 2016 election only.

November 16, 2015

1. Further discussion on the MSCA National Rescue network.
2. Approved the funding loan for the MSCA National Rescue network fund-raising calendar.

December 14, 2015

1. Discussed putting a donate button on the MSCA website with the ability to earmark funds for special interests like rescue, education, etc.
2. Discussed activating the Fund-Raising Committee to meet the monetary needs of an expanding club.

January 18, 2016

1. Opened discussion about advertising the club in livestock journals.
2. Approved starting the MSCA Health Testing Incentive Program.

February 09, 2016

1. Approved creating a breed informational pamphlet for members to distribute.

March 08, 2016

1. Approved moving forward with CHIC Program.
2. Approved archiving past newsletters on MSCA website.
3. Discussed offering fee-based advertising space for Members in Newsletter.

For a copy of any MSCA Board of Directors meeting minutes, email requests to the MSCA Recording Secretary, Alison Charter-Smith, email: alisoncs@wildblue.net

MSCA Committees - Volunteers needed!

...Sponsored by the MSCA Education Committee

Get connected – get involved. Volunteer positions on MSCA Committees are always available to club members. Experience is not necessary, but you should be responsible, have time to participate actively, and able to meet important deadlines. Description and contact can be located on the MSCA website at: maremmaclub.com/committees

MSCA National Maremma Rescue Network: The MSCA National Maremma Rescue Network is looking for members and volunteers all across North America who would like to be involved in rescuing Maremmas in need.

Please contact the Rescue Chair: Karen O'Brien-Maynard (karen@dinglepotttery.com).

New for 2016...

Maremma Hip Testing Incentive Program



Have your Maremma's hips certified through OFA or PennHIP and receive a \$25 rebate check from the MSCA! You must be a member in good standing of the MSCA and your dog must be registered with the MSCA.

One of the goals of the MSCA is education, with a focus on the value of health testing to the welfare of the Maremma breed. We've created this program to provide a little more incentive for owners to health test their dogs.

It's easy to participate! For more information about the program please visit the MSCA website: www.maremmaclub.com/maremmahiptestingincentive

Natural Raising Series: What is Natural Raising?

by Laura Tarbet Raising Naturally since 2006

Natural Rearing or natural raising is a completely simple concept of caring for the animals and people we love and need. I've struggled with how to approach this series for a very long time now and have attended and participated in many webinars over the past several months as I planned for this series for our newsletter. I had come to the conclusion that it's too broad of a subject to fully develop within the scope of four quarterly newsletters. There are so many levels of knowledge but I don't want to leave anyone out of something that is so important at the most basic level of life. I have many clients that have been asking for newsletters and raising instructions so I've taken them into consideration as well even though they may not be members of MSCA. I had everything all ready to go and this morning I just did one more online search and found it all done just the way I had prepared my own series!

So those of you that have no clue as to what natural rearing is or why you would want to bother with it can follow along, and check out the links at the bottom of each article. The links really are required reading assignments. Each article must be really very simplistic and bare bones in the interest of the space and costs of printing our club newsletter. I challenge you each and every one of you to set aside your current mindset to explore this subject with me. I promise you will learn a lot, and I'll bet you find some of that learning process very uncomfortable, but please don't shoot the messenger! There's been too much of that kind of thing done already!

Our first step on the pathway to learning is to open our minds and really use them to think about what we do and why we do it. I've studied the history of medicine extensively and have found out that much of current medicine has arrived here by pushing aside natural methods and yes, even bullying and murdering practitioners and promoters of natural medicine. 2015 saw the strange and suspicious deaths of about 30 holistic doctors or practitioners that have linked modern medicine to many of our most challenging health conditions today. Most of the 'conventional' methods of caring for and raising are very strongly conditioned into our thought processes by that wealthy corporation with the big advertising dollars. These influences come at us all from every direction. Our veterinary and medical schools are partially funded by grants

and endowments and contributions from corporations. The research and studies done are most often funded by the same. Scholarships are given. I am most grateful for a class I took in high school, Mass Media, where I learned about marketing concepts. In the case of our health we are the Eskimo in that cliché "Oh, he could sell refrigerators to the Eskimo!" Sit and think a moment about the huge fortunes that are spent on print, radio, and television advertising alone. Combine this with the way the higher education system is founded and built and funded--- you surely begin to realize you have a lifetime of conditioning to overcome but also at least a couple of generations of conditioning influencing your decision making process! We're going to try to set all that aside for now so as to really find the best answer to our health questions.

There are many well respected professionals that hate the concept and there are many well respected professionals that promote and revere the natural rearing path at every opportunity. One of the most revered and I think famous is Juliette de Bairacli Levy. Some of you may also be familiar with Pat Coleby and her books about raising goats. Rosemary Gladstar is probably the famous herbalist for human herbalism. I found these three very interesting in that they mirrored my own approach or pathway to learning the natural ways to promote health rather than to just play crisis control and try to cure ill health.

So in the interest of keeping this short and sweet I'll stop here so that there's room in our newsletter for other club business! In the meantime, do your homework and read the following links. If you'd like to follow along with me on my own journey then you can email me and we'll set up an email chain or a regular chat room, skype, webinar or other method of online discussion.

Homework Assignment:

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1. http://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/9_7/features/Holistic_Pet_Care_15822-1.html
 2. <http://peterdobias.com/blogs/blog/11015105-a-complete-guide-to-raising-a-puppy-naturally>
 3. http://www.naturalrearing.com/coda/l/_introduction.html - This site has an introduction that mirrored my own so I have just pasted the link here. There's only one or two things I would change.
 4. <http://www.aunaturelk9s.com/>
 5. I have gathered more information that I'm still wading through, email springsberry@gmail.com for more information.
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OFA vs PennHip

*...Sponsored by the MSCA Health Committee
Written by Colleen Williams, CVT
Stoneybrook Maremmas*

Many of us are familiar with the term, "OFA" and a few may have heard of "PennHIP", but what exactly do these terms relate to? And exactly what is the difference between the two? Is one superior over the other? Are there any risks?

We are going to take a look at both procedures, see how they are similar and how they differ from one other, then you can be the judge. My goal is not to steer anyone in a specific direction but to provide a comparison of the procedure and the cost so owners can make an informed decision based on their individual needs and desires.

So, let's start with OFA. The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals, or OFA, was founded in 1966. In its early days, The OFA screened only for hip dysplasia. Now, they provide a wide variety of health screening services which include evaluation of the shoulder, elbow and patella (knee), DNA testing for thyroid problems, heart defects and many other hereditary conditions. We are mainly going to focus on the screening method for hip dysplasia in this article, for the purpose of comparison.

The procedure for an OFA radiograph, or x-ray, can be performed with or without sedation. This is typically determined by the veterinarian and the clients' individual wishes. Being on the receiving end myself and having to take multiple radiographs over due to sudden movement, I prefer to have my dogs sedated. However, I am well aware that many people are uncomfortable with the idea of sedation, so this is something you must discuss with your vet prior to the procedure.

In the OFA radiograph, the dog is positioned on its back with its rear legs fully extended and knees turned slightly inward, so a fully conscious dog can put up quite a bit of resistance. It is not a painful process, but can be overwhelming to a dog that is not accustomed to being handled by strangers. The radiograph is then sent to OFA either by mail or electronically if the veterinary clinic has digital radiography. After OFA receives the film(s), they are sent off to 3 different board certified radiologists for evaluation. The films are scored on a seven point grading system. "Excellent, good and fair" are all considered to be within normal limits. Then we

move into descending levels of dysplasia: "borderline, mild, moderate and severe." These films are graded on an average consensus between the three radiologists. For example, if two of them scored the hips as good, and the third scored the hips as fair, the final score would be good. Preliminary OFA radiographs can be submitted as early as four months of age, but in order to become "OFA Certified" the dog must be at least 24 months of age, or two years. Prelims are estimated to be 93% accurate of what the actual score will be at two years of age, so they can be a useful tool in screening a potential breeding animal.

The actual cost of OFA can vary a great deal between veterinarians. You can expect to pay anywhere from \$150-\$300 depending on how many films are needed. The cost of submitting these films to OFA is \$35, plus postage if mailed. If you add shoulders or elbows to the evaluation, the fee for OFA goes up only another \$5-\$10. They also offer a kennel rate or litter evaluation which is considerably cheaper, but again, the overall cost will increase with the number of films taken. Many veterinarians charge a set amount per x ray, so be sure and ask!

Now, let's talk about the other alternative, PennHIP. PennHIP was first introduced in 1993 by the University of Pennsylvania. Unlike OFA, a PennHip evaluation does require full sedation in order to obtain the proper positioning that is required. In this process, the veterinarian will take 3 radiographs of the pelvis and surrounding structures. The first x ray is taken in a relaxed "frog leg" position with the dog lying on its back. The second image is obtained by applying steady consistent pressure to the pelvis in this same position, using the aid of a specially designed plate called a distractor. The third image is basically the same as the OFA view with the rear legs extended parallel, and knees rotated slightly inward. The x-rays are then sent off to a board certified veterinary radiologist, and comparative measurements are taken of the space between the ball and socket of the hip. This results in a number between 0-1. This number is called the distraction index, or DI. The closer this number is to 0, the tighter the hip joint, and the less chance of the dog developing osteoarthritis, or hip dysplasia. And likewise, the closer this number is to 1, the greater laxity in the hip joint and a higher likelihood of the dog developing hip dysplasia. There is no pass/fail score with the PennHIP method, but it is suggested that any dog with a DI of greater than

is a significant loss of vitality in the offspring as well as an increase in the expression of negative recessive mutations and genetic diseases. The combined effects of this make a COI of 10% the level at which there is a risk of smaller litters, higher mortality, and the expression of genetic defects and disease that have a negative effect on the size of the breed's population.

The degree of inbreeding can be measured by using an Inbreeding Coefficient, or Coefficient of Inbreeding (COI). The COI provides you with a percentage score; the lower the percentage, the lower the degree of inbreeding. Knowing the COI will allow you to make informed decisions before choosing a breeding pair.

For example, an inbreeding coefficient of:

- 0% indicates a dog that comes from two unrelated parents, based on all available pedigree information
- 12.5% would equate to the genetic equivalent of a dog produced from a grandfather to granddaughter mating
- 25% would equate to the genetic equivalent of a dog produced from a father to daughter mating.

Inbreeding can be accumulative, so if it has occurred to a significant degree over several generations, the inbreeding coefficient may exceed 25%.

Not surprisingly, smaller populations (as in more rare breeds like the Maremma Sheepdog) tend to have proportionally more animals with higher inbreeding coefficients than larger populations because of lack of genetic diversity.

Using COI to help make breeding decisions

When choosing a potential mate for your dog, it is highly recommended to calculate the inbreeding coefficient of the puppies that could be produced from a hypothetical mating. Current breeding guidelines are that, where possible, breeders should produce puppies with an inbreeding coefficient which are ideally as low as possible (less than 5%).

Breeders should be aware that the inbreeding coefficient is a measurement of risk and does not guarantee that puppies produced will, or will not,

have any inherited health conditions. There are other equally important factors to consider when deciding whether two dogs should be mated together, such as temperament, available health test results, the general health of the dogs etc. Your decision should be well balanced between the inbreeding coefficient and the good qualities of the sire and dam that you are considering.

Information based on the following articles:

1) www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/breeding-for-health/inbreeding and

2) www.instituteofcaninebiology.org/blog/coi-faqs-understanding-the-coefficient-of-inbreeding

Next issue: Part 3: Out-crossing, Line-breeding, and In-breeding, Calculating COI

Welcome new MSCA Members!

Roy Anderson
Diane Bergquist
Anna Boling
Virginia Bonacquista
Stacie Deslich
Ronald Drake
Jessica Hussman
Clay & Debbie Jones
Derrick & Debbie Keenan
Leigh Kenny
Janet Lew
Jeffrey Masters
Becky Penoyar
Jimmy L. Scott
Karen Weesner
Nancy Yeutson
Dierde Yudlson Maltz



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