

# Maremma Sheepdog Club of America



## The Maremma Guardian

June 2016 third edition

[www.maremmaclub.com](http://www.maremmaclub.com)

MSCA Newsletter

### YOU AND YOUR CLUB

#### **MSCA BOD Meeting Minutes – Summaries April 2016**

1. Moving forward with the CHIC program so that owners who utilize PennHip can list results on the OFA database.
2. Voted to allow fee-based advertising in the newsletter.

#### **May 2016**

1. Voted to include a Registrar's and Treasurer's report in the final newsletter of the year.
2. Approved mailing membership reminder notices in the first quarter of the year to lapsed members.

#### **June 2016**

1. The MSCA is now a 501(3)c non-profit organization.
2. New "Junior Member" membership category will be available beginning in 2017.
4. Limited Registration will become available in 2017.

*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](mailto:alisoncs@wildblue.net)*

### 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](http://www.maremmaclub.com/maremmahiptestingincentive)

### What is the CHIC Program anyway?

*...Sponsored by the MSCA Health Committee*

CHIC, the "Canine Health Information Center", is a database of consolidated health screening results. Sponsored by the OFA, CHIC works with parent clubs to identify health screening protocols appropriate for individual breeds. Dogs tested in accordance with the parent club established requirements, that have their results registered and made available in the public domain are issued CHIC numbers. CHIC is meant to encourage health testing and sharing of all results, normal and abnormal, so that more informed breeding decisions can be made in an overall effort to reduce the incidence of genetic disease and improve canine health.

For more information, see the CHIC website:

[www.caninehealthinfo.org](http://www.caninehealthinfo.org)

### 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](http://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.

[www.facebook.com/groups/918727318193790/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/918727318193790/)

Please contact the Rescue Chair:

Karen O'Brien-Maynard ([karen@dinglepottery.com](mailto:karen@dinglepottery.com))

## 2017 MSCA Board of Directors Election

If you are interested in serving on the MSCA Board of Directors, you may nominate yourself and/or any active MSCA Members.

### NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2017 MSCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

If you would be willing to serve on the 2017 MSCA Board of Directors you must be a full member in good standing with the MSCA for 2016 to participate in this election, both as a candidate or as a voter.

Seats that could be available for election:

- Vice President
- Correspondence Secretary
- Treasurer
- Board Member at Large

If you would like to nominate someone, please get their permission first and ask them if they have been full members of the MSCA for 2016 (required).

### FACTS for Nominees for election or appointment to the MSCA Board of Directors

The Board shall be comprised of a President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer and either 4, 5 or 6 other persons, whichever number is needed to bring the total to 9, all of whom shall be members in good standing, who shall serve in their respective capacities with regard to the Board and its meetings. The offices of Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and/or Treasurer may be held by the same person. Such duplication of office holding shall affect the number of additional members in such a way as to make a total of 9.

### Who is Eligible

To be eligible for nomination to office, a nominee shall have been a full member in good standing of the Club for at least one calendar year at the time of nomination, who are residents of the United States of America.

### How to Recommend Nominees

You may recommend yourself or others for possible nomination. You may suggest as many members as you like.

### Term

All directors shall serve for three calendar years following the year in which they were elected, which shall commence as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

### Board of Director Duties

Board duties include but are not limited to: managing and directing the business and affairs of the Club; determining questions of policy that arise between meetings of the full membership;

approving the annual budget for the Club; and attending board meetings.

### Meetings

A meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held at least once in each quarter of the calendar year, as close to the beginning of each quarter as possible. Additional meetings may be scheduled by vote of the Board.

Meetings and correspondence of the Board of Directors shall use email, teleconference and social networking. Please be willing and prepared to utilize these venues.

### Time Line

Call for Nominations	September 01, 2016
Nominations Close	October 01, 2016
Election Ballots Mailed	November 01, 2016
Election Ballots Deadline	December 01, 2016
New Board begins Term	January 01, 2017

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MSCA Board of Director Nomination Packets will be mailed with the 2017 MSCA Membership Renewal form.

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## Natural Raising Series: Bringing them On Up - Organically

*by Laura Tarbet Raising Naturally since 2006*

For our last newsletter article I shared a little bit of information with you and at the bottom of the page I referenced some of the herbal and natural medicine gurus of our day and of days gone by, as well as included links to websites, pages, and articles that likely kept you busy full time if you tried to read and study them all. Most of us have run full speed into our spring and summer schedules by now so this article will be even shorter and sweeter.

In order to raise anything organically you have to source organic seeds, fertilizers and provide it with organic food and treatments, in the case of animals, this means organic medicine. In the case of dogs, this mean you think carefully about anything you administer to them, feed them, their water, their treatments for parasites internal or external, and disease. Like everything in life, there is a learning curve. You might notice your pup is not eating much, and may be listless or have pale membranes. A pot-belly could be an indication of internal parasites as well. Some medicaments are effective against internal as well as external parasites, and some external parasites are the doorman for disease. However, the ones that usually come first to minds of modern day veterinarians are chemically derived, not natural. We must always first do no harm. Most cleaners,

chemicals or pharmaceuticals do not meet this criteria.

In the case of internal parasites, this can be life-threatening quickly and needs to be addressed with a protocol for the dam during gestation and within a week of parturition for the dam and her litter. I have not yet found any information that indicates which herbs will feed through to the litter to reduce parasitic infestation after birth, but we have had outstanding results from herbal preparations and tinctures. We are looking forward to being able to use the phrase "we have transitioned to organic natural raising" over the next couple of years.

In the feed pan feeding a raw diet of the parts of the carcass that humans do not want or cannot eat, from an animal that was itself raised organically, we can approach an organic lifestyle for our LGDs. We have learned that rabbit is not fatty enough to provide the energy needed by our hardworking LGDs, so we have pork day, beef day, and other day. The season dictates 'other day' and may vary between deer, other wild game, poultry or whatever else we're butchering on our farm that day. It's surprising what a small farm can produce for feeding the LGDs even as it feeds the human component. Herbal de-wormers can be used across the species with a slight adjustment for horses and the breeding population. These de-wormers are available online, or you can grow your own if you have room.

DE (diatomaceous earth) is one that gets mixed reviews and one that by itself has not seen great results in my goat herd, yet our hogs were well cleaned out by the use of one 40-50 pound bag in their two ton feeder. Pumpkin and pumpkin seeds work well against the internal parasites as well. The use of these three approaches has improved the general health and well-being as well as our parasite loads across the species on our small farm. Our LGDs have also seen a higher level of health and with it came bloom of healthier looking teeth and coats.

There is a common saying that the healthy plants are not as susceptible to insect infestations and there is also a saying that the healthy animal has an immune system that protects them against disease and parasites. If one has issues with fleas, mites, ticks, and internal parasites the first place to look to for answers is how the animal has been treated, fed and medicated. If there are toxins in the food, water, medicine, air, or other parts of the environment, then the immune system must work overtime to attempt to keep the body healthy.

Examine these facets of the environment of your LGDs carefully to see if there may be even trace amounts of toxins that are stressing or interfering with the body's immune function. Once you eliminate the toxins the immune system begins restoring health.

With the season's change there must always come a change in our schedules and as time goes by we experience changes in our lifestyles. Our learning curve is a lifelong thread which I hope each of you will pursue without ceasing and will achieve greater health and longevity for you and yours. This article wraps up my series on natural raising as I feel that the many links within the links in my last article will keep you as busy as you want and much fodder for thought.

There is so much more to delve into so I will end this series with an alert and a challenge--- to never let the learning end.

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## Those Damn Foxtails! – That Western Summer Scourge

...by Alison Charter-Smith

If you are living in the Western States, and experience winter annual grasses which dry out to a crisp in May or June, you might already know about Foxtails.



We used to live closer to the ocean in Northern California for numerous years, and I never really had a problem with Foxtails and my Maremmas – well, there were an occasional one or two that I would find between their toes, but I guess I've always been pretty lucky, until now....

We have since moved in December to the vast grasslands of the Western Sierra Foothills on the Eastern side of the State, and since our annual grasses dried out in early June, my Maremma's have now been feeling the brute of Foxtails on a daily basis.

If you don't know what Foxtails are, they are an invasive annual grass which sprouts a wheat-like head of faceted seeds shafts, which looks very similar to a fish hook, in that one end is "barbed" so that the seed tends to migrate in one direction.

When the grasses dry, each seed shaft can easily dislodge from the dried plant, and tend to get tangled in furry coats, while the “barb” penetrates into the skin and begins to migrate into deeper tissue. The “barb” travels and eventually erupts into an abscess, causing pain and infection for your Maremma. Though rare, these Foxtail seeds have been found to migrate as deep as the chest cavity to become imbedded into important organs, such as the lungs.

### **What to Look for?**

Maremmas seem to be predisposition to having Foxtail issues, due to their shaggy coats (and feet) and unlike pet animals, these working dogs are outside in the pastures all the time. These foxtail “barbs” are most commonly found between the toes and underneath the foot pad, in the ears and nostrils, and under the skin.

My Maremmas seem to exclusively get these barbs between the toes, and under their foot pads (i.e. between the pad crevices). I always know once the grasses dry out in early summer, that my dogs will start picking up Foxtails in their toes. I will notice one of my Maremmas is licking his foot more than usual, or he is limping. Upon closer inspection, I will observe a small puncture wound which is located between the toes on the top of the foot, which is generally accompanied by swelling around the puncture area.

Foxtails in the ears are usually indicated by your Maremma tilting or shaking his head excessively, and a veterinary ear exam is necessary to determine the cause and removal of the Foxtail barb, especially if you cannot reach, or see it within the ear. Sneezing fits, should also be checked and may require a nasal inspection by your veterinarian.

### **What can I do to prevent it?**

Since this summer has been my first major infestation of Foxtail barbs in my Maremma’s feet, I’ve been reading every article on the internet to see what I can do to help my dogs. Of course, most of the articles are not very helpful, since they basically suggest that you keep your dog out of the long grasses in the summer. Well, that great if you have a pet dog that you occasionally take hiking, but if you have a working Livestock Guardian Dog who lives in the pastures, how is that going to work?

Another author suggested mowing the pasture or removing the dogs from the pasture until the seed heads are lodged, which in my case, would be when winter comes. Removal wouldn’t work for me, since all my pastures have Foxtails in

it, my grazing animals live in those same pastures, and my therefore, so do my Maremmas. Also, the ability to mow all my pastures would be counter-productive (and physically impossible when you have over a hundred acres) when you’re trying to raise small ruminants who are supposed to be grazing down your pasture for one of their daily food sources.

One idea which I thought of is to first use intensive grazing practices (MIG) within small paddocks and a herd of cattle, who would trample down the grasses, before you put in your smaller ruminant and their Maremma protectors. I don’t have cattle yet, but I would definitely be willing to try this idea for next year.

### **What works for my Maremmas**

Since my dogs normally always have the Foxtail barbs between or underneath their feet, the most important thing that you can do, is to check your dogs on a daily basis (I even do this twice a day when I’m feeding), for new foxtail infestations. I use tweezers and remove all visible foxtails – sometimes they are so imbedded in the skin, that only the “tail” is visible. If my dogs have infections, I will use something gentler on the wound, such as a Nolvasan cleaner, since I don’t want to inflame the area more with a harsher disinfectant, that keeps the area clean and to prevent further infections. I know, hard to do, when either your Maremma is licking it all off, and/or all the flies are out due to the warm weather. However, if you have a serious infection or numerous infections, I would highly recommend seeing your veterinarian right away, since the infection can become systemic, and make your Maremma very sick.

Secondly, another preventative measure to prevent infections and even foxtails being imbedded into your dog’s feet in the first place, is to clip the hairs between the toes and underneath the feet pads in the late spring before the grasses dry. My German shepherd never had a problem with the foxtails, since her feet and pads already had naturally shorter hair. The barbs cannot lodge into the skin if they don’t get tangled in the first place into the longer hair of the Maremma. Regular brushings will also help prevent foxtails being imbedded into their coat and eventually into their skin.

Prevention is the key – well in my case, clipping the toes and daily inspections of my dog’s coats and feet have allowed me to control the infestation of the foxtails. Maybe next year, I’ll try the cattle and intensive grazing and let you know if that works.

## Guarding Deer

*...by Cindy Benson  
Benson Ranch Maremmas*



Over the past couple of years I have had the privilege of living with quite a few Maremma pups as I searched for the breeding dogs I had in mind. Thankfully, that search is nearing an end as I think I have found what I was looking for. It has been hard on my heart to part with the pups that went on to guardian only homes. Many of these pups were placed as adolescent dogs, and all were paired with more mature mentors. Placing started dogs has its rewards and challenges. I have been so impressed with the adaptability of the dogs I placed. The Maremma breed fascinates me and continues to earn my respect.

One of the placements was particularly unusual so I thought I'd share the story with you. The dogs in question are Wildcat Hollow Raissa, who was six months old, and her partner Katie, an eighteen month old Maremma.

Natalie and Alan raise deer, in addition to a few other more typical animals. They were looking for started dogs and their timing was good. These folks are wonderful. They did their research, asked me all the right questions, and spent time with me here on the ranch. They have also stayed in touch which I appreciate. When they asked me if I thought Katie and Raissa would guard deer I told them I had absolutely no idea. Here on the ranch, all on their own, none of my Maremmas will allow the deer or elk, or even the wild turkeys, to come into their pastures. So Natalie and Alan would be asking my dogs to protect what they had been protecting against here. The decision reached was that they would attempt to teach the dogs to accept the deer, and if they would not, just having the dogs on the property would help to protect the deer.

I instructed Natalie and Alan to introduce each dog to the deer singly, with a 20-30 foot length of parachute cord attached to the collar of the dog. In this way they walked the perimeter of the deer pasture. If the dog showed undue attention to the deer that thought process was interrupted by a bump with the parachute cord. Once distracted, and redirected, the dog was verbally rewarded. The dogs were not scolded and all training was done with patience and positive reinforcement.

I was so impressed with the dedication these new owners showed to my dogs. They worked with the dogs frequently over about a month and then allowed the dogs to live full time with the deer. It should also be said that the deer pasture is close to the house so it was easy for them to keep an eye on the dogs in their new job and that was certainly wise since both these dogs are still pups.

I was told that the greatest challenge came with Raissa. She is a gregarious darling of a dog and Natalie said that she appeared to have her feelings hurt because the deer didn't like her and would not allow her to touch them. In Natalie's words "everyone loves Raissa so they should too".

Once new pet piglets were introduced to the mix Raissa was much happier. The dogs have been in this new home for several months now and all is well. They are loved and productive trustworthy guardians. What more could you ask for!

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### Welcome new MSCA Members!

*James Beck  
Katrina Bowser  
Marcia Cherett  
Judie Croft  
Lynne Dawson  
Joe & Carmet Hall  
Stephanie Mitcham  
Jacqueline Moyer  
Greg Pierson  
Delia Rasmussen  
David & Marijane Sisson  
Lorinda Thome  
Heather Williamson  
M. Louisa Wooton*

## BREEDER'S CORNER

...Sponsored by the MSCA Education Committee



### Genetics 101, Part 3: Out-crossing, Line-breeding, and In-breeding - Calculating COI

...by Deborah Reid

1. in-breed-ing (*noun, Biology*) the mating of closely related individuals, as cousins, sire-daughter, mother-son, brother-sister, which tends to increase the number of individuals that are homozygous for a trait and therefore increases the appearance of recessive traits.
2. line-breed-ing (*noun, Genetics*) a form of inbreeding directed toward keeping the offspring closely related to a superior ancestor.
3. out-cross-ing (*verb, Genetics*) to cross animals by breeding individuals of different strains but, usually, of the same breed.
4. COI – co-efficient of inbreeding: the probability that an individual has two identical alleles for a given gene

#### How many generations should I use to calculate the inbreeding coefficient?

To calculate the chance of inheriting two copies of an allele (good or bad) from an individual ancestor it is recommended that you have at least a 5 generation pedigree.

A coefficient of inbreeding from a 5 generation pedigree will be an estimate of the probability of inheriting two copies of the same allele from only the dogs in those 5 generations that appear on both sides of the pedigree. It is highly recommended to go back as far as you can for the most accurate results.

#### Inbreeding Percentages

COI is the percentage of probability that any given allele of the puppies would have identical genes, owing to common ancestors.

Brother to Sister: 25%

Mother to Son or Father to Daughter: 25%

Grandparent to Grandchild: 12.5%

Half-sister to Half-brother: 12.5%

Great-grandparent to Great-grandchild: 6.25%

First cousin to First cousin: 6.25%

Remember that while there is always a chance of some variance when it comes to the percentage levels in any given dog, statistical figures are normally considered insightful and often accurate enough to be proved sufficient.

Calculating COI can seem complicated. There are two popular methods, Wright's Equation and Hardiman's Method.

#### Wright's Equation

You can access a Wright's Equation pedigree input field here: [www.czerwonytrop.com/inb](http://www.czerwonytrop.com/inb) - simply select the number of generations and enter the information on the pedigree form – however, Wright's Equation ONLY calculates inbreeding of the sire VS the dam, it does not calculate inbreeding already in the individual sire or dam line.

Wright's COI Equation

$$F_x = \sum \left[ \left( \frac{1}{2} \right)^{n_1 + n_2 + 1} (1 + F_A) \right]$$

IC can theoretically range from 0 to 100%, and is the possibility that two alleles of a gene are completely alike.

The general rule is: Inbreeding Coefficient (IC) should be under 5% in a considered mating; AVK (Ancestor Loss Coefficient) should be over 85%.

#### Hardiman's Method

Hardiman's Method considers all inbred ancestors, but only to 5 generations. Each generation is valued at 25% which is then divided by the number of individuals in that generation to give the individual values.

INDIVIDUAL VALUES		
Generation	Relationship	%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Sire/Dam	12.5
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Grandsire/Grandam	6.25
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Gr.Grandsire/Gr.Grandam	3.125
4 <sup>th</sup>	Gr.Gr.Grandsire/Dam	1.5625
5 <sup>th</sup>	Gr.Gr.Gr.Grandsire/Dam	.78125

By calculating the IC of an individual ancestor you can determine the percentage of influence that individual dog has in the pedigree.

A little over half of all hereditary defects are caused by hidden (recessive) genes. For the continued health of a breed it is therefore extremely important to consider in each breeding the degree of relationship represented in the parent dogs in order to avoid doubling up on possible defects in the alleles.

Information based on the following articles:

1) [www.canine-genetics.com](http://www.canine-genetics.com)

2) [www.czerwonytrop.com/inb](http://www.czerwonytrop.com/inb)

3) [www.highflyer.supanet.com/coefficient](http://www.highflyer.supanet.com/coefficient)

Next issue: Part 4: Out-crossing, Line-breeding, and In-breeding – Impact of Inbreeding

## NEW Fee-based Advertising!

Would you like to advertise in the MSCA Guardian Newsletter?

**Small Ad:** 1 column, max 5 lines, no graphic:  
**\$5.00**

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LINE 1: FARM/RANCH NAME  
LINE 2: NAME  
LINE 3: LOCATION  
LINE 4: CONTACT INFORMATION  
LINE 5: AD SPACE

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**Medium Ad:** 1 column, max 10 lines, with header:  
**\$10.00**

### PUPPIES!

LINE 1: FARM/RANCH NAME  
LINE 2: NAME  
LINE 3: LOCATION  
LINE 4: CONTACT INFORMATION  
LINE 5: AD SPACE  
LINE 6: AD SPACE  
LINE 7: AD SPACE  
LINE 8: AD SPACE  
LINE 9: AD SPACE  
LINE 10: AD SPACE

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### To submit an ad:

Contact Newsletter Editor, Deborah Reid  
at [debir1966@hotmail.com](mailto:debir1966@hotmail.com)

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The MSCA National Maremma Rescue Network will soon be taking photo submissions for the **2017 MSCA NATIONAL MAREMMA RESCUE NETWORK CALENDAR!**

Please check the MSCA NMRN facebook page ([www.facebook.com/groups/918727318193790/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/918727318193790/)) for photo contest and rules, and remember, 100% of the proceeds benefit Maremma rescue!

Fees are used to publish the newsletter, to help pay for printing and mailing.

**Large Ad:** 1 column, max 10 lines, with graphic:  
**\$15.00**



LINE 1: FARM/RANCH NAME  
LINE 2: NAME  
LINE 3: LOCATION  
LINE 4: CONTACT INFORMATION  
LINE 5: AD SPACE  
LINE 6: AD SPACE  
LINE 7: AD SPACE  
LINE 8: AD SPACE  
LINE 9: AD SPACE  
LINE 10: AD SPACE

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Find the MSCA on Facebook!



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