

WAYS IN WHICH YOUR KENNEL CLUB CAN WORK WITH VETERINARIAN STUDENTS AND VETERINARIAN TECHNICIAN STUDENTS

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Some veterinary students have a strong anti-purebred dog bias. I do not see this as often today, but it is still present in some. Clubs can do much to educate students on the joys of purebred dogs. Who better to teach students how to produce healthy dogs that have a predictable morphology and temperament? Programs addressing veterinary students may lead to productive relationships among clubs, breeders and veterinary colleges.

A number of kennel clubs give scholarships to veterinary colleges. But there are other ways that kennel clubs can build relationships with veterinary colleges and their students, as well as with schools that offer veterinary technician programs.

There are many ways to introduce students to responsible dog breeders and the world of purebred dog events. Not every kennel club has the ability to fund a scholarship. And in most cases the scholarship recipients are selected by faculty, based on academic record, not necessarily on an interest in purebred dogs.

The Finger Lakes Kennel Club ("FLKC") offers a Veterinary Prize (\$1,000) to a Cornell vet student who has demonstrated interest in purebred dogs. The students must submit an essay on the importance of purebred dogs in their lives, and provide two letters of reference. We give some preference if the student is a local, upstate New York, resident, but it is not a requirement. We have three members read the essays, and present our recommendations to the kennel club. The FLKC writes the check in the student's name, and sends it to the college for presentation at Honor Day. The veterinary college usually invites a member of the FLKC to attend honor day. Any prize amount is always appreciated, especially with the price of veterinary texts.

A survey of kennel clubs in the area of veterinary colleges came up with a number of ideas:

- Invite veterinary students to kennel club programs. Ask faculty and residents from the veterinary college to give presentations to your kennel club on their research, or emerging diseases that concern dogs. Hold your meetings at the veterinary college.
- Ask students who win scholarships or prizes to present a pro-

gram to the kennel club. Offer programs to the Student Chapter of American Veterinary Medical Association ("SCAVMA") chapter or to student Canine Club meetings.

- Work with your local SCAVMA to schedule and set up periodic "Meet the Breed" booths at the veterinary school. Or offer to make "Meet the Breed" presentations at periodic meetings featuring live dogs and take-home literature.
- Depending on your club's by-laws, offer an "informal" or "honorary, non-voting" veterinary student membership, so that students get copies of your newsletter and learn when there are canine events in the area.
- If your club offers training classes, consider offering a veterinary student discount to those taking obedience, agility or handling classes.
- Invite veterinary students to attend club seminars free of charge (examples: Breeders' Symposia or health-related seminars, both general and breed specific.)
- Invite students to your match shows and point shows. Offer tours of your shows. Student

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Canine Clubs may be interested in helping at your shows, or at least attending.

- If your club holds health clinics, ask students to help with the clinic.
- Ask your Show Veterinarian to allow students to shadow them at the show.
- Invite the Dean or Department Chairs to your dog shows, and ask them to present Group or BIS trophies.
- Offer microchip clinics at Veterinary College open houses.
- Produce club-sponsored "Pet Days" describing dog safety, videos of dog events, live dog demonstrations, breed booths featuring health related breed specific information directed towards veterinary students.
- Establish a committee of veteri-

nary faculty, students and club members to produce a neonatal health booklet.

- Establish a Whelp Watch program with the Theriogenology Department and/or the University Canine Clubs: Breeders notify the assigned university liaison when they are planning a breeding, and two or three students may sign up to observe the whelping. These students would be expected to meet with the breeder and the bitch early in the gestation period. The breeder needs to be an experienced breeder, and the bitch needs to be comfortable with people. The breeder mentors the students, including pedigrees, health clearances, and the stages of a normal whelping. The breeder works

with the breeder's regular veterinarian, and the students understand that whelpings often happen in the middle of the night. If there is a veterinary intern interested in observing a whelping, they should be invited as well. I have mentored a number of students and it has been rewarding for all. They learn that bitches do not whelp "by the book."

These are just some of the ways kennel clubs can introduce veterinary students to the world of purebred dogs, and to help them understand why our dogs and our breeding programs are important to us. Share your successful ventures with other clubs. 🐾