

*The following is an article based on the presentation made during the 2018 AEDCA Annual Meeting.*

## **STATUS OF THE AMERICAN ESKIMO DOG IN 2018: ANOTHER BREEDER'S PERSPECTIVE**

**Barbara E. Beynon**

### **DISCLAIMERS (Slide 2)**

- The following material is presented to AEDCA members for information purposes only. Whatever decision the membership may eventually elect to pursue, I respect their decision.
- I have not imported any dog of any breed from outside the USA for any reason, although I may in the future.
- I have not placed any AED with anyone residing outside the USA, although I may in the future.

### **AKC FOUNDATION STOCK (Slide 3)**

The AKC does not recognize other domestic (within the USA), multi-breed (more than one breed) registries, of which the UKC is one. The AKC does recognize certain domestic, single-breed registries, such as the one for the racing Greyhound. That is why you can purchase a racing Greyhound and register it with the AKC.

In order to get the AED recognized by the AKC, the AEDCA had to open its own Stud Book, thereby creating a domestic, single-breed registry for the Eskie which became the foundation for the American Eskimo Dog in the AKC Stud Book.

The AEDCA maintained its own Stud Book based on UKC registrations from 1988- 1993. In late 1993, AKC accepted 1,754 individual AEDs as AKC Foundation Stock. The AEDCA petitioned AKC to reopen the AKC Stud Book to a supplemental registration directly from the UKC from 2001- 2004. An unknown number of AEDs were accepted during this supplemental registration period, and the number of dogs accepted during that time is believed to be small.

### **AKC REQUIREMENTS (Slide 4)**

Since that supplemental registration, the AKC has changed its method for Parent Club requests to reopen the AKC Stud Book. All requests *must* include:

- Arguments both ***FOR AND AGAINST*** the proposal;
- The reason(s) for the request, which may include concerns for genetic diversity of the breed, too few dogs registered with AKC, health concerns, or other reason(s);
- Documented scientific evidence which support the reason(s) cited for the proposal; and
- The proposed method for utilizing any new AEDs into a breeding program to correct the documented problem(s).

### **SOURCES (Slides 5- 8)**

The following are the sources used to document statements of fact cited in this paper:

- Dr. Carmen Battaglia (2017) wrote a paper which he presented to the AKC Board of Directors in 2017 entitled *60 Breeds- Extinction in the Conformation Sport*. The following facts are taken from this paper:

- The AED is **NOT** on the list of 60 “endangered” breeds;
- Contributing causes of the endangered breeds include: Low conversion rates; “Low Entry” breeds; and Limited Registrations; and
- **NONE** of these contributing causes will be solved by opening the AKC Stud Book to a second supplemental registration of UKC AEDs.

- The Canine Health Foundation (CHF) and VetVine Webinar series: *A Clinical Genetics Approach to Understanding Genetic, Multiplex, and Health Testing* by Jerold S. Bell, DVM. It is **FREE**, available on-demand, and takes about 75- 90 minutes.

- Dr. Bell stated that complexly-inherited (caused by more than one gene) diseases in the dog, including Hip Dysplasia (HD) and diabetes mellitus, are **OLD** mutations.
- Dr. Bell also stated that researchers do **NOT** see any evidence that AKC breeds are suffering from a lack of genetic diversity.

- Personally-collected data from public sources, including:

- The AKC webpage, including show results for the period 2014- 2017, and past issues of the *AKC Gazette*;
- OFA data, show catalogs, etc.; and
- Pedigree data (currently over 7,500 individuals) which document that today’s AED population has Coefficients of Inbreeding (COIs) ranging from <2% to >50% (based on a 15- generation calculation using *Pedigree Explorer*). Even if an Eskie has “holes” in its pedigree, these calculated COIs can be used as a minimum number, which means that the absolute, true value could be more (but not less).

- Irion, et.al., (2003) documented that the American Eskimo Dog is one of the most genetically-diverse AKC breeds. Additionally, Boles (2017) stated that several researchers at the recent CHF Parent Club Health Conference in St. Louis in August, 2017 stated that the AED is one of the most genetically-diverse breeds.

- Bell (2007) states that the most important factor for diminished genetic diversity in dog breeds is the popular sire syndrome.

### **AKC STATISTICS (Slide 9)**

- Registrations of **ALL** AKC breeds have decreased over the last 15- 20 years.
- Entries at **ALL** AKC shows have decreased over the last 15- 20 years.
- The numbers of breeders and exhibitors in **ALL** AKC breeds have decreased over the last 15- 20 years.

The reasons for these declines are many and varied, and have been the source of much discussion and concern within the AKC and the Fancy. How does the Eskie and AEDCA fit into these statistics?

### **AED STATISTICS (Slide 10)**

Since full recognition in July, 1995, the membership in the AEDCA has remained essentially the same year-to-year.... about 150 households.

AKC registrations of the AED have declined but not as much as other breeds or the Non-Sporting Group.

As one member stated: “People *WANT* Eskie puppies!”

### **AKC REGISTRATION STATISTICS (Slide 11)**

AKC registration data from 1994- 1999 were collected from old issues of the *AKC Gazette* in which the AKC used to publish registration data every month and summarize the preceding year each spring. The AKC registration data for 2011- 2016 were sent via e-mail to the AEDCA.

The registrations for the entire six-year periods were totaled before comparison to remove whatever year-to-year variation may have been present in the two data sets.

- **All Breeds:** Total litters declined 58% and total individual dogs by 63%.
- **Non-Sporting Breeds:** Total litters declined by 71% and total individual dogs by 71%.
- **American Eskimo Dogs:** Total litters declined by 38% and individual dogs by 45%. (Remember the three sizes!)

The three sizes may play a role in the apparent greater decline in individual dog registrations compared to the litter registrations because more breeders are producing Toys and Miniatures today than they did 20 years ago. Beynon (1996a) studied 301 AED litters registered with the AEDCA and demonstrated to a greater than 99% Confidence Interval that Standards (average of 5.03 pups/litter) have larger litters than Miniatures (average of 4.01 pups/litter), which have larger litters than Toys (average of 2.52 pups/litter).

### **LOW ENTRY BREEDS (Slide 12)**

The AKC started the Low Entry (LE) list in 2005 to help permit judges get their required number of assignments in each new breed. If a breed has less than 3,500 entries (dogs actually present in the ring) during the preceding year, it is placed on the LE list the following year. Since the list was created in 2005, the AED has always been on the LE list.

Currently 90 of the 188 AKC breeds (almost 50%) are classified as LE. Despite the LE list, the AKC continues to recognize new breeds each year, and those breeds are added to the LE list.

### **AED ENTRY DATA (Slide 13)**

The following numbers are based on personally-collected data from the AKC Website 2014- 2017. Entries by state were collected for each year.

- 2014- 2067 total AEDs
- 2015- 2279 total AEDs
- 2016- 2608 total AEDs
- 2017- 2610 total AEDs

The difference over the four-year period 2014- 2017 represents a 26.3% increase in Eskie entries during that period.

The number of majors in each state was calculated beginning in the 2017 tabulation The number of majors nationwide in 2017 included 94 majors in 19 states.

Beginning in May, 2018, the new AKC point schedule for the AED indicates that four dogs or bitches are required for a 3-point major in all divisions in the USA. Also, five dogs or bitches are required for a 4-point major, and six dogs or bitches are required for a five-point major in all divisions.

### **AED CONVERSION RATE (Slide 14)**

The following data are based on AKC Registrations 2008- 2016.

Total number of pups in registered litters-	5,216	
Total number of individually-registered-	2,584	
Conversion rate-		<b>49.5%</b>
Total number on Full Registration-	2,255	
Actual conversion rate-		<b>43.2%</b>
Total number of unique AEDs bred-	452	
Rate of offspring bred-		<b>8.7%</b>

As a comparison, Beynon (1996b) studied 760 AED litters registered with the AKC between November, 1993, and September, 1996, and determined a conversion rate of 49.3%- almost exactly the same rate as the most recent statistics.

Historically, the AED has lost over half of its gene pool because breeders and owners did not register all of their puppies. Breeders of Merit (BOMs) must certify that ALL puppies that they produce are individually registered with the AKC. For the Advanced Breeder of Merit designations (Gold, Silver, or Bronze), these registrations will be verified by the AKC before it will recognize Advanced BOMs.

Additionally, less than 10% of Eskies born are ever bred. As breeders and owners, we must increase this number to maintain the genetic diversity of the breed.

### **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS (Slide 15- 16)**

- Welcome **ALL** newcomers into the Eskie world. We need everyone!
- Remember and **PRACTICE** what Momma said: *“If you don’t have something nice to say, ....”* Many of us know and practice this adage, but we must realize that we do have some chronic “complainers” among us. Kids know this; and for many years when my niece was showing our Eskies, she called a fellow exhibitor “that mean lady”. Do you really want to be that person?
- Encourage people who adopt your puppies (use care with words like “sell” and “puppy buyers”) to become responsible breeders and exhibitors in all AKC events.
- Just as breeders replace their breeding stock with offspring of better quality than their parents, we as breeders must replace ourselves with new blood before we stop breeding.

Some people complained at the Annual Meeting that we need to have fun at dog shows. The Texas delegation was shocked- we DO have fun at dog shows! We encourage each other, congratulate the winner when they beat us, and enjoy each other's company.

Remember, you reap what you sow. If the people at the shows aren't fun, look for people who are- even if they don't own Eskies. If exhibitors stay away from the chronic complainers, "mean ladies", and just difficult people, they will have more fun.

Breeders and owners **MUST**:

- Continue working to improve and preserve our breed;
- Screen all breeding stock and openly share **ALL** health information (this means getting CHIC numbers on all of your breeding stock);
- Be vigilant regarding emerging health concerns such as cardiac problems, cryptorchidism, temperament issues, etc.; and
- Remember the future of our breed is in our hands **today**.

Years ago when AKC recognition was only a dream, some Eskie breeders emphatically stated that "AKC recognition would ruin the breed." My reply was and still is: AKC recognition doesn't ruin a breed- bad breeders do that. Please don't be one of those breeders.

I have hard copies of the cited papers which I can scan and e-mail, as well as my data files on my computer. Please feel free to contact me with questions or comments at: (361) 774-3369 or [Bbeynon77@yahoo.com](mailto:Bbeynon77@yahoo.com)

## REFERENCES (Slides 17- 19)

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