

## Update from ACDHEW, Inc.

### **Results of ACD Health Survey**

In 2007 a survey on Australian Cattle Dog health issues was sponsored by the Australian Cattle Dog Health Education and Welfare, Inc. Among the 402 breeders and owners who responded, the following items were found to be of the greatest concern:

**Orthopedic Issues: 338 (83%)**

Hip Dysplasia: 299 (89.3%)

Elbow Dysplasia: 202 (60.3%)

**Deafness: 315 (77.4%)**

Bilateral Deafness: 282 (90.4%)

Unilateral Deafness: 255 (81.7%)

**prcd-PRA: 305 (74.9%)**

**Cancer: 190 (46.7%)**

**Eye Disorders (other than prcd-PRA): 128 (31.4%)**

These responses are consistent with comments of breeders and owners in various on-line forums as well as with formal and informal discussions held at National Specialties and other venues over the years. The results are also consistent with health statistics from other sources such as CERF and OFA and with the conclusions of researchers who have concerned themselves with our breed.

### **Australian Cattle Dog Enters CHIC Program**

Armed with these health survey results the ACDHEW Board recommended standards for the Australian Cattle Dog's entry into the Canine Health Information Center program—commonly known as CHIC. The recommendations were adopted by the ACDCA, Inc. Board in July.

CHIC is a joint program of the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) and the AKC Canine Health Foundation. Detailed information on CHIC may be found at [www.caninehealthinfo.org](http://www.caninehealthinfo.org)

CHIC goals, benefits, policies and guidelines are described below in detail. In short, when the ACDCA adopts standards for participation in the CHIC program, any ACD fancier who voluntarily complies with the criteria may apply for a CHIC number for their dog(s). The CHIC number itself does not imply normal test results, only that all the required breed specific tests were performed and the results—whether normal or not—made publicly available. The program is dynamic in that revised requirements can be adopted for a breed when warranted by changes in health information or by the availability of new tests. The CHIC program encourages breed appropriate testing and recognizes breeders who conduct such testing.

Quarterly reports of CHIC results will be emailed to the ACD Quarterly Editor and ACDHEW, Inc. for distribution.

## **CHIC Requirements for the Australian Cattle Dog**

Testing from recognized foreign or other organizations, not listed below will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Hip Dysplasia (evaluation at two years or older)**

OFA evaluation  
OVC evaluation (Canadian—Ontario Veterinary College)  
PennHip evaluation

### **Elbow Dysplasia (evaluation at two years or older)**

OFA evaluation  
OVC evaluation

### **Eye Clearance (at least one evaluation at two years or older)**

CERF evaluation

### **prcd-PRA DNA Test**

Testing from an OFA approved laboratory

prcd testing of the applicant dog is not required if the dog is a first generation Obligate A (the result of an A to A breeding) or a first generation Obligate B (the result of an A to C breeding) if:

- 1) the prcd-PRA test results for both sire and dam are in the OFA database and
- 2) sire, dam and obligate offspring for which CHIC status is being sought are DNA identity (as in the AKC DNA Profile) profiled and parentage verified.

The DNA profile paperwork must be submitted along with a completed OFA DNA-based disease test application.

- 1) the prcd-PRA test results for both sire and dam are in the OFA database and
- 2) sire, dam and obligate offspring for which CHIC status is being sought are DNA identity profiled and parentage verified.

The DNA profile paperwork must be submitted along with a completed OFA DNA-based disease test application. The disease based application form can be found at <http://www.offa.org/dnaappbw.pdf>

First generation obligate A's qualify for discounted prcd testing from OptiGen.  
[http://www.optigen.com/opt9\\_normaltonormal.html](http://www.optigen.com/opt9_normaltonormal.html)

### **Congenital Deafness**

OFA evaluation based on BAER test

## Frequently Asked Questions on CHIC

### What is CHIC?

In short, CHIC is a database of consolidated health screening results from multiple sources. Co-sponsored by the OFA and the AKC Canine Health Foundation, 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.

### What are CHIC's Goals?

To work with parent clubs in the identification of health issues for which a central information system should be established.

To establish and maintain a central health information system in a manner that will support research into canine disease and provide health information to owners and

To establish scientifically valid diagnostic criteria for the acceptance of information into the database.

To base the availability of information on individually identified dogs at the consent of the owner.

### What are the benefits of CHIC?

Once in place and accepted within the dog breeding community, the CHIC program offers benefits to breeders, buyers, parent clubs, and researchers.

- **For breeders**, CHIC provides a reliable source of information regarding dogs they may use in their breeding programs. In the future, breeders can begin to analyze the pedigrees of a proposed breeding for health strengths and weaknesses as well the traditional analysis of conformation, type, and performance strengths and weaknesses.
- **For buyers**, the CHIC program provides accurate information about the results of a breeder's health testing. For diseases that are limited to phenotypic evaluations, there are no guarantees. However, the probability that an animal will develop an inherited disease is reduced when its ancestry has been tested normal. Further, as more DNA tests become available and the results are entered into CHIC, the CHIC database will be able to establish whether progeny will be clear, carriers, or affected.
- **For parent clubs** considering establishment of health databases on their own, CHIC provides the answer with no upfront investment required by the club. The CHIC infrastructure is supplied and maintained by the OFA. The data is maintained in a secure environment by trained staff. The services are not subject to the time, technology, and resource constraints that parent clubs might face on their own. This frees parent clubs to focus on their core strengths of identifying health concerns, educating their membership, and encouraging participation in the CHIC program.
- **For researchers**, CHIC provides confidential and accurate aggregate information on multiple generations of dogs. CHIC information will also be useful for epidemiological studies enhancing our knowledge of health issues affecting all breeds of dogs.
- **For everyone** interested in canine health issues, CHIC is a tool to monitor disease prevalence and measure progress.

### What are CHIC's basic Policies and Guidelines?

The CHIC database is a tool that collects health information on individual animals from multiple sources. This centralized pool of data is maintained to assist breeders in making more informed breeding choices and for scientists in conducting research. In order for data to be included in CHIC, test results must be based on scientifically valid diagnostic criteria.

### **What does it mean that CHIC is breed specific?**

Core to the CHIC philosophy is the realization that each breed has different health concerns. Not all diseases have known modes of inheritance, nor do all diseases have screening tests. Some screening tests are based on phenotypic evaluation, others on genetic testing. With all these variables, a key element of CHIC is to customize or tailor the CHIC requirements to the needs of each breed. These unique requirements are established through input from the parent club prior to the breed's entry into the CHIC program. Breed specific requirements typically consist of the inherited diseases that are of the greatest concern and for which some screening test is available. Each parent club also drives specific screening protocols. As an example, one parent club may allow cardiac exams to be performed by a general practitioner. Another parent club may require the exam to be performed by a board certified cardiologist. A club may also use the CHIC program to maintain information on other health issues for anecdotal purposes. Later, as screening tests become available, the disease may be added to the breed specific requirements.

### **What are the identification requirements for entry into CHIC?**

Regardless of breed, each dog must be permanently identified in order to have test results included in CHIC. Permanent identification may be in the form of microchip or tattoo.

### **What does it mean to that CHIC is an informed consent database?**

CHIC operates an informed consent database. All information regarding test results remains confidential unless the owner specifically authorizes release of the information into the public domain. Owners are encouraged to release all test results realizing it is in the ultimate health interests of the breed and the information greatly increases the depth and breadth of any resulting pedigree analysis. For those not quite ready to accept open sharing of information, there is still value in submitting their results. All test information entered into the database is available in aggregate for research and statistical reporting purposes, but does not disclose identification of individual dogs. This results in improved information on the prevalence of the disease, as well as information regarding progress in reducing the incidence of the disease.

### **When are CHIC Numbers issued?**

A CHIC number is issued when test results are entered into the database satisfying each breed specific requirement, **and when the owner of the dog has opted to release the results into the public domain.**

### **Do test results have to be normal?**

No, CHIC is not about normalcy. 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.

The CHIC number itself does not imply normal test results, only that all the required breed specific tests were performed and the results made publicly available.

### **What is a CHIC report and when is it issued?**

A CHIC report is issued at the same time as the CHIC number. The CHIC report is a consolidated listing of the tests performed, the age of the dog when the tests were performed, and the corresponding test results. As new results are recorded, updated CHIC reports reflecting the additional information will be generated. For example, if a breed requires annual CERF examinations, an updated CHIC report will be generated every time updated CERF results are entered. Another potential example is as new DNA tests are developed and added to the breed specific requirements, updated CHIC reports will be generated as the test results are entered.

### **Can CHIC requirements for a breed change?**

Once included in the CHIC program, the breed specific requirements are dynamic. As health priorities within a breed change, or as new screening tests become available, the breed specific requirements can be modified to reflect the current environment. If the breed specific requirements are modified, existing CHIC numbers are not revoked. Again, the CHIC number is issued to a dog that completed all required tests at a given point in time.

CHIC will provide the parent club quarterly reports consisting of both aggregate numbers and specific dogs that have been issued CHIC numbers.

### **What is the CHIC Fee Structure?**

Test results from the OFA and CERF databases are shared automatically with the CHIC program. There is no fee to enter test results from either the OFA or CERF, and there is no requirement to fill out any additional forms.

To enter results into CHIC from another source such as PennHIP, GDC, OVC, or parent club maintained databases, there is a one time per dog fee of \$25.00. To enter results from any of these organizations, a copy of the test results, the fee, and a signed note requesting the results be entered into the CHIC database should be sent to the OFA. Any additional results after the one time fee is paid are recorded at no charge. Additionally, there is no charge when entering results on an affected animal from a non-CERF/OFA source

### **My dog has met all the breed specific CHIC requirements. Do I need to do anything else to receive my CHIC number?**

If all the results have been registered appropriately, you shouldn't need to do anything extra. The CHIC number should generate automatically. The main complication for ACD's will be the extra steps in registering first generation *prcd-PRA* obligate A's and B's

*prcd* testing of the applicant dog is not required if the dog is a first generation Obligate A (the result of an A to A breeding) or a first generation Obligate B (the result of an A to C breeding) if:

- 1) the *prcd-PRA* test results for both sire and dam are in the OFA database and
- 2) sire, dam and obligate offspring for which CHIC status is being sought are DNA identity (as in the AKC DNA Profile) profiled and parentage verified.

The DNA profile paperwork must be submitted along with a completed OFA DNA-based disease test application.

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The DNA profile paperwork must be submitted along with a completed OFA DNA-based disease test application. The disease based application form can be found at <http://www.offa.org/dnaappbw.pdf>

First generation obligate A's and obligate B's qualify for discounted *prcd* testing from OptiGen. [http://www.optigen.com/opt9\\_normaltonormal.html](http://www.optigen.com/opt9_normaltonormal.html)

### **What if I can't get a DNA profile from my obligate dog's sire or dam?**

If you can't get a DNA profile done for either the sire or dam, the only option for entry into the CHIC program is to test your obligate dog.

First generation obligate A's and obligate B's whose sire and dam were tested by OptiGen qualify for discounted *prcd* testing from OptiGen.

[http://www.optigen.com/opt9\\_normaltonormal.html](http://www.optigen.com/opt9_normaltonormal.html). We have requested that OptiGen institute the same discount for Obligate B's.

**My dog has met all the breed specific CHIC requirements. How long does it take to receive a CHIC number?**

The program which identifies newly qualified CHIC dogs is typically run two to three times a month, so there is some lag time between the recording of the last requirement and the issuing of the number. If you believe your dog should've received a CHIC number, and it has been more than 4 weeks since the registration of the last test result, you may email [chic@offa.org](mailto:chic@offa.org) to inquire about the dog's status.

**Is there a charge for CHIC?**

Currently, the only extra fee is to register PennHIP or OVC results since this must be done manually. To include these in CHIC, the fee is \$25. Send the fee, along with a copy of the test results, and a note asking that the data be included in CHIC to:

Canine Health Information Center  
2300 E Nifong Blvd.  
Columbia, MO 65201

There are no extra charges for CERF and OFA data as those go automatically to CHIC.

**My dog has completed all the requirements for CHIC, why haven't I received a CHIC number?**

The two most common reasons are 1) the owner simply hasn't allowed enough time for the information to be recorded and in sync and 2) the dog has not met the requirement for permanent id via tattoo or microchip.