



Basenji Club of America, Inc.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Janet Ketz
1912 Oakland Ave.
Crest Hill, IL 60481
jlketz@aol.com
secretary@basenji.org
C-815-325-5908

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Basenji Club of America Health Statement

As a collective whole, the Basenji is a very healthy breed. While there are two significant diseases--Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) and Fanconi Syndrome--that have plagued the breed, careful, wise, responsible, and conscientious breeding, along with recent genetic testing, has pointedly diminished the occurrences of these diseases. Conscientious breeding continues to ensure an overall healthy basenji.

There are hereditary eye conditions that can occur throughout a basenji's lifespan. Regular examination by a veterinary ophthalmologist, a certified Diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) is essential, beginning at 7 weeks of age. The results of all OFA Eye Certification Registry certificates should be available to potential breeders and people interested in a potential puppy. Basenjies with hereditary eye conditions, where the mode of inheritances are unknown, should be bred cautiously with the goal to reduce the occurrence in future generations.

DNA Testing (Affected, Carrier, Clear: Affected dogs should not be used in a breeding program unless bred to a Clear, and only as a tool to keep a pedigree from potentially being lost and keeping the additional genetic material that comes with said dog in the gene pool. Carriers should be used only to clears, too, for the same reasons as stated under Affected dogs. It is important to stress that a Carrier result still leads a normal, healthy life, no different from Clear. It is only in the breeder's plan that the Carrier result must be addressed responsibly).

Fanconi Syndrome is a condition in which the renal (kidney) tubules do not function properly. Instead of properly reabsorbing water, electrolytes, and nutrients into the body, the tubules "spill" them back into the urine to be expelled from the body. Unlike kidney failure which is a failure of the kidneys to process out waste and clear chemicals from the bloodstream, Fanconi Syndrome causes the loss of too many which need to be replaced orally through supplementation. Untreated Fanconi syndrome results in muscle wasting, acidosis, poor condition, and eventually death. With on-going treatment using the Gonto Protocol, Fanconi basenjies in which the disease is caught early have, on average, the same life span as a non-Fanconi basenji.

Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) in basenjies can cause progressive vision loss leading to blindness. Although there are multiple forms of PRA, one form caused by PRA-BJ1 accounts for approximately 50% of all PRA disease affecting basenjies. Due to the late onset of PRA, it is important to have the DNA genetic test for PRA-BJ1 completed before breeding. The gene test for PRA-BJ1 is offered by multiple labs, including the OFA and OptiGen. We suggest all breeders and owners list their results on the OFA website. The results should be available to potential breeders and people interested in a potential puppy.

Descendants of basenjis, where both parents have DNA tested clear may be declared genetically free of Fanconi and or PRA-BJ1. However, even though errors in DNA testing are extremely rare, further testing for the first generation should be considered for breeding stock.

Hip dysplasia occurs in a very small percentage of basenjis. (As of 12-31-2016, basenjis ranked 159 out of 175 of all breeds with more than 100 cases. Of basenjis tested, only 3.34% were abnormal.) If a breeder chooses to evaluate for hip dysplasia, it is preferable for X-Rays to have been read and registered with an accredited agency such as, Penn Hip, www.pennhip.org, or the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), www.offa.org. A copy of the results should be readily available to individuals looking to use the animal for breeding, and/or interested in a potential puppy.

Hypothyroidism occurs in a very small percentage of basenjis (5.38% of the dogs tested as of 12-31-2016). It can be a result of autoimmune thyroiditis. The OFA has an open registry for dogs that have been tested for autoimmune thyroiditis at 12 months or older, using approved laboratories. Basenjis with autoimmune thyroiditis should not be bred.

This BCOA Health Statement was approved by the BCOA Officers/Board of Directors in BCOA Ballot 2017-24. Effective August 15, 2017.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet L. Ketz". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Janet Ketz
BCOA Secretary