

# Copilot Breeding Cooperative

## Guidelines for Membership, Registration and Breeding

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### **Mission Statement**

The objective of the Copilot Breeding Cooperative is to produce healthy, temperamentally sound dogs whose primary purpose is providing companionship to humans, while simultaneously collecting data and developing best practices for the breeding of pet dogs

### **Organizational Structure**

The Copilot Breeding Cooperative is a sanctioned entity of the Functional Dog Collaborative, a 501c3 nonprofit organization. As a cooperative, it is a member driven organization, and voting members will have the opportunity to participate in key decisions. A leadership committee of at least two voting members will provide direction. Current members of the leadership committee are Laura Sharkey and Carolyn Kelly.

## Goals

- Maintain a population of breeding dogs in a manner consistent with their health and mental wellbeing
- Be a sustainable source of healthy, temperamentally sound pet dogs to the general public seeking ethically sourced puppies
- Establish and maintain a pedigree registry and database for companion dogs containing health and temperament data that can be used for scientific study and to inform breeding choices
- Provide support to member breeders including but not limited to:
  - a. access to breeding stock
  - b. assistance with placing retired dogs and breeding prospects
  - c. mentorship
  - d. financial support for testing and veterinary care
  - e. access to expert advice including that informed by results of the study of shared data
- Document health and disease risk in mixed breed dogs and develop best practices guidance for health testing in this population.

## Guiding principles

- *Canis lupus familiaris*, the domesticated dog, has proven itself to be an indispensable companion to humans throughout thousands of years of history.
- The keeping of domestic dogs as pets is understood to be an ethical choice which can provide benefits for both the dogs and the humans when done appropriately.
- The United States currently requires 8-9 million new dogs each year to supply the demand of people seeking a dog.
- Many breeding dogs suffer due to poor breeding practices, inadequate husbandry, and substandard conditions. This is unacceptable and no dog should suffer a reduced quality of life in order to produce puppies.
- The breeding of pet dogs is a serious responsibility and should be undertaken carefully with as much reliance on scientific evidence as is possible to promote the production of dogs who are healthy and suited to the purpose intended.
- Casual breeding of pet dogs outside of a well structured program can result in dog overpopulation, and unhealthy or poorly tempered puppies that are not suitable for life as a pet.
- No part of this document or the mission of the cooperative is intended to undermine or devalue the accomplishments and value of purebred breeding programs or to discourage people from adopting dogs in need of rehoming from rescues or shelters.

## Membership

There are two membership levels.

1. **General membership** includes access to stud book listings, and the ability to register dogs, and is open to anyone willing to sign an agreement to follow the cooperative's ethical standards. The standards represent a guideline for assuring quality in husbandry and business practices.
2. **Voting membership** includes eligibility to vote on cooperative decision making and is open to those who have bred at least one litter which is registered in the cooperative pedigree database.

### Benefits to members

- Ability to register qualified adult dogs and puppies in the pedigree database
- Access to the cooperative's studbook
- Expert guidance about health and temperament testing
- Access to data collected by the cooperative
- Financial support for testing when it becomes available (voting members only)
- Assistance placing breeding prospects in guardian or co-owned homes, and retired dogs in forever homes through the cooperative website and social media presence

## Ethical standards for members

### Husbandry guidelines

These guidelines are understood to be subject to individual exceptions based on breeder discretion, circumstances and as recommended by a veterinarian. They are intended to ensure that member breeders understand and follow best practices to provide breeding dogs and puppies with an excellent quality of life and are not intended to create barriers to membership.

**All dogs owned by members, regardless of breeding status,** should be kept in conditions consistent with their health and mental wellbeing, including:

1. Access to routine preventative veterinary care including vaccinations, and preventative medications as recommended by a licensed veterinarian
2. Being microchipped and registered to the breeder or guardian

3. Access to consistent human caregivers who provide physical touch, assessment of health and wellbeing and individual attention to the animal at least daily
4. Access to sufficient exercise to meet the dogs' individual needs
5. Sanitary conditions including clean food and water bowls and an area for toileting separate from sleeping and eating
6. Access to clean fresh water
7. An appropriate nutritionally-complete diet which provides sufficient calories, including extra calories adequate for pregnant and nursing females
8. Mental stimulation sufficient to prevent stress related behaviors, including access to safe toy and/or chew items
9. Reasonable protection from accidents, including being secured or supervised while outdoors to prevent access to roads
10. Access to emergency veterinary care as needed, especially when pregnant or whelping
11. Breeding females during whelping should be attended by a known and competent attendant, be provided with a safe indoor space isolated from other dogs and an appropriate whelping box, have access to water, and have the ability to move about freely. Except in cases of illness or other complicating factors or for the safety of the puppies, dams should have uninterrupted free access to their puppies for at least 4 weeks and be housed near them with regular access until at least 7 weeks.
12. Grooming appropriate to dog's coat type sufficient to prevent significant matting or overgrowth of nails
13. Intact animals should be kept separated as needed to prevent unplanned breedings
14. Intact males kept separated from females in heat should be protected from extreme stress, including refusal to eat or sleep and extended periods of frustration

**Puppies whelped and/or raised by members** should be kept in conditions consistent with their health and wellbeing, including:

1. Puppies should be housed in a home environment, meaning in the same indoor dwelling as their human caretakers. The space in which they are housed should be within earshot of at least one other living space in the home, and have appropriate heat and/or air conditioning to maintain comfort of both puppies and dam. Basement areas and garages are unlikely to provide the correct environment.
2. Puppies should be kept on a soft, absorbent surface with traction sufficient to allow them to move about from birth
3. The use of pig rails is recommended
4. Puppies should be provided with a designated toilet area from no later than 3 weeks of age

5. Puppies and their enclosure should be kept clean and free of continuous soiling by feces or urine
6. Puppies should be monitored for signs of congenital defects, failure to thrive, parasites, or infectious disease. Evidence of such should be treated promptly including the care of a veterinarian if needed to prevent suffering.
7. Puppies should be weaned gradually to solid food. Weaning should be slow enough to prevent suffering of puppies or dam. Natural weaning guided by the dam is strongly encouraged.
8. Puppies should be provided continuous access to clean water from no later than 4 weeks of age or coinciding with receiving nutrition other than mothers milk
9. Puppies should be examined by a licensed veterinarian and given all vaccines recommended by such veterinarian prior to leaving the breeder. Puppy owners should be advised of any health issues noted during the veterinarian exam.
10. Additional enrichment and socialization of puppies beyond basic requirements is expected; specific methods are left to the individual discretion of the breeder.

## Ethical behavior

**Members will behave in a fair, open minded, forgiving, non discriminatory and reasonable manner** toward other breeders, members of the public, potential puppy buyers, and others in the dog community. both in and outside the co-op.

- No member will engage in online harassment, bullying or slander of another person or program
- Puppy sales and other business dealings of members will be conducted in a professional manner and with transparency and honesty
- Discrimination based on sex, race, sexual orientation, political ideology, gender identity, national origin, or religious affiliation is prohibited

## Registry

The cooperative will maintain a pedigree registry and database for companion dogs called the Companion Dog Registry (CDR). All puppies born to two registered dogs should be registered by the breeder prior to placement in order to facilitate future data collection on the puppies. Registered dog owners will be provided with pedigree and registration documentation on request with a fee for administrative costs. At this time there is no fee for registration.

## **Adding adult dogs to the registry**

The cooperative seeks to register intact, healthy adult dogs of any breed or mix who possess innate friendliness with all humans and dogs. Adult dogs who were not registered as puppies may be registered if they meet the following requirements. Exceptions to requirements can be made based on individual breeding program goals. Interested owners of dogs with superior companion temperament are encouraged to apply. Individual guidance and support to meet health testing requirements is available.

### **Age:**

18 months or older

### **Temperament, in accordance with the following:**

- **Bite history:** Dogs with any human bite history are not eligible. Dogs with a known Dunbar scale level 4 history in more than one sibling or parent are not eligible. Dogs with history of bites on other dogs requiring veterinary care should be disclosed at application and may be considered on a case by case basis.
- **Resource Guarding:** No history of aggression toward humans when in possession of a toy or food item. Tolerates other known dogs in the household without biting or excessive guarding.
- **Tolerance of examination:** Able to undergo veterinary examination and routine preventive care without the need for sedatives, behavioral medications, or excessive restraint.
- **Response to new environments:** Able to remain composed while walking on a leash in unfamiliar public areas where it encounters unknown dogs and humans without excessive guidance from the handler.
- **Response to new humans in familiar environment:** Tolerates unfamiliar visitors to their home environment without an aggressive response, and preferably a pro-social response. Ideally this is the case with minimal to no training having been provided.
- **Separation:** Able to tolerate being alone for up to four hours without harming themselves or property, or soiling.

- **Unacceptable Behaviors:** Any submissive urination or consistent excited urination past 6 months of age, compulsive behaviors such as licking, spinning, fixation on environmental stimuli, persistent attempts to escape confinement despite adequate exercise and stimulation, inability to be reliably house trained by 6 months of age, prey drive that if unmanaged could reasonably be expected to result in the injuring of a domesticated cat or dog, human or dog aggression, resource guarding toward humans.

**Health, in accordance with the following:**

- Has never been diagnosed with any condition that *significantly* affects quality of life or requires costly, repeated, or painful veterinary intervention for which a genetic basis is established.
- DNA breeder panel completed through Embark. We choose Embark due to their ability to provide predicted coefficient of inbreeding (COI) for the puppies of dogs in their database, and to ensure that all dogs are in the same database to facilitate future study.
- Additional health testing requirements will be determined for each individual applicant based on breed content and size and may include:
  - Hips (PennHip strongly preferred)
  - Elbows
  - Cardiac
  - Eyes
  - Patella
  - Thyroid
  - MRI
  - Spinal X-rays
  - Others
- Submission of side view stacked photo, and photo of head showing no serious structural faults that would affect function

**Family history:**

Breed content as revealed by Embark testing and/or known pedigree should be considered when making breeding decisions. Dogs with greater than 50% breed content from non-traditional companion breeds may require additional documentation of temperament or be declined. Dogs with wolf content will not be considered.

## Breeding Strategies

- The goal of planned breedings is to produce puppies with highly social, easy-to-live with, low-aggression temperaments, lack of any disease with significant impact to quality of life, and structure that allows ease of movement and normal exercise tolerance.
- Any color, size, coat type or appearance is acceptable. Merle coloring or high amounts of white on the head require special consideration in choosing pairings to avoid any associated health risks.
- Carrier or affected status on DNA testing should be considered and additional testing may be required beyond Embark depending on breed content and Embark results.
- Temperament should be the highest and most important consideration when choosing breeding candidates and matching pairs, followed by health, and then structure and appearance.
- Sociability with humans and dogs is the most important aspect of temperament to be considered
- Selection for individual desired traits, regardless of breed or a breed standard, and the frequent introduction of new stock, will be emphasized
- It is understood that the consistency possible in a closed gene pool is not attainable in this model, and this is understood to be a necessary trade off for the benefit of increased fertility, health and longevity.
- The creation of a new breed is not a goal of the cooperative, although it may be a goal of individual members' programs.
- Predicted COI of puppies per Embark will be no greater than 10%.
- The use of the oldest possible appropriate healthy stud is encouraged
- Pennhip/OFA hip testing results should be considered when planning breedings.
- Natural mating is encouraged for at least the first breeding of each dog, to establish its ability to do so. Inability to mate naturally should be considered a negative trait and breeding away from this concern is expected.



- Successful unassisted natural whelping and mothering of puppies is a breeding goal. Inability to do so should be considered when making breeding decisions, and breeding away from this concern is expected.
- Fertility should be considered and unexplained small litter sizes should be bred away from.

## **Breeding**

To register a litter of puppies, a breeding application must be submitted and both parents must be registered with the Cooperative (see “Adding adult dogs to the registry”). The application may be submitted before or after the birth of the puppies. Past litters may be registered for up to 5 years after the date of birth, assuming all described requirements are met. Repeat pairings do not require an additional application.

### **Guidelines for breeding a litter**

- Both sire and dam should be at least 2 years of age. Breeding of dogs 20-24 months old may be approved in individual cases. Dogs with unknown parentage or from unknown lines should ideally be fully socially mature (2.5-3 years old) to establish adult temperament prior to breeding.
- Females will be bred no sooner than second heat, and third is preferred in most cases. Skipping heats is optional and should be based on veterinarian recommendation, breeding goals, and the condition of the dog. No female may be bred more than 4 times or after age 8 without prior examination and approval of a licensed veterinarian.
- Dogs should be in overall good health at the time of breeding with normal appetite, having no sign of illness, in healthy body condition, with good mobility of all joints, at a healthy weight, parasite free and up-to-date on vaccines as recommended by a licensed veterinarian.
- If the potential dam or sire was registered with the Cooperative as a puppy, proof of health testing and other items will be required as part of the breeding application.

## **Additional breeding guidelines for members**

- Members may breed unregistered dogs but it is expected that only registered dogs and puppies will advertised as such
- Submitting registered studs to the cooperative studbook listings for consideration is strongly encouraged. Acceptance of stud contracts is completely up to the discretion of the breeder and there is no requirement to allow use of your stud.
- Considering offering breeding quality puppies to cooperative members for purchase, guardianship, or co-ownership is strongly encouraged
- Registered puppies will be sold only with a written contract signed by both breeder and buyer. The contract must include:
  - an offer to take back any puppy at any time for rehoming or other needs, with no conditions applied
  - a commitment from the buyer that the puppy shall never be placed in a rescue or shelter of any kind, or be resold for a profit
  - a commitment from the buyer to provide an indoor home and appropriate vet care, as well as any other conditions deemed appropriate by the breeder
- Desexing of registered puppies less than 6 months of age prior to sale is prohibited.

## **Data collection on puppies produced**

The Cooperative will implement puppy testing requirements over the next few years with the goal of providing support to members to complete the following:

- Testing at least two puppies from each litter with Pennhip
- Collecting CBarq and health questionnaire data from all puppy owners at one and two years of age
- Additional data collection as indicated by results of breedings and other factors

## **Enforcement of Cooperative standards**

The credibility and reputation of the Cooperative is the responsibility of all members. Suspected or known violations of ethical standards or breeding requirements should be reported to any member of the leadership committee. Substantiated violations may result in removal from the Cooperative.