

ASCWTA

# The Prairie Wheaten

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## Inside

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Pet Foods you wouldn't want to feed to your dog .....   | Page 2  |
| The Senior Dog .....                                    | Page 6  |
| From a Breeder's Point of View .....                    | Page 12 |
| Are Two Wheatens Better Than One (One year later) ..... | Page 13 |
| The Rare Long Tailed Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier .....  | Page 15 |
| Agility Should Be Fun .....                             | Page 18 |
| President's Report .....                                | Page 21 |
| If Dogs Sent Letters to God .....                       | Page 28 |

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# Pet foods you wouldn't feed to your dog

Vet claims some cause damage to furry friends

LINDA SLOBODIAN of the CALGARY HERALD

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North Americans spend an estimated \$20 to \$30 billion US a year on pet food, but some experts claim many products - some recommended by vets - contain ingredients that aren't fit for a dog. Or a cat.

"There is no governmental agency in Canada watching over what goes in pet foods," says Dr. Corinne Chapman, a Calgary veterinarian who is unwilling to take pleasingly packaged pet foods - displaying juicy morsels and happy critters with strong white teeth and shiny coats - at face value.

Chapman echoes a growing number of voices that say a host of ailments - cancer, obesity, heart, liver and kidney damage, dental disease, skeletal degeneration, epilepsy, thyroid diseases, even excessive vomiting - may be linked to ingredients in pet foods on the market.

Some industry watchdogs, however, insist pet food is nutritious, and say levels of harmful substances, such as one chemical used in antifreeze to improve taste and appearance, are too low to do any harm.

In Calgary, there are 95,000 licensed dogs, and an estimate of only slightly fewer cats.

At best, say critics, the food in question being dished out to pets may be loaded with indigestible fillers providing little or no nutrition. Even corn and grains, main fillers, may be making pets sick.

"Some of the research that I've done - and some of the veterinarians I've contacted - suggests we're causing a lot of the chronic diseases we see in our pets by feeding them these grain-based

diets," says Chapman, adding that cats and dogs are carnivores that need meat. So where's the beef? Or chicken? In some products there's precious little, if any, actual meat. What exactly are those "by-products" so often listed as main ingredients on the label?

"These by-products include decayed meat, feet, beaks, hair and all internal organs," says Chapman who comprised a list of 17 "nasty substances".

"You'll usually find one or two nasty substances in the majority of pet foods," says Chapman.

Many pet foods contain chemical preservatives - the same chemicals used in antifreeze, pesticides and insecticides, or used as rubber stabilizers.

Restaurant grease is a major ingredient in pet food. Fat gone rancid is stabilized with powerful antioxidants to stop further spoilage, then sprayed onto bland food to give it taste.

It gets worse.

Buckling to intense pressure in the US., some manufacturers promised not to toss diseased cattle carcasses, roadkill - or euthanized dogs and cats from humane societies - into the mysterious mixing pot ending up in bags and cans in vet clinics, grocery and pet stores.

Like so much in this self-regulated industry, the decision not to grind up a demised pet for your Fido or Fluffy to chew on is voluntary.

The Pet Food Association of Canada says no one keeps track of how much Canadians spend on pet food, but the accepted estimate is one-tenth - \$2 to \$3 billion US - of the overall total.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association has standards that manufacturers can opt to adhere to. Only five of a dozen manufacturers peddling goods in Canada work with the CVMA.

"We're not a government regulatory body of any sort. So when manufacturers come to us, it's completely voluntary. I have five that are current. I have two more that are in the works. I'd say there might be another five or six (that don't oblige)" says Ottawa-based Steffani MacDonald, manager of the CVMA's Pet Food Certification Program.

"With our manufacturers we have contracts and so on, so there's no roadkill, no euthanized pets from humane societies. Foods like that won't make it into our manufacturers' foods."

Samples from food produced are sent to independent labs which test them for the program. If a red flag is raised, it may be retested and a manufacturer is given up to three months to fix the problem.

The CVMA does "periodic" testing for metals - arsenic, cadmium, lead, mercury - that find their way into pet food. A preservative such as propylene glycol, a flavour-enhancer also used in antifreeze and brake fluid and linked to kidney damage makes it into some approved foods.

Despite 27 years of monitoring what goes into pet food, the CVMA has no list of banned substances. And unlike the U.S., there's no law in Canada saying all ingredients must be listed.

Still, the CVMA boasts about standards it has set.

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## The Prairie Wheaten

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“Our standards are the most rigorous in North America. Two years ago, we harmonized our standards with AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials),” says MacDonald.

AAFCO pushed for improved labelling and testing. Critics say its standards are still lacking.

“AAFCO and CVMA puts a stamp of approval on a certain number of pet foods out there. However, AAFCO allows for all kinds of things. All of those nasty substances on my list are allowed into pet food still. These products are still being certified by the CVMA,” says Chapman.

American Dr. Glenn Brown, a CVMA consultant who in the early 1970s helped draft the current Canadian standards, admits pet foods contain chemical preservatives. But he says the levels are too low to cause serious damage in pets.

The retired Massachusetts philosopher and professor of animal nutrition dismisses concerns about Ethoxyquin - a highly carcinogenic preservative, patented as an insecticide and pesticide and used as a rubber stabilizer - found in some pet foods.

“They’ve recently done a study with Ethoxyquin in the U.S. Certainly levels that are added, about 75 parts per million, are below the detectable affect level. In other words, you don’t get an effect in terms of liver and kidney damage,” says Brown in a telephone interview.

He says Ethoxyquin is patented as an insecticide, but not used as one. “It is used to preserve rubber because it’s an antioxidant.”

As for the controversial preservatives BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole) and BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene) - potentially toxic to kidneys - Brown simply says they’re found in human food, too.

“One of the problems you have if you leave out an antioxidant in a food is the lipids (fats) begin to decompose. It turns rancid. The parts of rancidity can be, not always, but can be toxic,” he says.

Brown says measures in place to protect animals are “adequate.” He dismisses concerns raised about byproducts. “Have you ever seen a cat with a mouse?” he asks, noting the cat eats claws and hair. He makes no comment when it is pointed out that the cat also gets actual meat.

“The American Institute of Baking inspects plants. We certainly inspect them. What we typically look for firstly is cleanliness. We look to make sure vermin, everything from insects to mice, are absent or there is an effective control mechanism. We will look at grain samples, ingredient samples. We’ll ask to see intake records,” he says.

“I’m personally convinced these ingredients being used are certainly of high quality and certainly the products coming out are of high quality,” says Brown.

So why so many concerns from diverse groups?

“There is an industry that makes a living out of frightening people. Have you ever noticed how often people who have concerns have products to sell? When you get to pet food companies . . . you have individuals who essentially say that what’s on the market is of low quality, contains toxic materials, but ‘I have a product which does not,’ ” he says.

Vets often receive special discounts from pet food companies for products sold from the shelves of their clinics. Chapman, an advocate of raw or homecooked pet diets, does not.

Neither does another strong critic of pet food ingredients - the California-based Animal Protection Institute (API), a nonprofit group, that has done extensive research on the issue.

“We peddle information. We’re not in bed with any of the manufacturers. We survive entirely on donations,” says spokesman David DeWitt.

The API, which has a chilling report entitled *What’s Really in Pet Food*, says the AAFCO offers false securities and lacks proper testing mechanisms. As a result, DeWitt says, there’s a big difference between what people are buying and what they think they are getting.

DeWitt insists that problems associated with pet foods “are seen every day” by vets and add up to enormous vet bills for pet owners.

There’s no way of knowing if the use of euthanized pets has stopped, he says.

“The pet food industry and AAFCO say it’s not happening now, that they’re carefully screening it but there’s no way they can really know what’s going in and what’s not ....” says DeWitt.

So why aren’t more veterinarians raising alarms? One reason may be the lack of knowledge.

“I don’t think we know enough about human nutrition, never mind what we’re feeding our pets. I think a lot of it is brainwashing, part of it is ignorance and not bothering to change our mindset on it,” says Chapman, who has seen marvellous results in many pets whose diets she has changed.

“I don’t want to blame a pet food for everything . . . I’ll run blood work and do specific tests to try and rule out different things. Often when I change their diets, a lot of their signs will go away. Not in every case,” she says.

Read labels and research the Web for information on raw and natural diets, she suggests. “There are certain stores in the city that only sell foods that are of a better quality.”

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# The Prairie Wheaten

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“I’m not an expert. I’m not sitting here on a soapbox. This is just something I’m learning about and I want other people to be aware of it. Our animals need a variety of food,” she says.

Feeding them the same dry kibble every day leads to boredom, addiction - or worse, she adds.

## Where’s the Beef?

The following is veterinarian Corinne Chapman’s list of “nasty substances” to watch out for in pet food:

**Animal fat** - Rendered fat too rancid or deemed inedible for humans. Restaurant grease has become a major component of feed-grade animal fat. It is stabilized with powerful antioxidants to retard spoilage, then sprayed onto extruded kibble to increase palatability.

**Artificial colouring** - Used in pet foods, treats and rawhide toys. Has no nutritional value. Known allergic reactions in humans to FC&C Red and Yellow No. 5 and 7 dyes.

**BHA and BHT** - Preservatives potentially toxic to kidneys.

**By-products** - An ingredient produced in the course of making a primary food ingredient, can include hair, feathers, tongues, beaks, eyeballs, feet, claws, underdeveloped eggs, intestines, blood and blood-soaked sawdust. By-products equal no measurable amount of meat.

**Corn or corn meal** - A low-cost filler with little or no nutritional value.

**Corn syrup** - Gives food dampness; a pure carbohydrate (sugar); addictive and indigestible.

**Digest** - Animal feed-grade ingredient that must be made soluble with the use of heat and moisture. Example: poultry feet, bones, any animal part that can be crushed.

**Dried egg product** - Ingredients listed as product may include egg shells.

**Dry blood meal** - A cheap source of poor quality, indigestible protein.

**Ethoxyquin** - A cheap, powerful preservative known to be highly carcinogenic. It was originally used as an insecticide and pesticide as well as a rubber stabilizer.

**Gluten** - The sticky substance in corn or wheat starches that gives the starch its tough elastic quality. Helps hold together the pulverized composite of animal feed-grade ingredients.

**Meal** - Ground or pulverized composite of animal feed-grade ingredients; essentially the same as by-product, but may include traces of meat left over after cleaning and rendering.

**MSG** - (Monosodium glutamate) a flavour enhancer designed to disguise inferior food quality. Can cause brain and eye damage and allergic reactions.

**Propyl gallate** - A chemical preservative and flavour enhancer linked to kidney damage. Also the sweet-tasting chemical found in antifreeze and brake fluid solvents.

**Sodium nitrate and nitrite** - Highly carcinogenic chemical preservatives and colour enhancers.

**Soybean meal** - Filler product of little or no nutritional value.



## Postscript to Pet Foods

by Carolyn Fox

A week after the pet food article appeared in the Calgary Herald on May 19, 2003, I found a headline on the CNN Internet site, Mad cow may have been used for dog food. In this article, American consumers were being asked to hold onto the suspected “Pet Pantry” brands for proper disposal. This pet food was made by Champion Pet Food in Morinville, Alberta then shipped to the United States. The article stated that while there is no evidence that dogs can get Mad Cow Disease or spread it to humans, they do not want this suspected food to mistakenly be mixed into cattle or other feeds. The gist of the story seemed to be that we don’t want cattle to get that pet food but it is all right for dogs.

Last May when the cow in Northern Alberta was found to have BSE, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, Canadians were quickly assured that the diseased cow did not get sent out for human consumption. It could not stand on its feet so was killed and made into pet food. There was another story that it ended up in chicken feed. Who eats those chickens? We do, of course. No law or regulation prevented that sick cow from being sent to market. Agriculture Canada does have a code of practice that says sick, injured or disabled cattle in severe distress should be euthanized or slaughtered on the farm and not transported to the slaughterhouses. The code is just a suggested practice and has no regulatory force. Let’s hope there are some rule changes as a result of the Mad Cow disaster.

The mad cow from Northern Alberta is only one story to escape from the rendering “vat” of dead, diseased and dying animals that end up in animal feed. How many stories are not heard? How about road kill - elk or deer that may have Chronic Wasting Disease or CWD, a

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## The Prairie Wheaten

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Mad Cow variant, that is becoming more prevalent in the West. Perhaps these diseases can pass to our pets and to chickens or pigs through their food. Mad Cow Disease got out of control in Britain a couple of years ago because diseased cows were being ground up and put into feed for other cows. Those other cows, and probably humans too, got the disease.

Roz Bacon related an interesting story to me about the disposal of cattle on their farm. When a cow or calf dies, they take it out to a particular spot where coyotes feed on the carcass. Within three or four days there will be no sign of that carcass. All parts, including the bones, are eaten by the coyotes. A couple of years ago one of the Bacon's cows became sick. In trying to save its life they pumped it full of antibiotics and medications. The poor diseased animal was finally put out of its misery. Greg shot it then hauled it out to the coyote feeding spot. The coyotes would not touch that carcass because it was diseased and full of medications. One month later the carcass had not even begun to decompose. A less conscientious person could have taken that same cow to the slaughterhouse where it could have ended up in pet food. Wild animals have a choice to leave diseased and drugged carcasses out of their diet. Our pets do not.

Because our dogs do not have a choice, it is very important that you read the labels on your pet food. Make sure you are buying food with human grade meat and try to stay away from the "Nasty Substances" on Corrine Chapman's list. Corrine Chapman mentions certain stores in Calgary that sell only foods of a better quality. We have been in one of those stores and found it a delight to have so many great choices. Here in Saskatchewan you may have to look a little harder but take the time to do so for the sake of your dog's health.



### Dogs Are Miracles With Paws

A dog's nose in the palm of your hand can cure almost anything.

Dogs are made of love and fur.

Let your dog take you for a walk.

Dogs are a sure thing.

Some little known dog secrets: dogs have no secrets.

Dogs are like vanilla ice cream: reliably delicious.

Dogs are wise agents directly from heaven.

If you had a tail, wouldn't you wag it?

There are no bad dogs.

Be your dog's best friend.

Dogs like dancing, drive-in movies and dreaming.

God made dogs and spelled his own name backwards.

Dogs make great therapists.

Some dogs are nap dogs.

Dogs invented unconditional love.

Dogs are party animals.

Apply dog logic to life: eat well, be loved, get petted, sleep a lot, dream of a leash free world.

# The Senior Dog

by Carolyn Fox

Aging is inevitable in all forms of life but thanks to better veterinary care and improved nutrition our canine friends are generally living longer lives. The canine life span of today has increased to an average twelve years from seven years in the 1930s. There are advantages that come with age. While puppies can be fun, energetic, and playful, there is a contentment and bond that develops between canines and humans as a dog matures. Senior dogs become more laid back. They know who they are, they have learned what it takes to get along and know how to be part of a pack. An old dog **can** learn new tricks because they are more relaxed so can focus better. Older dogs know what “no” means. Because they aren’t teething, the older dog (usually) won’t chew your favorite slippers to pieces. The older dog is less demanding thus leaving you time for yourself. Older dogs will sit and be petted for as long as you want.

The average life span of a Wheaten Terrier is 13 to 14 years. Although many owners believe their Wheatens never really mature, they do enter their senior years between 7 and 9. Because of the love for our canine companions, we want them to be with us as long as possible. By learning about preventative health care and common age-related ailments, we can help our dogs to live longer and feel better in their senior years.

Here are ten tips for keeping your older dogs healthy as listed by The Senior Dogs Project on the Internet. I have expanded upon some of them.

1. Establish a relationship with the best veterinarian you can find. This veterinarian should be someone you trust and with whom you feel comfortable. It is advised that the older dog see the vet every six months. A thorough geriatric exam along with blood, urine, and serum tests by the age of seven will provide vital clues on the health of your dog’s organs. These tests also provide an important geriatric benchmark to note any changes due to the early onset of a medical condition.
2. Become informed about the conditions common to the older dog. Learn about therapies to treat these conditions, be alert to symptoms and bring them to your vet’s attention immediately. Be prepared to discuss treatment options.
3. Feed your older dog the best food you can afford. Of course, this tip goes for all ages. An older dog may be healthier because of what you fed him throughout his life. Read the “Food” article in this newsletter. Whatever diet

you choose, the older dog may do better on two small meals daily instead of one large one. Add more water bowls around your home to prevent the risk of dehydration.

4. Don’t over feed your older dog as obesity will create health problems and shorten his life. Your food serving size may need to change as he ages. If you can’t feel your dog’s ribs he may be overweight. A high fiber low calorie dog food could help lose weight, curb constipation and improve digestion.
5. Consider the use of dietary supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin for arthritis. Check with your vet. There are a variety of supplements to help promote healthy joints.
6. Give your senior dog adequate exercise, but adjust to his changing abilities. Short but frequent walks on smooth surfaces won’t jar his joints. Regular exercise can increase oxygen delivery to the brain which helps your dog’s mental abilities. Encourage your dog to stretch. After a walk or exercise gently stretch and massage your dog’s legs to improve circulation and warm the muscles.
7. Attend to your dog’s dental health. Brush teeth daily and have them cleaned professionally as advised.
8. Tell your vet you wish to have your dog vaccinated only once every three years as currently advised by the major veterinary colleges. Never allow a dog who is ill or suffering from any age-related symptom to be vaccinated. It could make matters worse. You may not want to vaccinate a senior dog at all, especially after the age of ten. Some owners prefer not vaccinate their dogs after the age of two.
9. Be diligent in controlling fleas and ticks. Keep your dog and his environment scrupulously clean.
10. Make your senior dog as much a part of your life as possible. Do all you can to keep him interested, active, happy and comfortable. Give him lots of love and attention. Keep him mentally stimulated with “mental gymnastics” such as hide and seek games using food treats.

## The Golden Years

We all want our beloved companions to age painlessly. It is up to us to ensure they are able to enjoy their golden years. Keep your older dog as mentally and physically active as possible to keep them sharp. Watch for ways to help him

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# The Prairie Wheaten

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continue the life he has always enjoyed. Some owners go as far as to build a ramp for their stiff old dog to get up on “their” special chair or bed. You may not want to go that far but do consider a raised food table so your senior dog does not have to bend his neck to the floor to eat.

Keep in mind that no matter how well your dog tolerated children in his young years, an older dog suffering with physical limitations and possible pain, may not tolerate a child’s quick and busy movements as well as he once did. Avoid traumatic incidents by limiting a child’s accessibility to your older pet.

Most importantly, be aware of the power of love. Give your dog all the love, attention and hugs you can offer. Regular socialization and interaction helps give the older dog a positive attitude and a healthy state of mind.

## An Overview of Aging

**The Eyes** A gradual weakening of vision is normal. Cataracts may form and can be treated surgically. If the white part of the older dog’s eye becomes red-tinged, Glaucoma could be causing pressure within the eye. See your veterinarian immediately if you notice those symptoms. If the lens of the eye becomes whitish and cloudy the problem may be nuclear sclerosis. This may lead to night vision problems and a difficulty to focus on nearby objects.

**The Ears** Some dogs have an age-related hearing loss. Older dogs are also more susceptible to ear mites, bacterial or yeast infections. A dog who keeps scratching at an ear may have an irritation or inflammation within that ear. Since a dog’s sense of balance is tied in with inner ear mechanisms he may stumble or be shaky on his feet.

**Nose and Throat** If a cough persists for two or more weeks, a visit to the veterinarian is advised. Usually the cause is benign and can be cleared up with antibiotics. However, a persistent cough can be a sign of Heart Disease, Heartworm infection or Cancer. If Pneumonia occurs it should be treated immediately.

**Mouth** Years of tartar build up could lead to periodontal disease. Reddish and swollen gums can lead to weight loss as chewing becomes painful. Periodontal infections can spread to other parts of the body causing further health problems.

**Heart and Circulatory System** The heart works less efficiently as a dog ages. This can lead to congestive heart failure. The first signs of this may be as simple as a mild cough so it is important to take all coughs seriously. Older dogs can also develop anemia. A shortage of red blood cells

may restrict the flow of oxygen to the heart causing lethargy and pale gums. Medication prescribed by your vet or an iron rich diet may treat anemia.

**Liver, Kidneys and Urinary Tract** Age takes a toll on dog’s organs and body systems. The liver may become less efficient in later years causing loss of appetite, weight loss and frequent drinking and urination. Kidney function can also decline causing the older dog to urinate more frequently. Your vet can advise you on these problems after running tests on urine specimens and blood samples.

**Nervous system** The nervous system includes the brain, spinal chord and nerves. Some older dogs develop cognitive dysfunction disorder. This is similar to Alzheimer’s disease in humans and has no cure. However, medications can be prescribed by your veterinarian that aid in the quality of life and improves symptoms. Seizure disorders may also develop but again, there are drugs available for treatment.

**Digestive System** The digestive system may gradually wear down and not work as efficiently. An older dog may not be able to absorb all the nutrients in his diet causing him to be malnourished. It is therefore even more important to feed high quality food. You may wish to add a vitamin and mineral supplement to his diet. An increased thirst and appetite without an increase in weight may indicate diabetes.

**Skin, Hair and Nails** Over time, skin can thicken, become dry and less elastic. Hair may lose its luster. Dry itchy skin can cause your dog a great deal of irritation and constant scratching. Your vet can help you find a treatment.

**Bones, Joints and Muscles** A dog’s bones become thinner and more brittle as they age. They may lose muscle mass. Joints can stiffen. Ask your vet about calcium supplements to strengthen weak bones. A soft easy-access dog bed will comfort “old” bones. An achy sore body can be soothed by a doggy massage. Arthritis can cause pain and stiffness. Glucosamine and Chondroitin supplements may help. Consult your vet for drugs that can ease the pain and discomfort. For more information see the article on Arthritis in Fall 2001, Vol.7 No.3 issue of *The Prairie Wheaten*.

**Metabolism** An older dog may move less frequently and at a slower rate. Food intake should be cut back accordingly or obesity can occur. Obesity can seriously aggravate heart disease, arthritis and other health problems.

**Elimination** Increased thirst due to failing kidneys may lead to the occasional accident because your dog may not know he has to go until it is too late. Digestive problems and decreased intestinal motility can cause diarrhea and flatulence. Frequent

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# The Prairie Wheaten

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outings and a before bedtime outing may help but if problems persist your vet can prescribe medicine to help with bowel and bladder control.

## Common Age-Related Diseases

Common age-related diseases include Diabetes, Osteoarthritis, Kidney Disease, Urinary Tract Problems, Constipation, Dental Problems, and Eye Diseases such as Conjunctivitis, Dry Eye, Cataracts, Glaucoma. Some age-related diseases that may be difficult to detect are Cushing's Disease, a hormonal disorder; Canine Cognitive Dysfunction, similar to senile dementia in humans; Heart Disease; Cardiac Arrhythmia, an irregular heartbeat; and Cancer. Almost half of all deaths in dogs over the age of ten are a result of cancer. Detecting illness or disease early can make an enormous difference in the quality and length of the senior dog's life.

Here is a senior dog checklist as found in both *Pets* magazine and the book *Your Older Dog*. If your dog is over seven years of age and you check YES to one or more of the signs, you should ask your veterinarian to conduct further tests. Your dog may be experiencing minor signs of aging or actually suffering from a more serious health condition.

### YES NO

- |                          |                          |                               |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Decreased general health      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of house-training        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Increased thirst              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reduced activity              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Excessive panting             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Confusion and disorientation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Less interaction              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Inability to recognize family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Decreased hearing             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sleeping more during the day  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Altered appetite              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Weight change                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Difficulty climbing stairs    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Increased stiffness           |

Good home care is crucial to the older dog. Here is a Healthy Dog Checklist of things you can check at home once a week or once a month depending on your dog's age and condition. You may wish to keep copies of this list in a binder or keep a journal to help you remember particular symptoms and their dates. Your journal entries could help your veterinarian determine the onset of a disease or ailment.

- Appetite normal - no problems chewing or swallowing.
- Drinks normal amounts of water.

- Nose moist and free of discharge.
- Teeth clean and free of tartar build-up. No bad breath.
- Gums pink and moist with no redness or growth.
- Eyes bright, clear and free of matter.
- Ears clean with no discharge, odor or swelling.
- Breathes without difficulty or excessive panting.
- Coat shiny with no flaking or hair loss.
- Skin free from itching or areas of irritation.
- No lumps or bumps on the body.
- No abnormal swellings or sores that don't heal.
- No fleas, ticks or mites.
- Walks without stiffness, pain or difficulty.
- Urinates with usual frequency and has regular bowel movements which are normal in size and consistency.
- No slips in house training.

These changes in your older dog warrant immediate action.

- Sudden loss of weight.
- Serious loss of appetite.
- Diarrhea or vomiting lasting more than a day.
- Increase in appetite without increased weight.
- Increased thirst.
- Difficulty in getting up from a laying position.
- Coughing and excessive panting.
- Abnormal behavior.

## Dealing with a Chronic Disease

When you take a puppy into your home you have made a commitment to him for life. The bond with him has grown stronger over the years, making it more difficult to deal with your dog's aging process and a possible chronic illness. It can be intimidating to take on the responsibility of providing home nursing care night and day. Although it can be hard work, it does have its satisfactions. A sick dog responds better to a family's loving care in the comfort of its own home. Your dog will be more content and you could develop a closer bond than ever before. You will always rest easy in the knowledge that you gave your best to your beloved companion.

A convalescent room or area can be set up in your home. It should have easy access to the outdoors and be a place where your dog is warm, has a comfortable bed, access to water and nutritious food. If necessary, a pen lined with clean warm bedding can be set up as a recovery area to keep your pet quiet and restricted. Dogs are not always aware they are ill so may try to run around causing overexertion to their ailing body. A dog who won't drink enough may have to have water spooned or syringed into the side of his mouth. Heating food slightly

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# The Prairie Wheaten

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might coax an ailing dog to eat. A nutritionally enhanced drink may help the dog who refuses to eat. Maintain a journal with the amount of food and water intake, frequency of urination, quality of bowel movements, medications administered, and temperatures if necessary. This record will help both you and your veterinarian monitor your dog's progress. Spend time talking with your dog and comforting him. Let him spend time near you. The tender loving care you give your dog will help him deal with any pain or discomfort he is experiencing.

## Facing the End

Death is inevitable. Some dogs die peacefully in their sleep without any suffering. In other situations the difficult decision of euthanasia may have to be made. Although this decision is up to you, your veterinarian can help you consider the options. Quality of life should be taken into serious consideration. It may be tempting to keep our dog alive longer than we should or put him through more procedures than warranted because we cannot bear to part with him. However, helping our loved one achieve a dignified and peaceful death, freeing him from pain and suffering, may be the kindest and most loving final gift you can give your dog. Ronnie Copland of Meirleac Wheatens in Illinois puts it this way, "It's better to put your Wheaten down a week too early than a day too late."

Arrange for the disposal of your pet's body. Do not leave it to chance. A possible end in a mass grave or a rendering plant is not a pleasant thought. Cremation can be arranged through your vet. The ashes can be saved in an urn or scattered at a favorite location. Some communities have pet cemeteries where a gravestone can be engraved to memorialize your pet. Ronnie Copland advises her Wheaten owners go to their veterinarian ahead of time, when they are less emotionally distraught, to sign the permission slip for euthanasia and to make the decision on what will be done with the body - necropsy, communal cremation, individual ashes, or burial. She feels this also provides a first positive step towards ending a dog's suffering.

## Grieving

The death of a pet is a painful experience. Each of us deals with the loss differently. Allow yourself to grieve in your own way without denying your true feelings of loss, even though there may be those who don't understand and say, "Get over it. It was only a dog". Include children in the bereavement process. Allowing your child to participate in the care and comfort of the older dog may help that child deal with grief, knowing that he was an important part of his companion's last days and hours. You and your children may find comfort in creating a memory book celebrating your pet's life with drawings, stories or poems, and photographs. A source of

comfort may be found at the Pet Loss Grief Support Website: <http://www.petloss.com>. This is "a gentle and compassionate website for pet lovers who are grieving over the death of a pet or an ill pet." Here you will find personal support, thoughtful advice, healing and inspirational poetry, a list of pet loss books available for adults and children, a chance to share your grief with others, and much more. If the loss is too difficult for you or your child, your veterinarian should be able to refer you to a grief and loss counselling specialist for confidential professional counselling.

## References

[Your Older Dog](#) a book by Jean Callahan - a Complete Guide to Helping Your Dog Live a Longer and Healthier Life. Published by Simon and Schuster ISBN 0-7432-0309-7

[The Senior Dogs Project](http://www.srdogs.com) at <http://www.srdogs.com>

[American Animal Hospital Association](http://www.healthypet.com/) your link for healthy pets at <http://www.healthypet.com/>

[Animal Wellness Magazine](#) volume 4 issue 1 article: Life Begins at Ten

[PETS Magazine](#) November/December 2002 Focus on: Senior Care

[PETS Magazine](#) July/August 2003 article: Grieving for the Loss of a Pet

AND my own experience of living with and grieving for our beloved Wheatens, Benji (1975 - 1979), BJ (1979-1989), and Patty (1976-1991). Max, at age seven and a half, is just entering his senior years.



Urns to contain your pet's ashes for display or burial are available through your vet or at The Humane Society. A "ginger jar" purchased at a specialty store or made by a ceramic artist may be more to your liking. The beautiful wooden urn pictured above was crafted by Ferg Fladager of Regina. For more information contact Ferg at [flladager@hotmail.com](mailto:flladager@hotmail.com) or 1-306-789-7328.

## Walk With An Old Dog

By Gayl Jokiel

Because you will not be forever,  
Hope against time though I may,  
I paint your picture in my memory,  
Eyes blue with age, muzzle gone gray.

Because you walked with me in Springtime,  
Puppy-clumsy, running free.  
As you grew, we grew together -  
You became a part of me.

Because you shared with me my sorrows,  
Not understanding - simply there.  
Often spurring me to laughter -  
My friend, you know how much I care.

Because the years have slowed your fleetness,  
Though your spirit still is strong.  
I promise I will take more time now,  
So that you can go along.

Because you do not fear the future,  
Living only in the now,  
I draw strength from your example -  
Yet time keeps slipping by somehow.

Because the day will soon be coming  
When I will no longer see  
You rise to greet me - but in memory  
You will always walk with me.

## Senior Dog's Advice For Pups

### Old Dog has some wise rules and advice for puppies to take to heart. Listen up young pups!

An enterprising pup can find at least a bit of fun in almost every situation except those involving veterinarians.

No toys to play with? The stick is a classic: easy to play with, always fun, always available.

When given a new toy, make it your favorite for a few days. Then ignore it. A new toy will soon appear.

When you're a puppy, a shoe is the best toy. When you're a little older you'll appreciate a broader assortment.

When playing, no doesn't really mean No! unless it's said three times, and even then it might mean yes if you're persistent.

Toilet paper is fun to unroll, and good to eat.

Always greet guests by leaping on them. The only reason they have come to visit is to see you.

Ten Things That Must Always Be Barked At:

1. The mailman
2. Anyone in any sort of uniform
3. Other dogs
4. Humans in funny hats
5. The vacuum cleaner

6. Animals on television
7. The pizza guy
8. Mirrors
9. Doorbells
10. Doorbells on television

For all you male puppies out there, leg humping is lots of fun, but if you care for it too much your human might take you to the vet (I can hardly say these words) and have you "fixed". Good Grief, what do they think needs fixing!

Two fun gifts to give to your human:

1. Dead animals
2. Dirty underwear you get out of the hamper

Eleven Amusing Responses to Training Commands:

1. Sit (unless commanded to sit)
2. Stare
3. Cock head slightly while staring, as if agreeable but puzzled
4. Yawn
5. Walk away
6. Lick privates
7. Bark
8. Scratch head with rear leg
9. Lie down and go to sleep
10. Pee on nearby object
11. Run and find your ball or Frisbee, place it at your human's feet, and bark

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# The Prairie Wheaten

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## Seven Commandments of Food:

1. Any food on the floor belongs to the dog.
2. Begging is not demeaning if it gets results.
3. The worst of their food is better than the best of our food.
4. Sit near the young ones, they drop the most food.
5. Pretty much anything is good to eat, especially if it was once alive.
6. Pretty much anything is good to eat if it can be broken into swallowable pieces.
7. If it tastes good, eat it. You can always throw it up later.

Dog food is anything a dog decides to eat.

Stealing large food items off the table will get you into serious trouble, but it is probably worth it.

Grass is always fun to eat. Everyone gets excited when you do.

Always expect a treat for doing a trick. Teach your human that there are no free rides.

## Be Alert for the Following Sounds, They Often Mean Possible Food:

- Refrigerator door opening
- Kitchen cabinet door being opened
- Can opener
- Trash can being opened
- Cellophane being crinkled

While your human is explaining to you why you shouldn't be eating something, try to look as if you care. It makes them feel better.

## Ten Great Places to Sleep:

1. Her bed
2. His bed
3. Their bed
4. The kid's bed
5. On cool tile (in the summer)
6. In front of the heating grate (in the winter)
7. Anywhere you're in the way
8. On the couch or chair (if forbidden)
9. Snuggled up or against a human
10. In the dog bed

If you look cute enough, you can sleep anywhere you want.

Pups need twenty hours of sleep a day. Sleep anywhere, and often.

Always circle in place three times before settling down to sleep. No dog knows why we do this, but it's tradition, so keep it up. The Old Ways are important.

Old dogs are allowed to sleep anywhere, and as often as they like. They've earned it.

When Old Dog is sleeping, do not bother him.



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# The Prairie Wheaten

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## From a Breeder's Point of View

By Barbara Osborne, Wicklow Wheatens

In the last issue of *The Prairie Wheaten*, I stated my intention to write a series of articles about breeders and their breeding programs. I proposed to write about many aspects of a breeding program, including our responsibilities as breeders, costs of breeding, basic genetics, health, phenotypes, genotypes, choosing studs, whelping litters and challenges facing today's breeders. By writing these articles and sharing my thoughts, I hope to shed some light on some of the mysteries behind breeding programs.

Today I would like to discuss our responsibilities as breeders. In addition to breeding healthy, happy puppies with good temperaments, breeders of Soft-Coated Wheaten Terriers (SCWT) must adhere to the national club's (Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Association of Canada) Breeder's Guidelines and Code of Ethics, and breed according to the breed standard. Breed standards are recognized by the Canadian Kennel Club and are used by judges, exhibitors and breeders alike to evaluate how well the dog in question meets the breed standard. The breed standard sets out, in writing, the essence of the breed. This includes the general appearance of the dog, size, coat, color, gait, temperament and specific proportions and features of the dog's head, neck, topline and body. The better the dog conforms to the standard, the better the dog will be able to perform in the manner for which the breed had been created.

In simple terms, breeders who have a genuine interest in breeding and exhibiting dogs are trying to create, perfect and perpetuate their respective breed while honoring the purpose to which their breed was originally created. As SCWT's were originally bred to herd cattle, patrol the borders of small farms, hunt badgers and otters, and kill vermin, SCWT breeders must keep this mind

when breeding. If Wheatens only needed to run fast in order to perform their original farm duties, then a breeder would only need to concentrate on whatever it takes to create the fastest Wheaten. However, as our goal as breeders is to produce a dog that looks, acts and moves in a certain way, then we, as breeders, must produce and be able to evaluate dogs that score high in **all** elements of breed type: breed character, silhouette, head/expression, movement and coat.

To illustrate the importance of breed type, consider the following analysis of 'breed character'. Breed character is the immediate, first impression the dog gives when entering a room or show ring. It is the most obvious thing about any dog. It is really the "sum total of all those mental and physical characteristics that define not only what the breed should look like, but how it should act". For example, a Great Dane must exude strength and power, while the sad, doleful expression of the Basset Hound distinguishes it from the American Cocker Spaniel's intelligent and alert appearance. Can you imagine a Wheaten that wasn't happy, steady, energetic, alert, strong, graceful and well coordinated? If, as breeders, we can not look at a Wheaten and instantly recognize the breed by its general look, attitude and style, then we can not say the dog is truly a SCWT in spite of its pedigree and purebred registration certificate.

To continue with the analysis of breed type, the element of 'coat' is very important to the SCWT. Not only is the Wheaten coat a distinguishing characteristic of the breed, but also sets the dog apart from all other terriers as well. The Wheaten coat is an abundant coat covering the entire body, whose texture is soft and silky with a



gentle wave. Although there are many aspects of the element of coat, such as texture, quality, pattern, trim, amount and color, the SCWT standard is emphatic that the 'overall coloring must clearly be wheaten with no evidence of any other color except on the ears and muzzle where blue-gray shadings may be present'. Further, the breed standard finds major faults with woolly, harsh, crisp, straight, cottony and curly coats as these are all considered to be incorrect. When a breed standard, such as the SCWT's, places such an emphasis on coat color and texture, then we, as breeders must respect these distinguishing characteristics and breed for 'type'. Breeding away from this could be considered irresponsible and would eventually discredit the original purpose to which the breed was created.

Although I have only discussed two of the elements of breed types, all five elements are equally important. Once again, they are breed character, silhouette, head/expression, movement and coat. They represent the essence of any breed, and responsible breeders should not be breeding Wheatens, or any other purebred dog, until they fully understand and are able to recognize the degree to which a given dog succeeds in these areas.

Resource:  
*Dogs in Canada*, Vol.92 No.6, Jan 2001; *Unveiling the Mysteries of Breed Type*; Richard G Beauchamp

## Are Two Wheatens Better Than One? (One Year Later)

by Jim and Trina Fallows

A year ago, we wrote about our experiences in bringing a second Wheaten terrier into our house (see Vol. 8 No. 2 Fall 2002). The incumbent dog (Fergus) was a 4 year old male. The new dog (Molly), was a female puppy.

Despite the obvious size difference, the arrival of Molly was a very traumatic experience for Fergus. He had been a shy puppy (by Wheaten standards!), and had clearly become accustomed to having the run of the house. Our mild mannered gentleman struggled to handle the self-confident tornado that had invaded his space.

The purpose of this article is to provide an update of our progress in handling the difficulties that we presented in last year's article. In general, most of the problems have been overcome, though the process of resolution was longer and different than what we had initially expected.

To summarize last year's article, we prepared for the arrival of our second Wheaten by:

- selecting a puppy of the opposite gender than our incumbent dog;
- attempting to match the temperament of the puppy to the temperament of the incumbent dog; and
- introducing the puppy to the incumbent dog (twice!) on neutral ground prior to bringing the puppy home.

Despite these preparations, we had the following experiences in the first two months following the puppy's arrival:



- Fergus would run away whenever the puppy was loose;
- Fergus twice urinated on furniture to mark his turf;
- the dogs never played together, and generally avoided one another; and
- Molly appropriated all of the dog toys in the house for herself, regardless of whether they had originally belonged to Fergus.

Clearly, the relationship between the dogs was not going well, and it went beyond an initial unfamiliarity and uneasiness. We did a bit of research on the problem, but everything that we read advised us to not interfere in the dogs' relationship, and that they would establish their own natural pecking order.

By November 2002, the puppy had been in the house for four months, and we decided that we had to do something to change the behaviour of the dogs. We contacted Barb Lloyd from the Dogs Den Training School in Regina, and she agreed to come to our home and observe the interaction between the dogs. This proved to be the turning point!

Barb explained that you should normally allow dogs to sort out their own pecking order, however the relationship between two dogs can sometimes be dysfunctional, and it can be helpful in such cases for humans to intercede.

Specifically, she recommended that we reprimand Molly whenever she was unnecessarily bullying Fergus. Barb's theory was that Fergus would gain self-confidence in his relationship with Molly if he could see that we would support him in difficult situations.

The relationship between the two dogs began to change immediately, and Fergus soon became comfortable being in the same room as the puppy, particularly if humans were present. The attached picture captured an amusing incident from New Year's Eve 2002. Fergus had fallen asleep on a couch, and unbeknownst to him, the puppy had clambered onto the couch and had fallen asleep at his feet. There they remained for about 30 minutes until we took the photograph, which awakened Fergus. The poor guy immediately went wide-eyed with fear as he

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## The Prairie Wheaten

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realized their sleeping arrangement, and he made a beeline for his crate.

The dogs have continued to progress, and each month they seem to grow a little closer. Fergus has come to realize that Molly is “all talk and no action”, so that he has little to fear from her barking and running. Molly no longer views Fergus as a threat to her position in the household. She rarely tries to steal his food (except for special treats), as she knows that there is always enough to go around. They follow one another out to their dog run, so they appear to get some enjoyment from being around one another.

Other parts of their relationship never came together. Molly will not allow Fergus to chew a bone or play with a toy in her presence. Fergus will sometimes try to pick up a stray toy or bone (there are usually a dozen or so strewn around the house at any given time), however Molly will immediately demand that Fergus give it to her, and he always does. As a result, Fergus receives his own playtime every day (e.g., when Molly has gone out to the dog run alone) so that he can continue to enjoy chewing bones or playing with toys.

The key lesson that we learned from our experience is that bringing a second Wheaten into your home is at least as much work as the first one. All the normal “joys” of toilet training a puppy still apply, and you must pay attention to the relationship between the puppy and your other dog. The two dogs will bond to at least some extent, but it may take a significant amount of time (6 months or more), and it may take some intervention on your behalf to make it happen!



Molly and Fergus

### Wags and Brags

**From Margaret Stewardson:**

Sept 29- Prissy ( Ch Myshawns Last Affair) gave birth to 7 puppies weighing in at 6 3/4oz- 8oz. The happy father is Kicker ( Myshawns California Dream). This litter will be called something with moving, motion, traveling because half of the litter was born on the way to the Vet's! What a surprise to me!!!!

2. Champion Medwinns She's Got Wil' Power won the Veterans Class in Ottawa over many Am/Can Champions. Bea also made the final cut for the Breed at the National Specialty. Not bad for an 11 year old!

3. I would personally like to thank Barb and Mike for all their help at the National Specialty. They took the dogs and myself here there and everywhere! You are right Mike!! What in the world would I have done without you?? Thanks again!

**From Barb Osborne and Mike Dumelie:**

Ch. Wicklow's New Edition "Sophie" completed her championship going "Best of Winners" at the SCWTAC National Specialty weekend. Her win over more than 20 dogs resulted in 5 points, more than enough to complete her championship.

## The Rare Long Tailed Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier

By Bob Hamilton

A few years back I wrote a short article on the evils of tail docking complete with graphic photo's (see Vol. 7 No.1 Spring 2001). It's easy to spout off on what other people should do with their dogs, isn't it? This summer I had a chance to put my money where my mouth was. One of our former pups had a litter and under our breeding agreement, we were entitled to a pick of the litter. We knew we wanted a female and there was only one in the litter. Although Aaron was reluctant, this was to be my dog so I asked the owner not to dock her tail.

When we went to Calgary to pick up our new pup, we found Tori playing with her brothers. As she dashed by, one brother or another was always handy to pull her up short with a quick chomp on the tail. Just a few inches of skin, fur and extra bone but it really did seem to make a difference in puppy play. We felt sorry for Tori who seemed to get the worst of it. Of course in most parts of Europe, Tori's brothers would have also all had long tails and the playing field would be a bit more even.

That's not to say everyone in Europe agrees. The Council on Docked Breeds has a web petition up at the moment to try and bring back tail docking where it is banned and preserve it where it is in danger. Passions certainly run high on the topic. Some people are incensed to fury by the sight of an undocked tail. Others are equally fervent that tail docking is on par with killing baby seals. Fanatics on either side of the issue give me a headache.



Tail docking doesn't traumatize your dog for life. I don't think it constitutes animal cruelty. It is clearly painful for the pup but the dewclaws have to come off anyway so what's one more snip? Well it's just that – one unnecessary procedure for your animal to endure and one unnecessary expense for you to pay.

What is it like living with an undocked Wheaten on a day to day basis? There have been more than a few times that Tori's Tail has come in handy. One time Tori was playing on the front lawn and made a quick break for the street. Only a last minute dive and a handful of tail kept her from danger. And of course there's the time her tail knocked over a glass of milk. But mostly we just don't notice her tail at all.

What about all the arguments put forth by the Council on Docked Breeds? Isn't her tail supposed to become fouled with feces and spread germs all around the house killing us all? Surely the tail will become snagged in brush and be flayed to the bone. Aren't undocked tails a sign that the apocalypse is upon us?

Fortunately the Wheaten tail curls up and over the back so there is little chance it could ever become fouled. As for

getting snagged in the brush... well Tori does love to run in the bush and she has been covered in burrs. But no more on her tail than on her nose.

No, there are no health concerns here. Tail docking is utterly unnecessary cosmetic surgery for your pet. Good thing they don't make breast implants in six packs or I'm sure someone would want to use them on a dog.

So why do people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century dock tails? Some would argue that we dock because of tradition. A Wheaten should look a "certain way". Certainly the members of the Council on Docked Breeds are very strong and well-meaning traditionalists. Still, I can't help but wonder if some of the reason we dock isn't at least partly financial.

We know a true champion in the show ring can mean much higher stud fees or higher rates for pups. Over a dog's lifetime this can add up to a fair bit of money. The Canadian Breed Standard states that the tail "is docked so that two-thirds of it's original length remains". The American Breed Standard states "Tail is docked and well set on, carried gaily but never over the back". An undocked tail would be considered a

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## The Prairie Wheaten

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fault. Not a disqualification but certainly one strike against your dog.

I called the CKC but in Canada undocked Wheatens are very rare and nobody had any information. In fact, the representative of the CKC told me that I couldn't show an undocked Wheaten since it didn't conform to the breed standard. Of course this is not accurate but it does show how deeply the misinformation about docking runs.

I called the AKC where undocked Wheatens have been shown recently. The representative I spoke with told me that while he was not familiar with the Wheaten he was a breeder of the Cocker Spaniel and had shown Boxers. He told me that undocked Cocker Spaniels and uncropped Boxers can be shown but rarely win and an undocked Wheaten would likely face the same problem. He said it would be "very difficult" for an undocked Wheaten to win in the show ring.

It does seem a bit unfair to fault a dog for sporting the tail God gave her. As the owner of an undocked Wheaten it would be discouraging to enter my pup in the show ring only to have her beaten out by a cosmetically altered dog. I suppose this is something the parents of the Miss Teen Canada pageant contestants come up against too.

Attitudes towards docking are slow to change but they ARE changing. There is hope on the not too distant horizon. I spoke with Alan Fox of the Saskatchewan Wheaten club and one of the people most directly responsible for originally having the breed recognized in Canada. Although he is not directly involved in the process, Alan tells me that the Canadian breed standard is in the process of revision.

In recognition of the fact that tail docking is illegal in some countries, the proposed revised standard states "the tail

is usually docked so that 2/3rds of the original length remains, but an undocked tail is allowed". The revised standard has been voted on and approved by the national Wheaten club but not yet adopted by the Canadian Kennel Club. No word on any revision to the AKC standard. My guess is it may still be many years before we see an undocked Wheaten take best of show but at least this is a very good first step.

Perhaps my little girl will never win the big ribbons in the show ring and her big floppy tail does knock over a glass of milk now and again. Yes it looks like a rat's tail when it gets wet and it is one more thing to brush. Still, I wouldn't dream of chopping it off. I love my rare Long Tailed Soft Coated Wheaten – floppy tail and all.



Congratulations to Margaret Stewardson's eleven year old "Bea", Champion Medwinns She's Got Wil' Power, on winning the Veterans Class at The National Specialty in Ottawa, Ontario on September 7, 2003 . Bea was also in the final cut for Best In Breed. Bea was bred by Gail McNeil and Aldene Carter and was handled by agent Lori Campbell.



# Regina Agility Event - July 19th and 20th



Danny Maclennan and Darby, from Prince Albert, take a break.



Alan Fox with Judy and Danny Maclennan at ringside.



Darby about to jump the hurdle.



Darby heads up the see-saw.



Racing out of the tunnel.



Through the tire.

A job well done, Danny and Darby!

## AGILITY SHOULD BE FUN

by Danny MacLennan

It is a beautiful summer day in Regina, just perfect for an agility trial. I am walking across the agility field, taking in the familiar sights and sounds. Everyone seems to be enjoying themselves, smiles everywhere, people talking, joking, encouraging or harassing each other. There is the sound of dogs barking and yipping, excited to be competing or just seeing another canine friend.

I hear them coming long before I see them. It is the Foxes—no it is not Max I hear but MacDuff (a Basset Hound). His loud baying bark is not like any other dog sound at a trial and attracts a lot of attention. Their coming to the trial leads me to discover a couple of new lessons. First, everyone loves MacDuff, secondly, no one gets away with writing only one article for “The Prairie Wheaten.”

Perhaps I should go back to the start of the story about our second agility trial in Regina. The last article (Vol. 8 No.2 Fall 2002) was about the technical side of agility. This one hopefully will show the fun side of doing an agility trial.

As my wise friend Darren Plummer would say “you go to a trial all weekend and run your dog for eight sixty second runs—if you’re not enjoying the comradery and company of the other competitors and their dogs, you are in for a boring weekend.”

It is Friday a.m. and I am packing the car so we can get an early start when Judy gets off work. The phone rings and I see it is Judy calling, likely wants me to pack something she forgot to mention. She tells me that we are able to leave at noon. It would appear that she had booked a day off, forgot and went to work only to find folks giving her a strange look. I find this very amusing but will hold my comments until she gets home and I can see if she is as amused as I am.

We arrive in good time and are setting up the tent. As we are the only folks from the Prince Albert Kennel Club we set up beside some competitors from Swift Current that we met at our last trial. We are joined by some Regina competitors and everyone is busy setting up.

Due to some grass replacement at the field, space is tight and everyone is careful to take as little space as possible. People are sharing tools and lending equipment to those who forgot to pack an item or two.

Some competitors arrive together; they have shared the costs of having to travel hundreds of kilometers. Many of them have been doing it for years and are the best of friends. The one thing everyone here has in common is the shared enjoyment of competing at agility.

We let Darby out of his kennel for a little stretch and I notice he has attracted someone’s attention. She is half way across the field before I recognize it is Margaret Stewardson. Margaret is here as a volunteer member of the Regina Kennel Club, it is her first agility trial so we have lots to talk about. We make sure that she will join us the next couple of days when she is not working. It’s always nice to get more people interested in the sport. We secure everything for the evening and go to where we are staying.

I am part of the ring crew that sets up the course for the judge so we arrive early on Saturday. I notice lots of volunteers from R.K.C. they are setting up the food booth, raffle tables and an information table. The volunteers are an integral part of any trial and no trial would succeed without them.

During the weekend I get a chance to meet a few of them and discover they represent many facets of dog training. I was aware of the more common training areas, confirmation, obedience and fly ball. Some of the areas also represented were herding, tracking, retrieving and lure coursing all of which sounded like a lot of fun for dog and owner.

As the competition begins it is fun to watch the dogs and their handlers. There are a few competitors and their dogs that are not having fun, but most are. Looking at it from a dog’s point of view it must be great. You get to run around off leash, take all those fun obstacles, make your owner very happy and when it’s all done they give you treats and hugs.

When the Foxes stop in I am surprised at all the attention that MacDuff attracts. It is hard to explain but it seems every one that comes by has to stop and pet him. I tell Alan it must be that not many Basset Hounds show up at agility trials. He tells me that it happens every where they go, “it is like watching the T.V. show ‘Every One Loves Raymond’, only the star is MacDuff.” Although MacDuff likes all the attention what he is most interested in is the food.

It is great to have people drop in to chat. Margaret has returned to watch the trial and is impressed with the dogs. She is having fun watching Darby do his thing. Darby is not having a particularly good time; he is hot and tired and would rather stay and visit our guests than compete. The trial is down to the last event of the day when I notice that Darby has perked up and is actually paying attention to me. It is the start of the team relay and we are pired with a Golden Retriever named Hunter, both dogs need one more qualifying run to move up to masters level. We do it, place first and qualify, what a great way to end the day.

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## The Prairie Wheaten

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The weather is a lot better on Sunday, not as hot and the wind has slowed to a tolerable level. Darby would still rather be visiting than running but has some very good runs and gets two firsts and a third.

The highlight of the trial and the reminder of why we compete is during our third place finish in the masters jumpers event. The course is long, complicated and very tight for time. As I am walking the course I notice Margaret sitting near the finish and remind myself to say good-bye and thank her for the company. Darby is one of only four dogs that complete the course in the time allowed but catches a pole with his paw on the second last jump so we don't qualify. As we walk over to Margaret, she smiles and says, "If I had known about this when my dogs and I were younger, I would have sure taken up this sport. It looks like so much fun." That puts a smile on my face as I reply, "that it is, Margaret, that it is" and I leave thinking what a great weekend it has been.



Everybody loves MacDuff



## Wheaten Boutique Let's Go "Online" Shopping for Wheaten Wares

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PRINTS FRIDGE MAGNETS RUBBER STAMPS GROOMING VIDEOS LUGGAGE TAGS  
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### Deer Island Creations

<http://deerislandcreations.com/PAGE2.HTM>

### McCartneys Dogs

<http://mccartneysdogs.com/>

### The Inky Paw

<http://www.inkypaw.com>

### Dog Art Online Gallery

<http://www.petart.net/DogArtwheatenterrier.html>

### Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of Southern California Merchandise

<http://www.wheaten.org/merchandise.htm>

### Originals by Springer

<http://www.dogsculpture.com/scw.html>

### Maryland Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club

<http://www.mscwta.org/store.htm>

### Crane Fine Papers

<http://www.crane.com/prdSell.asp?ProdGroupID=18546&DeptID=&CatID>

### Canine Cravats

<http://www.caninecravats.com>

### Furrytale Ceramic Studio

<http://home.ptd.net/~picasso/>

### Motor City Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club Boutique

<http://www.motorcitywheatens.org/Boutique.htm>

### Animal Krackers K9 Gifts

<http://www.k9gifts.com/index.html>

and one a little bit closer to home:

### TTL Computer Concepts

<http://www.ttlcomp.net/WFPrinting/Coffee.asp>

## Wheaten Meeting - April 29th



Welcoming Committee

A Wheaten meeting was held at Mike Dumelie and Barb Osborne's home on April 29, 2003 to choose a new executive for the Assiniboine Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Association. You can see the slate of new officers listed on the front cover of this newsletter. The welcoming committee did a particularly good job of "greeting", the lunch committee provided tasty desserts, but that ad hoc committee only seemed interested in how much "under the table" graft they could get.



"Vote for my proposal, or else!"



The ad hoc committee enjoys a little behind the scenes "graft"



"I'm so happy you're the new president, Barb."



Lunch Committee

## President's Report

by Barb Osborne



Ahhh, the sights, sounds and smells of autumn are in the air. The days are getting shorter, the nights are getting longer and it is getting colder, both day and night. Farmers are burning off the remains of their fields, leaving a lingering, familiar scent in the air at night. The squirrels are busy finding and storing food for the winter and the birds are flying south. Big orange pumpkins can be seen everywhere and soon, little ghosts and goblins will be finding their way to our house for Halloween treats. The leaves are changing color from green to brilliant shades of yellow, orange and red, and are crunching under my feet as I clean up from the dogs during my daily routine in the yard. Yep, even though the seasons change and bring new surprises, some things never change; I still have to clean up after my dogs. It's just that much harder in the fall because we have so many leaves in the yard, ensuring that the dogs' 'surprises' are always a little bit harder to find!

Speaking of change, maybe it is time for some changes in our local section club, the Assiniboine Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Association. In the past few years, our club has hosted many walks around Wascana Lake in Regina, and has added a walk in Saskatoon as well. Assuming the high levels of participation will continue with these walks, the club will continue to plan this event. But how about something new?

There was a time when various club members hosted one or two pot luck dinners each year, usually around St Patrick's Day and Christmas. These dinners were always a lot of fun and well attended. Even if there were no club events to discuss or National Specialty to organize, that was okay as we could always talk about our Wheatens. Imagine, a room full of Wheaten enthusiasts who are willing to listen to all your Wheaten stories! And good food too. What more could you want?

In the past, our local club has also planned and organized several picnics in Wascana Park, where games and events were planned for children, adults and Wheatens. Have you ever seen Wheatens in a three-legged race, or play baseball? These too, were a lot of fun but interest waned over the years. Is it time to revisit this event? Our club has baked dog cookies and sold 'Wheaten' pins, both as fundraisers, and hosted a grooming seminar for all interested Wheaten owners. This was a hands on event, with demonstrations of pet cuts, show trims, nail cutting, ear cleaning, teeth cleaning and basic grooming tools and techniques. This event was very well attended and the feedback was very positive. Is there enough interest to host this again?

On a much larger scale that involved the commitment of many club members, our local club has hosted the National Specialty twice. This event was held on behalf of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Association of Canada. This was an entire weekend event, that not only included the dog show itself, but also bar-b-ques, lunches, banquets, seminars, prizes, transportation, host hotel, fundraising, judges, parades, boutique, speakers, etc. The various committees worked for an entire year to pull off this grand event, both of which were very successful. On a similar scale, several years ago the club hosted the Western Canadian Wheaten Convention, where we flew in top Wheaten breeders from California. These breeders, as well as local veterinarians, filled our heads with information about breeding, showing, health, anatomy, movement, puppy evaluation and so much more. Again, this was an extremely successful event that even attracted visitors from other provinces. We really have to thank local club members who have committed so much time and energy to these endeavours to ensure a successful outcome.

Now, I am not suggesting that our club host another National Specialty any time soon nor am I suggesting that we plan another convention. (Before I would even consider hosting a large scale event again I would talk with the local executive first to ensure we had the proper support in place.) Rather, I raised these events to show you, our local club members, that this club is capable and committed to providing a variety of events, big and small, to all Wheaten enthusiasts. Therefore, what we need from you is your ideas. What would you like to see? Should we have another grooming seminar? Should we plan a health seminar so more of you could understand the health issues affecting our breed? Is anyone interested in fund raising so the club could send the proceeds to Wheaten health research? Should we start with a Christmas potluck to get together to throw some ideas around? If so, Mike and I would be glad to host it at our house.

By writing this report, I hope I have generated some interest in either renewing old, tried and true events or introducing some new club events. As I said above, I would love to hear your ideas. You can give me a call at 584-7673 any time. I will also find out if there is enough interest for a Christmas potluck, and if so, you will hear from me or another member in the club.

For now, Happy Halloween!

## First Aid Class - April 16th



Barb Osborne, Roz Bacon, Heather McCrum and Carolyn Fox attended the informative first aid class at the Albert North Veterinary Clinic (as advertised in the last issue). Here they are watching a demonstration of correct bandaging techniques.



Congratulations to Roz Bacon's one year old "Higgins", Champion Wheatendales Henri Higgins, on obtaining his championship on his very first weekend out. He won two Group 2nds and a Group 4th at the Moose Jaw Show, May 24, 25 and 26, 2003. Higgins was bred by Roz Bacon and owner handled.

# On the Show Scene



Roz Bacon's Higgins and Kalee ready for the Moose Jaw Show in May.



Higgins waiting his turn in the ring.



Roz Bacon accepts, on Kalee's behalf, the award for "Softest Dog in Show" presented by Danielle Campbell of the Grade 6 class from Westmount School, Moose Jaw.



Barb Osborne and Sophie prepare for the Regina Show in June



Sophie in the ring at the Regina Show.



## In Memoriam

Our thoughts and sympathies go out to the following:

Marg and Dave Safnuk on the loss of K.C. on June 11, 2003 at age 15½. In 1999 K.C. was spotlighted in our newsletter. At least six times a week, summer and winter, K.C. was taken on three and a half to six kilometer walks. By age 12 it was estimated K.C. had walked over 15,000 km. On June 1, 2003, just ten days before her death K.C. was at our Wheaten Walk ..... still walking. What a girl!!

Halley, Chuck and Donnalee Duncan on the loss of Emy Lou, Ch. Myshawns Waggish Emerald CDTT, who died of cancer on July 8, 2003 at age 11.

Barb Osborne and Mike Dumelie on the loss of Chinzia, Ch. Holweit's Purrdy Woman, who died of cancer on August 2, 2003 at age 10.

Sharon, Gillian and James Klopoushak (and SCWT "Daisy") on the loss of Abbey - Lady Abigail of Dilanderry - April 8, 1991 to August 11, 2003.



## REMEMBERING EMY

—We Miss You—

Emy-Lou, my sweet, sweet girl  
You sure sent my heart in a whirl  
Our time spent with you enriched our lives  
Special memories of you live on - survive

Brushed by the hand of God  
Is the painted sky above  
I see you running in the clouds  
With family and friends you love

Your nose prints pressed on our windows  
Your paw prints etched in our hearts  
The little things belonging to you  
With those we'll never part

Sometimes I smell you on the breeze  
I can see your almond eyes  
I sense you're sitting next to me  
Or lying by my side

I remember putting lipstick on  
Then sharing a bit with you  
We thought we were a pretty pair  
You, me and you

You wagged your tail right to the end  
We stayed with you, my dog, my friend  
I trusted you as you trusted me  
No more secrets between me and thee

I trust someday we'll meet again  
I can see that Emy-smile  
We'll walk in the park that never ends  
Mile after mile after mile



"He is your friend, your partner, your defender, your dog. You are his life, his love, his leader. He will be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart. You owe it to him to be worthy of such devotion"

— Unknown

"Heaven goes by favour. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in."

— Mark Twain





### *Ch. Holweit's Purrdy Woman "Chinzia"*

**January 11, 1993 – August 2, 2003**

It is with great sadness that Mike Dumelie and Barb Osborne announce the passing of our girl Chinzia. Chinzia battled cancer for nine brave months but finally passed on August 2.

While we still have our other four girls, our house feels very empty. Chinzia was our boss dog and a constant companion. Her natural compassion for all creatures large and small and her concern for her human companions can not be replaced. She was the type who was always there when you were down, bolted to your side in unwavering support. While she was a true terrier, she was the type to try to help a baby bird in distress or fret over a crying baby. She will be forever missed.

While her final days were difficult, she never suffered. She had great spirit to the end and truly did not want to leave when the time came. While she did not want to make the final trip to the vet, as she passed into sleep she gave Mike a few final licks as if to say that it was okay. She was always thinking of us. It was heart-breaking.

We must thank Dr. Melissa Jackson our vet and our friend for her constant support and attention through this terrible illness. We must also thank Dr. Jim Randall and all of the compassionate people at the Airport Animal clinic for all they did.

Good bye my love and my friend. Sleep in peace. You will not be forgotten. Until we meet again, we know you will be looking out for us and the breed we love.

Mike and Barb

## Wheaten Walks



Spring Walk - June 1st  
35 people, 20 Wheatens, 5 others



Autumn Walk - September 14th  
29 people, 23 Wheatens, 4 others

# Walking With Wheatens



## If Dogs Sent Letters To God

from the Internet

Dear God,  
Could you explain again why dogs are not allowed on a Greyhound bus?

Dear God,  
When my family sits down to dinner, they always bless their food. But they never bless my dinner for some reason. I have the feeling I'm missing something here. So, I've been wagging my tail extra fast when they pour out my food, as my own blessing. Have you noticed?

Dear God,  
Is it true that dogs are not permitted in restaurants because they can't make up their minds what not to order? Or is it the carpets again?

Dear God,  
When I go to Heaven, will I be allowed to stick my head over the side of my cloud?

Dear God,  
Is it true that dogs don't have to go to confession because priests don't have the patience to listen to all of our sins?

Dear God,  
Please pass this message along to my so-called master: Why are you trying to teach me to roll over and play dead? Do you find that funny? Funny how?

Dear God,  
Should I tell my human that I ate her wedding ring? Or would that be in incredibly bad taste?

Dear God,  
Hell: A million vacuum cleaners run by great big cats. Am I close?

Dear God,  
Do you have any pets? Or are we all your pets?

Dear God,  
Is thunder absolutely necessary?

Dear God,  
Must I bark, or can you hear my thoughts?

Dear God,  
Is it true that in Heaven, dining room tables have on-ramps?

Dear God,  
When I get to Heaven, can I play Frisbee with my halo?

Dear God,  
Where does kibble come from? And what are bits? Bits of what?

Dear God,  
We Wheatens like clean beards and faces. Could you please make it snow year round?



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## The Prairie Wheaten

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“Bring on Winter!” say Wheatens everywhere.



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# The Prairie Wheaten

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## Change of address

Please let us know if you change your address or e-mail. Remember that the newsletter is available via e-mail. It saves the club the expenses of postage, paper and envelopes and you get the newsletter in colour. Let Alan Fox at [acfox2002@yahoo.com](mailto:acfox2002@yahoo.com) know if you'd like to be added to the newsletter e-mail list. Back issues can be viewed and downloaded at:

<http://wheatenguy.tripod.com/prairie.html>

If you do not have a computer, donations to the club to cover the cost of mailing your newsletters would be appreciated. Donations can be sent to our treasurer Sue Luchuck, address listed on front cover.

## Contributors

A big THANK YOU to all contributors to this newsletter issue. You helped make this newsletter more interesting and informative. All articles, photos, and ideas for future issues are gratefully accepted by Carolyn Fox at the address listed to the right. Send us news of your Wheatens' achievements or their amusing antics. Please inform us of a death for our In Memoriam.

## Scientists Study Dog Genome

It was announced on September 26, 2003 that scientists have completed a first rough draft sequence of the genes of a dog. The study shows that dogs have 2.4 billion base pairs of DNA, roughly a half-billion less than humans. In a dog's DNA there are possibly 30,000 genes that canine cells use as templates to make proteins. These sophisticated molecules build and maintain the animal's body. It is probably no surprise to us that substantial numbers of canine genes are employed by the olfactory system - a dog's sense of smell. One realization discovered by the scientists is that 75% of the genes found in humans are also found in dogs. It appears that we have more in common with our canine friends than we thought. Sources: BBC News; Associated Press.



Overheard at the end of the Spring Wheaten Walk:  
"Roz, do we have to go home already?"

## \*\*\*\*\* DEADLINES \*\*\*\*\*

**Deadline for submissions for the next issue is April 1**

Please make your submissions to:

Carolyn or Alan Fox

74 Cooper Crescent

Regina, SK S4R 4J7

or email at [cfox@sasktel.net](mailto:cfox@sasktel.net)

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