



# GREENHAVEN Animal Clinic

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Over the last two months, we have been discussing hip dysplasia and arthritis of the hips. We have discussed the treatments and the differences between dysplasia and arthritis.

In this month's article we will cover some of the prevention strategies for both of these conditions. As we have all heard, prevention is the best policy, and this holds true for hip dysplasia and arthritis also. The first place to start is with genetics, and doing our homework before we ever pick out our new dog. Most breeders should be able to provide information about the history of both the dam and the sire. Hopefully, they should be able to provide breed records as well from both sides. As long as both pedigrees are relatively free and clear of any known issues, this should provide us with quite a bit of confidence. The chances of having issues, primarily with dysplasia should be greatly reduced, but not completely eliminated. Part of the information that should be provided would be both parents' OFA certification. This certification is done off of radiographs when the dog is approximately two years old. These radiographs are then evaluated by independent radiologists to give an estimate of the quality of the dog's hips. Research has been shown that these evaluations help reduce the incidence of dysplasia in puppies with parents that have good results. An even better test is the Penn Hip certification. The next area to focus on is with nutrition. This area has gained quite a bit of attention over the last several years. The research shows us that proper nutrition can do wonders in preventing problems from ever happening. As we know most all of our hunting dogs are larger breed dogs. The research shows that if we use the large breed puppy diets, we will greatly reduce the incidence of arthritis and other growth problems, such as OCD. These specialized diets lower the protein level, but increase the protein quality so that we get good muscle growth but don't have excessive protein that gets converted to energy and then fat in the dog. Or the protein needs to be processed by the dog to excrete it. These diets also have a lower energy (carbohydrate) level to avoid unnecessary weight gain. They also have a lower calcium percentage.



Extra calcium above active all year long and not just during the hunting season. Activity burns calories and helps to prevent weight gain, but it also keeps the dog in good physical shape. Just by keeping the dog in good shape helps to maintain muscle strength and mass. This goes a long ways in helping to maintain healthy joints. Sec-

ondly, we need to feed a diet that is relatively restricted in calories to help prevent packing on the pounds. This is especially true if your dog has been spayed or neutered. Not only do we need to pick a good diet, we need to portion control how much is being fed. The best way to do this is by feeding meals. Often times, we see owners putting out food free choice. If given to the dog, it will be eaten. This of course leads to weight gain. Measure out with a measuring cup at each meal how much the dog should be getting. Once it is gone, then that is all they get to eat.

As you can see, there are several things that can be done to try and prevent problems before they ever start. As mentioned in previous articles, there are things that can be done once problems come up, but again prevention is the best medicine. Extra calcium above what the puppy needs has been shown to cause some issues with the bones. Even with these diets, we want to make sure that the puppy does not become overweight. Preventing the puppy from getting fat is far better than trying to get that additional weight off later on.

The next area of focus is after the puppy stage. By far and away, the absolutely most critical thing to do is avoid weight gain. There is very good data out there that shows that if we maintain an ideal weight and growth pattern while a puppy and keep them in their ideal body condition that we can prolong their life span and have a higher quality life. In fact, one study showed dogs that were fed this way from birth on lived two years longer than their littermates and had fewer medical and orthopedic problems. As I stated in the first article, one of the things we see all too often is a dog that is overweight having some sort of ortho-



pedic problem. If this weight gain had been prevented in the beginning, we may not have had an orthopedic issue. We can prevent this weight by focusing on two areas nutrition and exercise.

We need to keep these dogs active all year long and not just during the hunting season. Activity burns calories and helps to prevent weight gain, but it also keeps the dog in good physical shape. Just by keeping the dog in good shape helps to maintain muscle strength and mass. This goes a long ways in helping to maintain healthy joints. Secondly, we need to feed a diet that is relatively restricted in calories to help prevent packing on the pounds. This is especially true if your dog has been spayed or neutered. Not only do we need to pick a good diet, we need to portion control how much is being fed. The best way to do this is by feeding meals. Often times, we see owners putting out food free choice. If given to the dog, it will be eaten. This of course leads to weight gain. Measure out with a measuring cup at each meal how much the dog should be getting. Once it is gone, then that is all they get to eat. As you can see, there are several things that can be done to try and prevent problems before they ever start. As mentioned in previous articles, there are things that can be done once problems come up, but again prevention is the best medicine.

Dr. Bill



### North Carolina QUWF State Chairman, Don Stroud & QUWF Member, Zack Smith WINS 1ST PLACE FOR FLUSHING DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS AT NATIONAL UPLAND CLASSIC FINALS On March 10th, 2012



Pictured from the left: Hal Brown Zack Smith and Don Stroud

Congratulations to all!

On Wednesday March the 7<sup>th</sup> four members of Yadkin Valley QUWF Chapter 110 competed in the "Nationals" field trial for the National Upland Classic Series. This is a three day event where the handler and his dog experienced quail, chukar and pheasant in their quest for the title. Don Stroud competed in the flushing division while John Faust, Donald Nifong and Tom Farrington competed in the pointing division.

John Faust had won our chapters Dog Of The Year title for pointing dogs and Don Stroud won Dog Of The Year in the flushing division after our three fun trials held this season.

We hope you will join us in wishing our guys the best of luck in these events that will conclude on March the 9<sup>th</sup>.