

# **Labrador Owners Club Code of Ethics**

**Approved by Membership 2023**

## **Preamble**

The Code of Ethics is established and agreed to by the membership to maintain the good name and reputation of the Labrador Owners Club and its members. This can only be accomplished by every member taking personal responsibility for abiding by it. Members will bear in mind that the Code of Ethics is a set of recommendations which includes a commitment to a high standard of practice in owning, breeding and maintaining the Labrador retriever's original purpose as a hunting retriever. This encompasses all characteristics of the breed as outlined in the CKC Breed Standard, including but not limited to intelligence, hunting ability, temperament and conformation.

The Code of Ethics should, above all, reinforce our dedication to the Labrador retriever and ensure that our practices result in a positive public perception of the Labrador Owners Club, its members and our breed. It applies to all LOC members whether breeders, performance or show enthusiasts or pet owners.

The Code of Ethics is part of the Club's Policy & Procedures document, allowing for revision as required to ensure its relevance to current circumstances in the breed.

## **Section 1 –Testing Breeding Stock: Ensuring the continuation of our best genetics.**

The LOC encourages their members to make informed decisions on breeding stock. Breeders should use the current available genetic tests, clearances and other tools in addition to ensuring our breeding stock has the characteristics and qualities that distinguish our breed. Breeders are encouraged to have open dialogue surrounding genetics and health issues pertaining to their breeding program and the breed as a whole, with their peers and their puppy clients.

### **Recommendations for breeding stock are as follows:**

1. Hip and Elbow clearances at an age recommended by a Board-Certified Radiologist (OFA, Penn Hip) prior to breeding. It is recommended to re-radiograph hips and elbows at a later age to get a truer picture.
2. Current eye clearances (within the last 24 months) by a Board-Certified Veterinary Ophthalmologist certified normal or breeder option
3. Cardiac Evaluation (Advanced Cardiac Exam) - recommend advanced cardiac including an echo.
4. Exercise Induced Collapse (EIC)
5. Locus (Dilute) DNA Test - DNA based D LOCUS
6. prcd-PRA DNA Test -DNA based prcd-PRA test.
7. Centronuclear Myopathy (CNM) DNA test
8. Degenerative Myelopathy (DM) DNA test
9. Hereditary Nasal Parakeratosis (HPNK) DNA test

DNA testing should be carried out by qualified, accredited laboratories.

Breeding stock that is being used or serviced by LOC members should meet the standards outlined in 1 through 9 above.

Other Considerations/Issues that may have a genetic component are, including but not limited to:

epilepsy, hypothyroidism, skin disorders, allergies and orthopedic disorders such as osteochondritis dissecans (OCD).

Breeders are strongly encouraged to omit affected cases in their breeding choices while recognizing that: no dog is genetically perfect; maintaining a rich and diverse gene pool is important for the long-term health of the breed; and good breeding decisions must balance many factors. It is suggested that breeders give the highest health priority to selection against heritable disorders that significantly decrease quality of life and that have the greatest likelihood for improvement through careful breeding decisions.

More tests will be available concerning Labradors as science progresses. The LOC anticipates releasing advisory statements as they become available.

The decision to include a genetic test or not in your screening program should include considerations such as: the seriousness of the disease, the reliability of the test, the prevalence of the disease in the breed, and the presence of affected or carrier dogs in the vertical and horizontal pedigree.

The ideal use of DNA tests is to prevent or produce affected puppies, while at the same time maintaining genetic diversity and gradually decreasing the prevalence of the disease gene(s) in the breed.

Breeders are also encouraged to engage in continuing education and be aware of new tests and new diseases as they become available.

Breeding bitches and dogs should not be bred before 24 months of age. All dogs and bitches owned should receive routine health checks by a veterinarian.

## **Section 2: Care and Welfare of the dogs we breed & produce.**

All LOC Club members will provide their dogs with appropriate housing facilities, food, and health care for optimum mental and physical health in line with their Municipal Bylaws.

Breeders are encouraged to be a knowledgeable resource to their customers in order to ensure the health and welfare of their customer's dogs throughout the dog's life.

Breeders accept the responsibility for the care of any unsold dogs.

If an Owner is unable to care for their dog the Breeder is responsible to take it back or re home the dog. When dealing with older dog owners' breeders should encourage them to have their wishes pertaining to their puppy/dog included in their estate planning prior to selling them a dog.

Prior to puppies leaving the breeder they should be socialized, de-wormed regularly and be physically examined by a Veterinarian and deemed healthy in all systems and receive their first vaccination. No breeder should knowingly sell any puppy with health or developmental concerns. Puppies need litter mate interaction to ensure proper social development and should not be sold prior to 7 weeks of age.

Breeders are encouraged to thoroughly screen new dog owners to be sure they are suitable owners of this breed and that they have the time and financial resources to care for a puppy/dog.

Breeders are encouraged to set up breeding guidelines for new breeders who purchase puppies from their kennel and breeders using their studs. Existing breeders should help mentor and educate new breeders in the science of breeding good dogs, good practices of animal husbandry, and teach them to avoid the pitfalls of breeding.

In addition, new breeders should be informed of all known genetic conditions carried in the breeding stock they are purchasing to aid them in avoiding future genetic problems.

Members are encouraged to use positive reinforcement when training their dogs and to refrain from harsh training techniques which may physically or mentally affect their dogs

### **Section 3: Breed Deviations and Placement**

Members of the Labrador Owners Club should not be involved in any breeding of dogs that are not eligible for registration in the Canadian Kennel Club Stud Book.

Members should not breed, own, sell, provide stud service, advertise, promote, or use in their programs any Labrador Retrievers, regardless of registration, who do not conform to the CKC Breed Standard in colour. This includes avoiding lines that have dilute-carrier (Dd) or affected (dd) Labradors in their pedigrees. Members are encouraged to not use any descriptive adjectives pertaining to colour other than those listed in the CKC breed standard. Members should refrain from selling stock or providing stud service to anyone who advertises and/or breeds dilute-carrier (Dd) or dilute-affected (dd) Labradors. Deviation from this is misleading to the public and is a disservice to the Labrador Retriever breed.

Members should be aware and educate themselves on those they sell breeding stock to and/or offer stud services. This would include knowledge of their programs, social media advertising and facilities/standards of care.

Members should support the "Five Freedoms" of animal care as outlined by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association in housing and re-homing their dogs. The Five Freedoms include freedom from hunger and thirst, from pain, injury, and disease, from distress, from discomfort and to express behaviours that promote well-being.

Dogs should not be knowingly sold or donated to research facilities. Participating in clinical trials or studies that support the health and welfare of the Labrador Retriever or purebred dogs in general is acceptable. Dogs are not to be placed with a dealer, broker, or pet shop or to be given as prizes in contests, lotteries, and auctions, be knowingly sold for animal research or sold to persons who will donate the puppy to an organization which will use it for fund raising.

### **Section 4-Warranties**

Breeder members should warranty their puppies as outlined in Section 1.

Warranties should also cover any other defects that are diagnosed by a CVMA/AVMA accredited veterinarian with appropriate diagnostics done to establish possible origin. The issues in Section 1 and any further diagnosed conditions which alter the quality of the pups' life

or prevent the attainment of the purpose for which the pup was placed require fair and agreed upon compensation between breeder and client. Solutions shall be in writing and the individual breeders' contract terms made known to the client prior to completion of a sale. Said document should include:

- Refund of the purchasers' money OR
- Other solutions to which the breeder and the purchaser mutually agree upon prior to sale and are noted in writing.

Breeders should not demand return of the clients' puppy/dog for the warranty to be enacted. Breeders should be aware that some clients may wish to return the affected dog with the breeder and should be prepared for this situation.

Breeders should also include a secondary health warranty for a timeline established by the breeder for a 'wellness puppy check' by the clients chosen DVM. Recommended minimum timeline would be 48 hours.

Purchasers are instructed to immediately place the dog under the care of a veterinarian on a lifelong basis.

### **Section 5: Sportsmanship/Members Conduct**

In all canine events, meetings and activities members of the LOC should always conduct themselves with a high standard of sportsmanship, friendship, goodwill, and respect. Members should represent the Clubs' purpose, Bylaws and Constitution by holding the Labrador retriever to a standard of excellence. Our Labradors should always be treated with respect that is their due.