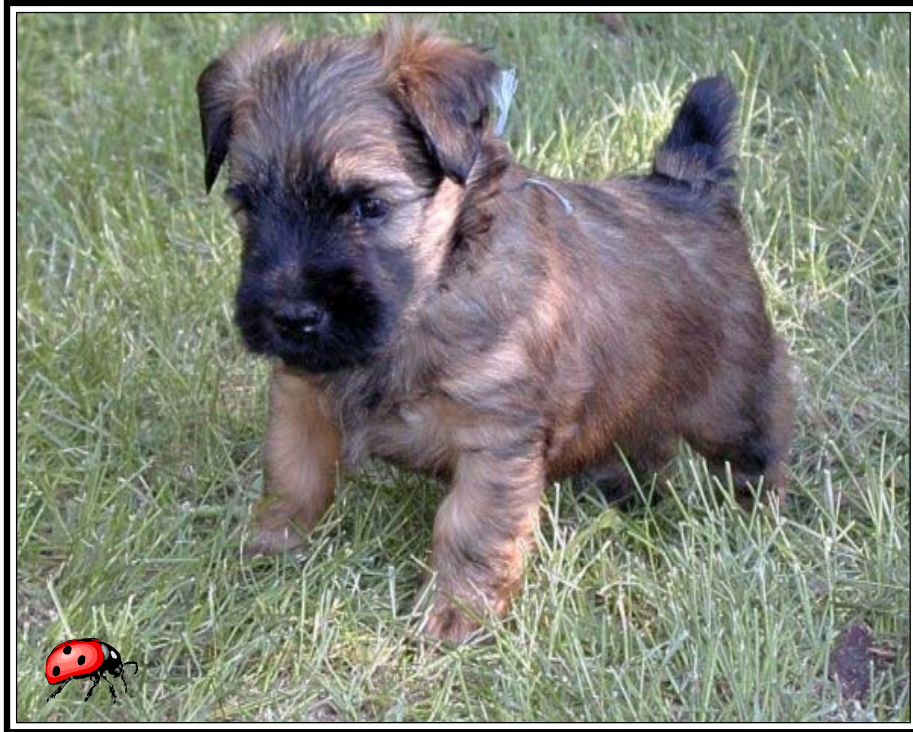


ASCWTA

# The Prairie Wheaten

Vol 8 No. 2 / Fall 2002



I am so bigger than you Mr. Bug!!!!

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## Our Experience with Addison's Disease

By Mike Dumelie

We have been fortunate enough to have attended the Addison's Seminar put on by Helen Larson twice in the past three years. I encourage you to read her material closely and keep it in the back of your mind. What you know about Addison's Disease may indeed help save your dog in the future.

Addison's has been called the great imitator. I can tell you that it is a reputation that is well deserved. In May we got a look at it first hand when our Sadie became deathly ill. When I say deathly, I mean it. We were certain that she was only days from death and in fact after finding out more we were probably right. If not for the quick actions of our vets, Dr. Jackson and Dr. Randall we would have lost her.

For weeks Barb had thought something was not right with Sadie. She was listless and losing weight. She was constantly going off on her own. She was eating about half of what we would expect of her. One of the most significant signs was when Sadie began having accidents in the house. This is a dog that is so well trained that when she was a pup she wouldn't go for a whole weekend because she wasn't in her own yard.

The final straw was when she started to show signs of a potential neurological disorder when she went into fits of shaking. This was truly the low point of this period when we were sure we were losing her. Finally, on May 23, 2002 we contacted Dr. Jackson for help.

We did a complete urinalysis and protein/creatinine ratio. Nothing significant showed up in the tests. We thought this to be a good sign. Over the next week, things worsened. Sadie was not eating at all. She was sleeping a lot and had more accidents. In addition, she was now vomiting and having bouts of diarrhea.

On May 29<sup>th</sup>, Sadie looked to have only a few days left. At that point Dr. Jackson asked that we go to see Dr. Randall for a complete work-up. Sadie had a complete work up including a Radiograph, Urinalysis, CBC, etc. Nothing significant showed up and we took Sadie home. During the day Sadie was given fluids and we did see an improvement as a result. This is a normal result as the fluids provide a partial stabilization effect on an Addisonian dog.

Over the weekend we saw a significant deterioration. Sadie refused to eat, was having accidents and would not leave her crate. When we did take her out she appeared to be drunk and was not able to stand on her own.

Fortunately, on June 3<sup>rd</sup> Dr. Randall noticed a small indicator of Addison's disease. In retrospect, the symptoms should have been obvious to us. Sadie was a classic case of Addison's. Unfortunately, until you experience it you may not pick up on it. We are so aware of protein wasting disease and its impacts we sometimes forget that there are other conditions. I encourage you to read as much information about this condition as you can. Undiagnosed, your dog can go into Addisonian shock which often leads to death.

As for Sadie, she is now on Florinef and Prednisone to deal with the fluctuations caused by any form of stress. We did a number of Electrolyte profiles on her to determine the required dosage for both drugs. In addition, she continues her Thyroid medication to deal with her previously diagnosed Hypothyroid condition.

Sadie has put on weight and returned to her old self. We feel blessed to have many more years with our Sadie. She is already living on borrowed time as the doctors gave her a few years to live when

she was diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis as a pup. She is now 10 years old and going strong.

The interesting footnote to all of this is that the three main conditions Sadie has suffered in her life are a recognized syndrome. In rare circumstances, dogs with Addison's Disease go on to have a Hypothyroid condition and then progress to Myasthenia Gravis later in life. Sadie, in keeping with her unique life, has done it backward. She started with Myasthenia Gravis as a six month old pup (and subsequently beat it), was diagnosed with her thyroid condition a few years later and finally got Addison's. The common thread is these are all conditions linked to the immune system.

As we find out more about our other conditions in the breed, we find more and more are related to our dog's immune systems. I believe we are all here for a purpose. The lucky ones find that purpose and live a meaningful life. For our Sadie, beyond being a loving friend for Barb and I, that purpose is to educate. Her conditions have helped us to learn more about our breed and have assisted us in our breeding and maintenance philosophies. My only advice to each of you is to watch your dog's immune systems closely. Take care not to stimulate it. We take diarrhea and vomiting very seriously. We avoid shifting foods unless there is a good reason to change. We also believe you need to have a great relationship with your vet and discuss openly their philosophies on vaccination, etc.

I encourage you to read Helen's material and commit it to memory. Don't rely on your vet to take care of your dog. Addison's looks a lot like other conditions. Learn the symptoms and assist your vet in the diagnosis. Addison's is not the end of the world if diagnosed and properly treated but it is a death sentence if not.

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# The Prairie Wheaten

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## Addison's Disease or Hypoadrenocorticism by Helen Larson

The Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier is one of the breeds listed in veterinary literature as having a predisposition for Addison's disease. The purpose of this article is to provide Wheaten owners and breeders with information about the disease. Increased awareness will lead to early diagnosis and treatment before the crisis stage of the disease.

Addison's disease is the common name and Hypoadrenocorticism the commonly used scientific name. Adrenal insufficiency and adrenocortical hypofunction are less commonly used terms. Addison's disease is the insufficient production and secretion of hormones (glucocorticoids, mineralocorticoids and androgens) by the adrenal gland cortex. This is a disease that if left untreated, leads to death.

Dr. Thomas Addison first described the disease in humans in 1849. In 1856 it was demonstrated that removal of both adrenal glands resulted in the death of experimental animals. This proved that these glands are necessary for the maintenance of life. Addison's disease in dogs was not reported until 1953.

**What causes Addison's disease?** To date no one has discovered the cause or any specific risk factors for this disease. About 80% of human hypoadrenocorticism is immune-mediated destruction of the adrenal cortices. Many of the features of canine Addison's disease resemble those in humans and it is likely that dogs also have this immune-mediated destruction.

### **What is Autoimmune disease?**

Autoimmunity is a misdirected immune response, in which the body's defenses become self-destructive. Under normal conditions the body's immune mechanism is able to recognize its own tissues and chemicals. This recognition of self is called immunologic tolerance. When tolerance breaks down the body fails to interpret its own cells as self.

Autoimmunity may result from a combination of factors such as genetic predisposition, hormonal factors and environmental triggers such as viral infections and vaccinations. Auto-antibodies reactive to the adrenal cortex are diagnostic of autoimmune Addison's disease and have been identified in dogs with this disease.

When immune-mediated disease affects the adrenal glands; it may also affect other glands. Up to 5% of Addisonian dogs have endocrine failure in the thyroid gland (hypothyroidism), the pancreas (diabetes), parathyroid gland (hypoparathyroidism) and reproductive disorders (primary gonadal failure). Addison's disease does not cause other disorders; it is just that the immune disorder may affect more than one tissue.

**Who gets Addison's disease?** Addison's disease can occur in dogs of any age, sex or breed. Current research has shown this to be primarily a disease of young to middle-aged females as is the case for most immune-mediated disorders in the dog. Up to 70% of dogs diagnosed are female. 80% are 7 years of age or younger with the average age being 4.6 years. Dogs of all breeds are affected, including mixed breeds. Recent publications describe an increased familial or genetic predisposition with a possible contribution of triggers as a cause for the disease in some breeds.

Two examples of familial predisposition are; (1) a group of related Standard Poodles was studied and ten were found to have Addison's disease. This group had no pattern of inheritance, but the prevalence of disease was extremely high compared to the general canine population. (2) The 1996 Autoimmune Endocrine Health Survey for Bearded Collies also concluded there was a hereditary Addison's disease that exists in the Bearded Collie population.

### **Wheatens and Addison's**

Dr. Margaret Slater has just completed a health survey for the SCWTCA. There were 1246 dogs in the final survey, a total of 4 Wheatens with Addison's. This is 0.6% of the 1246 dogs. She states it doesn't appear to be very common in the breed.

Dr. Meryl Littman states that the prevalence of Addison's in SCWT's is really not known. She estimates she knows of over 350 Wheatens with PLE/PLN, but only a dozen or so with Addison's. "So although there is a predisposition in the SCWT breed, Addison's is still not that common". She does not know of any pedigrees with a higher incidence of Addison's, but this needs more study. It appears to be a sporadic problem within the breed.

### **There are two types of Addison's disease.**

Primary hypoadrenocorticism constitutes the majority of canine cases. This type originates within the adrenal glands and is an atrophy or destruction of all layers of the adrenal cortex. Secondary hypoadrenocorticism is caused by decreased secretion of hormones by the hypothalamus or the pituitary glands. Their hormones stimulate the adrenal cortex to release its hormones. Without these triggering hormones the adrenal glands fail to function

The adrenal glands are small structures located above each kidney. They have two main sections: the center or medulla and the outer area or cortex. Addison's disease concerns hormones called corticosteroids produced by the cortex. There are two main types of corticosteroid - glucocorticoids and mineral-ocorticoids. They are needed to adapt to stressful situations and without them, even small stresses can lead to disaster.

Cortisol is the major adrenal glucocorticoid. It affects every tissue in the body and is responsible for carbohydrate, lipid and

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protein metabolism, maintenance of normal blood pressure, and counteraction of the effects of stress. To counteract stress cortisol increases glucose levels in the blood, providing a source of energy for all the body's activities. Abnormal adrenal glands do not secrete any cortisol causing decreased levels of glucose to deal with stress. Aldosterone is the major mineralocorticoid and is responsible for maintaining the levels of minerals, sodium, potassium and chloride in the body. Aldosterone's affect on the kidneys results in the maintenance of fluid levels and mineral balance in the body.

The onset of Addison's disease is a gradual process with 85 to 90% of adrenal cells being destroyed before signs of deficient secretion become obvious. Individual variation exists among dogs so some dogs show symptoms earlier or later than others. A partial deficiency syndrome may occur, where the adrenal glands secrete adequate amounts to maintain a near-normal state. Symptoms only occur during periods of stress when there are inadequate levels of corticosteroids to deal with the stressful situation. As destruction progresses secretion is inadequate even under non-stressful conditions.

This illness appears to affect some dogs episodically. These dogs fluctuate between appearing normal and quite ill. This waxing-waning course of illness is not always obvious to owners of affected

dogs. Vague symptoms such as; occasional anorexia, vomiting, and/or diarrhea, muscle weakness, lethargy and depression are common. The vague symptoms often have the owner talking him or herself out of a veterinary visit. Signs of illness are often nonspecific and similar to more common diseases such as kidney, gastrointestinal and infectious diseases. The mimicking of other diseases is why Addison's disease is often called the "great pretender".

A hallmark symptom of Addison's disease is impaired tolerance to stress. Even mild physical or emotional stress can cause an Addisonian crisis. A healthy dog responds to stress by releasing cortisol. Dogs with Addison's disease can't do this. Therefore, the physiologic defense provided by cortisol does not operate. Absence of Aldosterone compounds the problem with depletion of fluids and impairment of cardiac function. This leads to eventual circulatory collapse.

What constitutes stress and the amount of stress a dog can tolerate varies with each dog. Examples of stressors are: elective surgery such as spaying/neutering, traumatic injuries, infection, vaccinations, cold weather, or psychological distress such as trips to the veterinarian, the family packing up for a vacation, being placed in a boarding kennel, traveling or summer thunderstorms. Stress can be fun things too such as agility or obedience classes.

Commonly reported symptoms. Severity can vary dramatically from dog to dog.

- Anorexia
- Thin/Weight Loss
- Depression/Lethargy
- Vomiting/Diarrhea
- Weakness
- Collapse
- Shaking and Shivering
- Excessive urination with or without excessive thirst
- Waxing and Waning Course of Illness
- Painful/Sensitive Abdomen
- Fatigue/exercise intolerance

The dog may also appear clumsy and unable to climb stairs or jump on the bed. This may be due to muscle loss or weakness. The dog does not have the strength to do normal activities.

On examination by the veterinarian the dogs were noted to have:

- Mental Depression
- Thin/emaciated
- Muscular Weakness
- Dehydration
- Slow weak pulse
- Blood in feces
- Gastrointestinal hemorrhage
- Collapse
- Abdominal pain
- Pale mucous membranes/anemia
- Low temperature
- Low blood pressure
- Grand Mal Seizure

**Addisonian Crisis the Endocrine Emergency.** Addisonian crisis occurs when the dog is in circulatory collapse and shock. The deficiency of Aldosterone

## Comparisons of Diseases to which SCWT are Predisposed

	<b>RD</b>	<b>PLN</b>	<b>PLE</b>	<b>ADDISON'S</b>
Age of Onset	< 1-3 yrs	Mean ~ 6 yrs	Mean ~ 4.5 yrs	Average 4.3-5.4 yrs
Sex Predilection	None noted	Female: male 1.6	Female: male 1.7	Female (in general)
PU/PD	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vomiting/Diarrhea	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Azotemia	Yes	Eventually	No	Possibly (pre-renal)
Low albumin	No	Yes	Yes	Possibly (melena)
Low globulin	No	No	Yes	Possibly (melena)
Low Na:K ratio	Not noted	Rarely (-7.0%)	Rarely (-7.0%)	Yes

RD = Renal Dysplasia    PLN = Protein Losing Nephropathy    PLE = Protein-Losing Enteropathy

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leads to severe depletion of sodium (hyponatremia) resulting in depletion of body fluids (hypovolemia) and potassium retention (hyperkalemia). This progresses to collapse, bradycardia (slow heart rate), hypotension (low blood pressure), and associated cardiac arrhythmias (abnormal heart beats). In Addison's hypovolemia and shock cause bradycardia but in other diseases this condition causes tachycardia (fast heart rate). Deficiency of cortisol causes low blood sugar levels (hypoglycemia). Hypoglycemic seizures have been reported in dogs with Addison's. Decreased secretion of gastrointestinal enzymes causes anorexia, nausea, vomiting, flatulence and diarrhea. These symptoms as well as anxiety, mental depression, and loss of mental acuity, may also be related to the absence of cyclic peaks of cortisol.

This crisis may be the first time the owner suspects anything is wrong and may be fatal if not treated promptly. The goal of emergency treatment is stabilization with aggressive therapy. Virtually every dog treated with IV therapy, glucocorticoids, and mineralocorticoids have shown rapid improvement. There may be a need for intensive monitoring and therapy for several days to stabilize the dog. Studies have found that between 33 to 51% of dogs with Addison's were diagnosed during a crisis. The dog owners stated their dog had signs and symptoms of being unwell, but they had a difficult time getting a definitive diagnosis. The emotional trauma to both the dog and its owners, combined with expense are the primary reasons for early diagnosis before crisis occurs.

**Diagnostic Testing:** Blood Chemistry Profile: Electrolyte profiles (Sodium, Potassium, Chloride) are extremely valuable. They support a tentative diagnosis and are useful in modifying therapy. Balance of these chemicals is vital to health and abnormal levels can be life threatening. The diagnostic

chemistry profile will have a low sodium (<135 meq/L) and elevated potassium (>6.0 meq/L). Sodium potassium ratios are used to identify adrenal insufficiency. Normal ratios are between 27:1 and 40:1. In primary hypoadrenocorticism the sodium: potassium ratio will be below 25:1. However, these changes are not present in all dogs. EKG abnormalities are associated with high potassium and low sodium. Untreated high potassium can lead to cardiac arrest and death. Other diseases can cause elevated potassium and/or low sodium. The definitive test for Addison's disease is the ACTH stimulation test. This test directly assesses the capacity of the adrenal gland to secrete cortisol and indirectly assesses Aldosterone secretion. An ACTH stimulation test should be considered in dogs with signs of weight loss, decreased appetite, and intermittent vomiting and diarrhea.

**Long-term Management of Dogs with Primary Hypoadrenocorticism.** In every case, medications must be administered to maintain the life of the animal. Treatment is replacement of the hormones with synthetic glucocorticoids (i.e. Prednisone) and mineralocorticoids (i.e. Florinef or Percorten V). Therapy usually brings about a rapid recovery, and involves life-long medications. Steroids do not cure disorders; they just treat the symptoms. Prednisone may be needed on a regular basis, or at times when the dog will be in a stressful situation. These medications come in multiple potencies and forms and have no set or consistent dosage. They need to be individualized to the severity of the condition and the patient response. When given in the minimum dose that maintains a therapeutic response side effects can be kept to a minimum. Key is to remember every dog is different. Once achieved improvements in the dog's health are usually maintained.

Florinef (fludrocortisone) is in pill form and has been used for treatment of dogs with Addison's for over 20 years. Advantages of this medication are;

dosage can be quickly changed to adjust incorrect doses, most owners can administer tablets and the drug is readily available at most human pharmacies. Disadvantages are: extremely high doses may be required which increases the side effects, owner compliance in giving the medication on a regular basis is often a problem and at high doses this therapy is expensive.

Percorten V or DOCP (desoxycorticosterone pivalate) is an injection that is given once every 21 to 30 days. The dog on this medication may also require low doses of Prednisone. The most common cause of Percorten treatment failure is insufficient supplemental glucocorticoid administration. Advantages of this form of treatment are; infrequent doses of the drug (every 21 to 30 days) improves compliance, most owners can be taught to administer injections to their dogs and expense is similar or less in larger dogs. Disadvantages are: the need for supplemental Prednisone, if the owner is unable to give injections it must be done at a veterinarian's office at an added expense, pain on injection, and the drug is not as readily available as Florinef and must be purchased at the veterinarian's office.

Most often the veterinarian will try to stabilize the dog on Florinef. If this is not possible a change to Percorten V (DOCP) is indicated. The goal is to use the medication that produces the desired effect - a healthy and happy dog.

One side effect that requires caution is immune system suppression. Synthetic glucocorticoids produce suppression of the immune system by suppressing antibody formation. This can lead to compromised resistance and susceptibility to infection. When vaccinating Addisonian dogs avoid giving combinations by using separate injections at spaced intervals to prevent overwhelming the immune system.

The owner has to pay close attention to a dog with this disease by watching for

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signs and symptoms and changes in the dog's behavior. These dogs crash quickly! Okay in evening but by morning all signs and symptoms present. Symptoms that can alert owners to a problem are dehydration (touch the dogs gums, if they feel tacky this is a sign of dehydration, a well hydrated dog has wet slippery gums), changes in appetite, vomiting and/or diarrhea, appear tired and there is no tail wagging.

I was fortunate to communicate with four Wheaten owners whose dogs have Addison's disease. They provided me with detailed information about their

experiences and the health of their dogs. The course of their disease followed the clinical picture described in much of the literature I read.

If the diagnosis of Addison's disease is made early, it is controllable with an excellent prognosis. After therapy stabilizes the condition, the dog can usually lead a normal life with few if any restrictions. The most important factors are long-term response to medications and diligent owners and veterinarians. Recognition of the disease and the cost of treatment seem to be the biggest obstacles to a successful outcome.

With the health focus for Wheaten breeders and owners on PLE and PLN we must not forget there are other diseases affecting our breed. Many of the signs and symptoms are the same. Let us be vigilant and not overlook other causes of illness as this leads to delayed diagnosis and treatment of those diseases. This in turn leads to prolonged illness of our dogs. Addison's disease is another reason to send the dog's information to the open registry. If there is a hereditary link we need to find and understand it.

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I would like to acknowledge the following for their help in my research: Kathleen Strauser, Exec Director, Canine Addison's Disease Awareness Collaborative, for information, articles and suggestions; the owners who submitted information about their dogs and experiences, Dr. Margaret Slater for correspondence on preliminary data from 1999 SCWT Health Survey and Dr. Meryl Littman for her correspondence.

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**About the author:** I have a degree in nursing and no veterinary training. I presented information on Addison's disease for the health seminar at the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Association of Canada's National Specialty in June 2000. This article is a small portion of the information presented. I have tried to make the article informative without getting too technical. Please contact me if you would like more information or the complete reference listing. Helen Larson [jhl Larson@mts.net](mailto:jhl Larson@mts.net)

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I used 46 articles/textbooks and many personal correspondences to research this topic. Listed are the key references:

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# The Prairie Wheaten

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## Are Two Wheatens Better Than One?

by Jim and Trina Fallows

This was the question that we sought to answer earlier this year as we considered getting a companion for Fergus, our four-year-old Wheaten.

The first thing that we realized is that very little that has been written on the subject of acquiring a second dog. Some of the books we consulted did not even mention the topic! A search of the Internet yielded a few snippets of information, as did discussion with other dog owners. We were already comfortable and knowledgeable about Wheaten behaviour (or so we thought...), however it turned out that we were not well prepared for what actually happened.

In general, we found that two Wheatens ARE twice as much fun as one, however there is no guarantee that the incumbent dog will bond to the puppy, and there is also no certainty that the puppy will learn much from the incumbent dog.

We have been told that our experience does not reflect typical canine behaviour. Nevertheless, we were asked to write an article on the topic as a way of

summarizing some of the conventional wisdom regarding obtaining a second dog, and also as a way of showing people just how unpredictable our little furry friends can be! We do not pretend to be experts on the subject, and our research and conclusions are unscientific to say the least.

### Preparing for the Arrival of the Second Wheaten

Our veterinarian and our breeder were in agreement that the second dog should be of the opposite gender of the first dog. In addition, the temperament of the incumbent dog should be considered in the selection of the puppy.

We were fortunate in this regard, as Roz Bacon's Tess had recently given birth to a litter of ten puppies, which included six females. Our incumbent dog, Fergus, has always been shy around other dogs,



Molly

and definitely did not exhibit the personality of an alpha male. Roz advised that we should be seeking a puppy that is social and friendly, but not overly aggressive and dominant. After observing the puppies through their crucial formative weeks, Roz selected a puppy that had just the characteristics that we required for Fergus' sister.

Prior to bringing our new family member (Molly) home, we took Fergus to meet Molly at Roz' home on two occasions. The idea was to ease the transition for both dogs by introducing them to each other on neutral ground. Whether this actually accomplished anything is difficult to say.

### D-Day

Introducing Molly into our house proved to be a tremendous amount of work! For starters, there are all of the "joys" associated with having a new puppy (e.g., toilet training, teething, etc.). Even though we had been through this before with Fergus, we had managed to repress or forget just how much work is involved here. In addition to the normal demands associated with having a puppy, we also had to carefully observe the relationship between the two dogs. Thus, bringing a second dog into our home was definitely more work than with the first dog.

Continued on page 8



Fergus

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The material we had read emphasized the importance of ensuring that the incumbent dog continues to receive a proper amount of attention. This was not easy, because of the near constant supervision that a new puppy requires.

Fergus found the change to be particularly difficult. After having the run of the house for three and a half years, there was now another dog in his home. His initial reaction was to begin “marking turf” by relieving himself in the house on two occasions. Within a few days, Fergus accepted the puppy’s presence in the house, but wanted nothing to do with the “intruder”. He would run away and/or hide from her unless she was confined to her crate.

### Outcomes and Lessons Learned

As indicated in the literature, the dogs have established a pecking order, with the female puppy Molly being dominant over the adult male Fergus. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the dogs have not bonded to one another. They do not play together and generally avoid one another. Our research also uncovered recommendations that each dog should have its own toys, and that there should be an abundance of toys in the house. The theory is that the incumbent dog will be more willing to accept the puppy if the puppy comes with its own toys rather than stealing toys that formerly belonged to the older dog. By having a greater number of toys, there will be a lesser likelihood that the dogs will fight over ownership of any single toy. The reality is that the dominant dog has appropriated all of the toys for herself, and the less assertive adult has simply ceded all rights to his former toys.

Conventional wisdom suggests that toilet training a second dog is easier, since it learns from the incumbent dog. As noted earlier, this was not the case for us. The adult dog marking turf in the



house served to confuse the puppy about the appropriate location to go to the bathroom. Eventually, the puppy caught on, but the time needed to toilet train the second dog was about the same as what was required by the first dog.

Several things that we read stressed the importance of the manner in which the dogs are fed. Specifically, the dominant dog is to be fed moments before the second dog. Each dog will then feel comfortable in its role, and will eat its meal. Our results in this area have been

both bizarre and hilarious. Neither Fergus nor Molly defend their food; in fact each dog seems to take particular delight in eating the other dog’s food, while ignoring its own.

The moral of the story is that if you are looking to raise dogs who will conform to a cookie cutter template, the Wheaten is the wrong breed. Fortunately, this is also what makes them so delightful! We love both dogs to bits, and have no regrets over our decision to add to our family.



### In Memoriam

Bud and Jan Reinson’s Katie at age 16  
April 2002

Our thoughts and our sympathy goes out to Bud and Jan  
on the loss of their wonderful Wheaten.



# The Prairie Wheaten

## A Typical Agility Trial

by Danny MacLennan of Prince Albert

It's Sunday morning and I am sorting out some old magazines and wondering about the wisdom of promising Carolyn an article on agility for the newsletter. Then I come to a past issue of DOG World magazine with a "meet the breed" article on Wheatens and I begin to peruse the article. To my surprise there on page 30 is a picture of a Wheaten in full flight exiting a tunnel and looking to its handler for instructions for the next obstacle. The caption reads "The Soft Coated Wheaten's high energy level make it an excellent breed for agility."

This caption got me reminiscing about why several years ago I started agility training with Darby. There were three reasons actually. To spend some quality time with our dog who spends his days home alone. To get some exercise for Darby and myself. And not the least important, to show those in the kennel club that the little brown fuzz ball that entertained the puppy class could actually be trained to do agility.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be doing an article on our experience of going to our first out of town agility trial. To make the occasion more special, if we do well, we will actually qualify for Darby's first agility title.

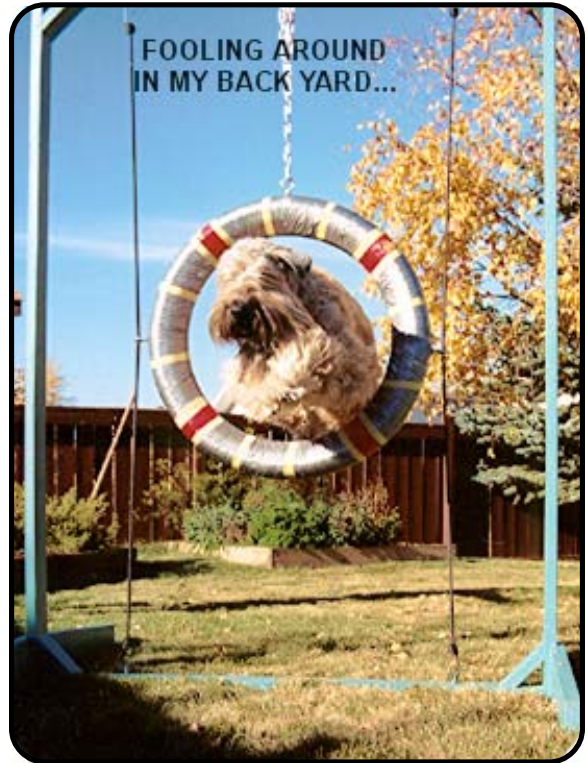


It all begins when I turn on the computer and there is a message from Michele Sare announcing the dates for the Regina Kennel and Obedience Clubs inaugural agility trial. I look at the dates — July 20 & 21, 2002. I check with Judy and we determine that we can go, so I print off the application form, fill it in, attach a cheque and drop it in the mail.

Darby is classed as a "specials" dog. That means he can no longer do the jumps at full height due to his age (7) and the stress it was placing on his body to compete at the 26" jump height. He will now compete in the 22" jump height. We are entered in all the events to be offered at this trial. Darby is just ready to title so he is actually competing at two different levels, starters and advanced. For this trial he is entered in the following: one round each of Advanced Gamblers, Advanced Snooker, Advanced Jumpers and Starters Team Relay. He is also in four rounds of Starters Titling. (Any one who wants a description of the various games, feel free to contact me at:

[djmacLennan@shaw.ca](mailto:djmacLennan@shaw.ca) and I will forward a copy of the information that we use for our classes in P.A.)

We arrive in Regina Friday evening and proceed to the competition site on Rochdale Blvd. It is my intention to sign in and then set up a shade tent for us close to the site, so when we arrive on Saturday we need only to concern ourselves with the competition. At the registration table they ask



to see Darby's registration card to ensure that he was measured by two judges at the height of 21 1/2". They hand me a schedule of events and we proceed to set up.

When I look at the schedule, I note that there are 57 handlers from three provinces, running 68 dogs. Also attached is a schedule of when I have to work at various tasks as a volunteer. It would not be possible to run these events if those participating did not help with the timing, scribing, pole setting and other duties that arise.

Saturday morning is sunny and hot even at 6:30 a.m. I take Darby for a short run to help him loosen up, then we sit down to a cup of Tim Hortons and a toasted bagel. There are people arriving and visiting, as these trials are a very social event. Most of the people are ready to compete. We anticipate that the course will be well spaced and open as that is the type usually designed by our judges, Kirsten Locke, from Edmonton, and Darcy Bennett, from Calgary.

# The Prairie Wheaten



When competing in agility you're actually competing at two levels. You are competing at the trial level for placement with the other dogs in your division. You are also competing to meet the qualifying time required to meet the standard set by the Agility Association of Canada.

The first round of the day is Gamblers. Gamblers is a two-part game. The first portion, known as the opening, is timed at 40 seconds and is designed to test the handlers' ability to get their dogs to complete a combination of obstacles. The obstacles are assigned point values and a predetermined number of points are required to qualify. The second portion of the game requires the handler and dog to complete a set combination of obstacles, only this time the handler must work at a distance from the dog. This portion is known as the gamble.

Darby is great. We finish second to Boomer and his owner, Deb Malone, from Saskatoon. We compete against each other often, and the dogs are very evenly matched and we each win our share of the contests. More exciting to us is that we qualified, and this is Darby's first win at the advanced level.

The next round is a Titling or Standard round. The Titling round is designed to test dog and handler on all the obstacles used in AAC and consists of a minimum 15 and maximum 24 obstacles. The event is timed and no faults are allowed.

Time is not usually a factor for Darby, he is a very fast dog. He is also very knowledgeable about all the obstacles, and at this level, if something goes wrong it is almost always my fault. But as any Wheaten owner knows, he has been known to look me in the eye and then proceed to do what ever he wants. In agility it is

called giving your handler the paw.

We finish with time to spare, but I am too slow with my commands, Darby takes an extra jump and we are disqualified. I should note that the jump taken was placed there by the judge as a trap for unaware handlers, and it worked. I will have to be more alert next round.

A second Titling round is run immediately following the first, and this time we get it done perfectly and qualify. We are now only one qualifier from a title.

The day is just about done — one round left. It is hot, temperature in low 30's, and no breeze. The dogs are beat and so are the handlers. So we are glad when

they call us to the line for the final round, and it is Team Relay. Team Relay has a team of two dogs each assigned half the obstacles to run. The lead handler carries a baton and has to hand it to the second handler who with their dog completes the course. It is a timed event and no faults are allowed.

We are teamed with collie named Keesha and her handler, Joyce Baker, from Regina. We finish in good time, but both of us have faults; we finish in second place but do not qualify.

It has been a fun day. We are tired but content with how we competed. We also made some new friends, and Max came down. He even brought Carolyn and Alan along and we had a great visit. They promise to return Sunday if possible.

It is 7 a.m. Sunday morning; we get here early because it was too hot to sleep. We go for a warm up walk, and on our return I notice some clouds on the horizon. Great, maybe we will get some shade.

Only someone that has spent the last 14 years in northern Saskatchewan could forget that in the south, when you see clouds and know a weather change is coming, quite likely it will be driven by STRONG WINDS. Grab the lid to the



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## The Prairie Wheaten

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cooler, fold the lawn chairs, now I know why they put those extra guy ropes on this tent! I have it under control, but I have to work the first round so I put Darby in his ex-pen and go to work. The first round has just started when I notice a group of people at my site. There is Darby in his pen, wagging his tail at the people who are trying without much luck to save our tent. Poor dog, he does not realize he is in eminent danger of joining Toto in Kansas. All ends well, the tent is folded and weighted down by what ever was handy at the time.

We compete in our first round of the day. It is a game called Snooker, based on the pool game of the same name. In Snooker you have three or four red jumps and six jumps numbered 2 thru 7. The game is to do one red then one numbered until you have used all the reds. You can use reds only once, and if you knock down a red pole, you must find another red jump to use. When the reds are all completed, you must then do all the numbered jumps in order. We are doing great, we get all the red jumps completed and have done all but three of the sequence jumps, when once again I miss a trap jump. Darby takes the jump and we are disqualified.

It is time for round three of the Titling rounds. If we get this we Title. This is good timing — here comes Max and he is just in time to see Darby run. Well, not quite, things are not running too well, and there are lots of delays mostly due to the weather. At least we get a chance to visit. Darby is content with lots of attention, and he does not have to listen to me as I am getting a little grumpy. Max is also content; he seems to like the wide variety of possible female companions that keep parading by.

Finally we are called to run, but Darby is not too concerned. He would rather stay and visit. I lay down the law — he is coming with me. My first mistake. Now I tell him this is a very important run, so he better shape up (I am grumpy!!). After all these years of agility, you would think I would have seen it coming. We are half

way through the course when I call Darby to take the table. Darby looks me straight in the eye and looks over to the side of the course to make sure all are watching. He refuses to continue until he knows I have reached the limits of my patience. He gets on the table but then looks over at our guests and refuses to get off when we are to continue. By now even the judge is having a good time, he just laughs and asks me how it is going. We get our act together and finish the course with no faults, but when we get the time we have been on the course five seconds over the allowed time and do not qualify. We do have a great picture of us crossing the finish line, as Carolyn had time to get there to meet us.

After I have time to contemplate, I begin to see the humor in what had just transpired. The Foxes are off — they are just starting holidays and need to do some preparations; too bad they did not get to see Darby Qualify.

We are first up for the final round of Titling, so we have no time to dwell on the last round. Darby is great. He completes the course with 7 seconds to spare and no faults. We finish first and qualify, and he now has the title of Special Agility Dog of Canada. The achievement does not sink in until his certification arrives a couple of weeks later, but we are happy just the same.

We have one round to go when the rain starts and it pours. Darby is hiding in his crate under a tarp and has made it very clear to me that he is not coming out. I get most of our gear in the truck and am ready to go when the rain stops.

Darby agrees to do the last round, which is Jumpers and is his favorite.

Jumpers is called a speed course, it has only jumps and tunnels, you must complete the course on time and have no faults. This is our first Advanced Jumpers course. It is complicated and I am sure that I will get lost half way through, so I take all the allotted time to walk the course. Wow, can that dog run, I am out of breath, we have just ran the course with time to spare and no faults. We finish first and qualify. What a way to end the day and weekend.

We are both dead tired, but we stop to have a BBQ at Judy's sister's home before heading for home. It is nine in the evening and Judy is at the wheel, we have a golden oldies station on the radio, all is well.

Now that I have had time to reflect it was a great experience. Darby was exceptional. I do not want to do this at the same pace as the serious agility folks who do this every second weekend all summer, but it was fun. I will be back in Regina next year if all works out — the people are great and deserve our support.

P.S. Just in case you think we do this well at all trials, we just finished a trial in P.A. We ran all eight rounds and did not complete any of them. We did, however, have fun and met a couple of nice people from B.C. Darby was happy, he won two bags of doggie treats for having the most points and not qualifying, That pleased him a lot more than any than any piece of paper from the agility folks.



# A Second Opinion could save your Wheaten's Life

by Helen Larson of Lastingimage Wheatens, Oakbank, Manitoba

### What is a second opinion?

A second opinion is defined as a consultation or a deliberation between two or more physicians/veterinarians about the diagnosis or treatment in a particular case. For this article I am referring to the veterinarian originally attending the dog seeking an opinion from a specialist for diagnosis and/or treatment.

A specialist is defined as a physician who has advanced training and a high degree of knowledge, skill and competence in their specialized area of practice. After completing their advanced training they are certified by a specialty board as being qualified as a specialist.

### Why ask for a second opinion?

The veterinarians we take our dogs to are, for the most part, General Practitioners who are defined as veterinarians who do not specialize in a particular field of medicine. They have a broad general knowledge and experience in several disciplines or areas. These veterinarians may take a special interest in an area of practice, and may attend conferences and read articles about their area of interest. However, without advanced training and board certification they are not classified as a specialist.

With the knowledge explosion in the field of medicine and veterinary care a general practitioner can't be expected to be an expert in all the illnesses and diseases that may affect our dogs. Based on these statements insist on a consultation with a *specialist* for complex health problems, not just for PLE/PLN but for *all* complex health problems.

Develop good lines of communication with your vet. If you have a good vet express your appreciation of their abilities as a General Practitioner. Let them know you value this and be open in sharing the information you gather about your breed of dog.

### Who are the specialists?

In the diagnosis and treatment of PLE/PLN in the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier?

Dr. Meryl Littman and Dr. Shelly Vaden.

Other specialists?

There is a guide to a list of internists who specialize in multiple areas of internal medicine on the SCWTCA site. <http://www.scwtca.org/> Click on Health, and then click on "ACVIM veterinary internist". This will take you to the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine site. There you can click on "ACVIM Specialist near you".

### Why are these veterinarians considered specialists?

They are board certified in their area of specialty. They have 4 years of vet school, 3 years of internship and residency training, and specialty board certification that verify their level of knowledge and expertise.

Specialized knowledge does not end with specialty training. Involvement in clinical practice, research and continuing education provides for the ongoing development of their expertise. They are actively researching the health problems within their specialty. For example, with health problems affecting our Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers, Dr. Meryl Littman and Dr. Shelly Vaden both see Wheatens in

their clinical practice at their respective universities. They have also consulted with well over 500 veterinarians, giving their advice on the diagnosis and treatment of an ill Wheaten. This consultation is important, as there is no "cookbook recipe" for the investigations to be done or the treatment. Some dogs have additional abnormalities or do not show all the signs and symptoms, therefore they need an individualized plan of care. Dr. Vaden is also doing extensive long-term follow-ups on a colony of Wheatens and the Weagles at the North Carolina State University. This experience, their board certification, and research make them highly qualified specialists for consultation about an ill Wheaten.

### Why can't my vet get the information from veterinary journals and textbooks?

Veterinary information in reputable journals and textbooks can be old before it is published. Remember how long we waited for the article "Familial Protein-Losing Enteropathy and Protein-Losing Nephropathy in Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers: 222 Cases (1983-1997)" to be published in the Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine? Research completed in 1997, then analysis of data and article written, article submitted March 1999, printed Jan 2000. It can take as long as 10 years for new knowledge to be published in a textbook. There are many, many different textbooks available. They are expensive and vets may not have the most current edition.

When your vet contacts a specialist to discuss your dog's case they get

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## The Prairie Wheaten

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the current (cutting edge) information on both the best diagnostic tests to diagnose the problem and the most effective treatment plan for the diagnosis. Isn't this what you want for your dog? Why not contact the ones generating the information and knowledge?

Cost is sometimes a factor in the type of treatment a dog may receive. In this case specialists can also assist your vet. Why do expensive tests that may not give the answer we are looking for? They can guide your vet by suggesting what tests to do. Not doing the tests that will not add to information needed may save money.

### **How can you be a part of getting a second opinion?**

**Be an Advocate for your dog!** What is an advocate? They are the person who pleads another's cause. You can be your dog's advocate by being knowledgeable about the Wheaten Health web sites, all the contact information on how your vet can access Dr. M. Littman and Dr. S. Vaden.

Be aware of your dog. Observe them when they are healthy so you will notice any differences that could signal a change in their health status early. Keep accurate records; write down dates so you can give a good history of your dog's health or illness.

Email has become one of the vet's best tools in the accessing of second opinions. Your vet can email the information they have regarding history, signs and symptoms of the illness, testing that has been done etc., and arrange a time for a telephone conversation. This will save valuable time for both your vet and the specialist being consulted.

### **Why is it sometimes hard to get your vet to ask for a second opinion?**

Ego! Watch out for it. It can get in the way of the good medical care your Wheaten needs and deserves. Not only your Wheaten but you as well, after all you are paying for this care. If your vet refuses to access a specialist for a second opinion – **FIND ANOTHER VET!**

A recent experience of mine is an example of this. One of my puppy owners called about her 5 year old female whose blood work showed she was in renal failure. I asked the owner to have her vet call Dr. Littman. The vet did not want to (and did not) call Dr. Littman. His reason was that he would not have all the answers to the questions he knew she might ask (she was one of his professors in vet school). After a call to Wheaten owners I know in the area another vet was found. This vet made the call and did more testing. Was the final outcome a good one? No it was not, but at least we can take comfort in the fact that we did the best we could for her before she died of a probable diagnosis of PLN (results are still pending).

Ego is not exclusive to the vet, be sure yours doesn't also get in the way.

### **Are we the dog owner also a problem?**

Owners who have some knowledge about the diseases (but not the training) hear their dog might be in kidney failure and assume too fast that it's a poor prognosis. Sadly some dogs are prematurely euthanized and when the test results and necropsy data are analyzed the dog was misdiagnosed as having kidney failure or PLE/PLN. They had other diseases that could have been treated.



Early **accurate diagnosis** is the key to an acceptable outcome. If the outcome is not the one you hope and pray for at least you know you did the best that you could.

### **What causes misdiagnosis?**

Test results may be changed by the presence of infections (e.g. parvovirus, Ehrlichia sp., Babesia sp., and Rocky Mountain spotted fever) parasite infestations (e.g. Heartworm and other parasites) liver disease, and urinary tract infections. These causes must be ruled out before definite diagnoses of PLE/PLN are made.

Was the blood tested at a laboratory that is reliable? For example; a lab with technologists who are trained to do the tests on equipment that is regularly tested for quality control. Or did personnel, who are not specifically trained to do the test, do the tests in the vet's office on equipment that does not have regular maintenance and quality control checks.

### **KEY POINT: SCWT + illness does not always = PLE or PLN!**

Wheatens get other diseases beside PLE, PLN, RD, Addison's etc. Other breeds of dog die of PLE, PLN, RD and Addison's.

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# The Prairie Wheaten

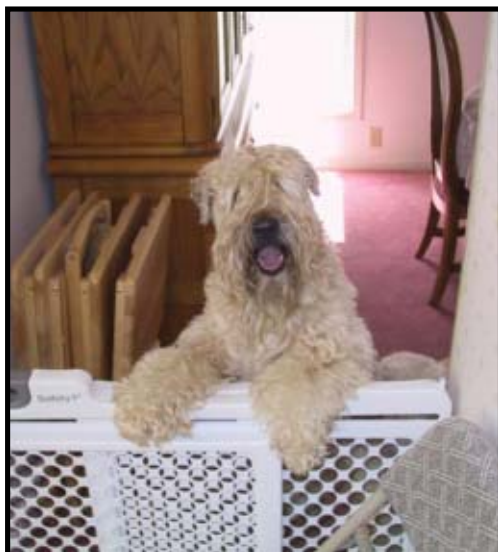
Here is a table from an article by Dr. Littman. Look at how several of the signs and symptoms are similar in different diseases. These similarities can lead to confusion and misdiagnosis of a sick dog.

	<u>RD</u>	<u>PLN</u>	<u>PLE</u>	<u>ADDISON'S</u>
Age of Onset	<1-3 yrs	Mean ~ 6 yrs	Mean ~ 4.5 yrs	Young (in general)
Sex Predilection	None noted	Female:male=1.6	Female:male=1.7	Female (in general)
PU/PD	Yes	Only 25% had PU/PD	No, unless on steroids	Yes
Vomiting/Diarrhea	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ascites/edema	No	Possibly	Possibly	No
Azotemia	Yes	Eventually	No	Possibly (pre-renal)
Kidney Size	Small	May be normal	Normal	Normal
Hypoalbuminemia	No	Yes	Yes	Possibly (melena)
Hypoglobulinemia	No	No	Yes	Possibly (melena)
Hypercholesterolemia	No	Yes	Hypocholesterolemia	No
Low Na/K ratio	Not noted	Rarely (~10%)	Rarely (~10%)	Yes
Urine Specific Gravity	Isosthenuria	Mean 1.023	Mean 1.033	Low ( medullary washout)
Proteinuria	None or mild	Yes	No	No
Histopathology (K-kidney; I=intestine)	Fetal glomeruli, fetal mesenchyme (K)	Glomerulonephritis, glomerulosclerosis (K)	IBD, lymphangiectasia, lymphangitis (I)	

RD = Renal Dysplasia    PLN = Protein Losing Nephropathy    PLE = Protein-Losing Enteropathy

## Conclusion:

I am so fortunate to have a wonderful vet. She is confident in what she knows and is the first one to admit that she cannot begin to keep up with all the information out there. She stated that the Internet and email have been one of the best tools she has acquired. She can search for the specialists who are doing the research and developing the treatment protocols for the problem she has identified in the animal she is seeing. When we last spoke about this she mentioned how she is able to email what diagnostic information she has been able to gather to the specialist, the specialist is then able to review the information and either email her back or arrange a telephone call. It saves so much valuable time and money. Just think of it, no telephone tag across North America. She mentioned a specialist at a university in Texas for a dog with cancer, an eye specialist at the University of Minnesota, and yes she has contacted Dr. Littman and Dr. Vaden about Wheatens in her practice. The possibilities are endless.



## Inner Strength

submitted by Sue Luchuck

If you can start the day without caffeine or pep pills,  
 If you can be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,  
 If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,  
 If you can eat the same food everyday and be grateful for it,  
 If you can understand when loved ones are too busy to give you time,  
 If you can overlook when people take things out on you when, through no fault of yours, something goes wrong,  
 If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,  
 If you can face the world without lies and deceit,  
 If you can conquer tension without medical help,  
 If you can relax without liquor,  
 If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,  
 If you can do all these things . . .

THEN YOU ARE PROBABLY THE FAMILY DOG.....

## The Best Place to Bury a Dog

We are thinking now of a Wheaten, whose coat was golden in the sunshine and who, as far as we are aware, never entertained a mean or unworthy thought. This Wheaten is buried beneath a cherry tree, under four feet of garden loam, and at its proper season the cherry strews petals on the green lawn of his grave. Beneath a cherry tree, or an apple or any flowering shrub of the garden is an excellent place to bury a good dog. Beneath such trees, such shrubs, he slept in the drowsy summer or gnawed at a flavourous bone or lifted head to challenge some strange intruder.

These are good places, in life or in death. Yet it is a small matter. For if the dog be well-remembered, if sometimes he leaps through your dreams actual as in like, eyes kindling, laughing, begging, it matter not at all where the dog sleeps. On a hill where the wind is unrebuked and the trees are roaring, or beside a stream he knew in puppyhood, or somewhere in the flatness of a pastureland, where most exhilarating cattle graze.

It is all one to the dog and all one to you, and nothing is gained and nothing lost - if memory lives.

But there is one best place to bury a dog. If you bury him by this spot, he will come to you when you call - come to you over the grim, dim frontiers of death, and down the well-remembered path, and to your side again. And although you call a dozen living dogs to heel they shall not growl at him, or resent his coming, for he belongs there. People may scoff at you. Who see no lightest blade of grass bent by his footfall, who hear no whimper, people who may never really have had a dog. Smile at them, for you shall know something that is hidden from them, and which is well worth the knowing. The one best place to bury a good dog is in the heart of his master.

*From the Portland Oregonian, September 11, 1925.  
By Ben Hur Lampman*

## President's Message by Margaret Stewardson

Dear Wheaten friends!

Well, here it is the end of September and the forecast is for snow this weekend. I hope all of you have survived the blistering hot July, rainy August, the mosquitoes and the grasshoppers of the Summer of 2002!

It was a rather busy summer for some of us. I attended the National Specialty in Woodstock. I entered my Beatrice who is soon approaching her 10th birthday and she was 3rd in her class. Mike and Barb also had one of their dogs there and it did exceptionally well. Roz Bacon had another litter of 10. I don't know how that happens??? Mike and Barb had litter of 8 and I had a litter of 6.

In September, I was fortunate to attend Wheaten Health Seminar in Edmonton presented by Janet Petros, the SCWTA Health Chair. I came away from the seminar believing that we are not doing anywhere near the testing we need to be doing on our Wheatens. The protein creatine testing should be a must for all of us and more preventative testing on young dogs. I know that testing is expensive for all of us, but it is an important tool.

When thinking about our charitable giving this year we should consider Wheaten health. If each of us were to donate \$100 to Wheaten health this would ensure the research would be carried on by Dr Vaden. She is currently working with weagles (wheaten/beagle cross) to identify how PLE/PLN is transferred. Money well spent, I think!

I hope we will, once again, get to share stories of the adventures of your Wheaten at the Wheaten Walk or the Pot Luck scheduled for the Fall.

A number of our members have had some health problems and I want to wish them a speedy recovery. I would like you to think of Sheila Teichreb who is battling an illness right now. For those of you who don't know, Sheila and Ed Teichreb are the founding members of this club so many years ago and their dogs go under the banner "Anlon".

Don't forget to give your Wheaten a big hug every day! They deserve it!



# True Facts about Puppy Mills in Canada

## Voiceless Victims - Prisoners of Greed

- ◆ Hundreds of puppies are born in Puppy Mills each year.
- ◆ Mill dogs are forced to live in very small wire cages, often exposed to the elements. Many pups freeze or die of heat exhaustion.
- ◆ Mill operators minimize expenses by not providing proper food or medical care.
- ◆ Females are bred on their first heat and every cycle after, literally wearing out at 5 to 6 years of age. They are then killed. The “lucky” ones are euthanized!
- ◆ Genetically defective pups are sold to pet stores throughout Canada and the United States.
- ◆ Canada’s Animal Cruelty law was written in 1892.
- ◆ Quebec has an estimated 1800 puppy mills, producing 900,000 pups per year.

## What You Can Do

- ◆ Boycott stores that sell puppies of any kind no matter where they say they got them from. Do not buy any products in their stores. Write the store and tell them that you will not shop there until they stop selling puppies.
- ◆ Never buy a puppy from a pet store! Adopt from a shelter, a rescue organization or buy from a reputable breeder. Remember no reputable breeder would sell puppies to a pet store under any conditions.
- ◆ Educate yourself and tell everyone you know about Puppy Mills.
- ◆ Write your local Members of Parliament expressing your concerns.

## We Have Voices Let Them Be Heard

This information is from <http://www.nopupmillsCanada.ca>. To learn more about puppy mills, visit their website.

# Secondary Boycotts

by Jacki Stein

*Jacki Stein is the “Home Finders” (Rescue) coordinator of the Motor City Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club, Detroit, Michigan. This article is from the club’s newsletter, Tale Waggers, Spring 2002 and is used by permission.*

This may be a term that you’re unfamiliar with but should know if you’re at all involved with pure-bred dogs ... as our readership is. Stated simply, a secondary boycott is accomplished when the secondary or consequent source of a product is avoided, or boycotted, because a boycott of the primary source isn’t feasible or considered productive in order to make a statement about your grievance/objection.

A prime example for us would be that we cannot necessarily make a direct impact on puppy mills by simply not purchasing those animals ourselves and advising others to do the same. They are financially independent and have the resources to overcome the lone objector’s voice. But we CAN make an impact on the merchant in the shop that receives and then sells the animals by also not purchasing any products from said

merchant because of the sale of those live animals on the premises.

So try to remember this the next time you’re in the mall pet store. Buy NOTHING from that store - no food, toys, equipment NOTHING. Anything they sell can be found at another source that does NOT offer live animals for sale. It’s especially effective when your family member wants to go inside the store and look at the cute toys or buy the dog some new treats if you say, “No, I refuse to support a store that sells live animals. Let’s go to (insert store, i.e., PetsMart or Petcetera, etc.), who support and contribute generously to dog and cat rescues and shelters.”

Let’s strike these places where it can be of some benefit; those pet shops don’t move from their premises because they don’t like the coffee - they leave when they don’t make any money. Refuse to support them so that your hard earned dollars don’t go to support something that you’re working against!



# Finding a Reputable Breeder

by Carolyn Fox

Finding a reputable breeder can be a lengthy but rewarding process. Remember, the dog you chose will live with you for as many as 15 years or more. You want to find the most compatible breed first and then a reputable breeder to provide you with your choice. One way to do this is by contacting the Canadian Kennel Club (<http://www.ckc.ca>) and/or breed clubs of the breed for which you are looking. You can also find almost every breed on the Internet by doing a search. A great web site that lists breeders and information on 200 breeds is the Dogs In Canada web site at: <http://www.dogs-in-canada.com/breeds/> An excellent site that also covers most breeds is <http://www.yourpurebredpuppy.com/> "Learn about dog breeds and purebred dogs, including 200 AKC, UKC, and FCI recognized dog breeds, plus rare dog breeds. See dog pictures (dog photos) and learn about temperament and personality before choosing a purebred puppy. Learn how to interview dog breeders and how to choose the best purebred puppy in the litter." To find Reputable Wheaten Breeders go to Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier of Canada Association's web site at <http://www.jb-ccs.com/scwtac/> and look at the "Breeder's Directory".

You can attend a local dog show to talk with owners/handlers about their breed and ask for referrals. If you find an ad in the newspaper, be sure you are able to visit the home of the puppy's mother to see how and where the puppies are born and raised. The environment should be clean, the dogs healthy and well kept. Reputable breeders usually do not need to use newspaper ads. Be especially careful with ads that offer more than three or four different breeds or a cross of two breeds in more than one ad under the same phone number.

A reputable breeder breeds one, or perhaps two breeds and is not out to make money. They probably have a waiting list and definitely do not have puppies

available year-round. You can expect a reputable breeder to ask a lot of questions about your work schedule, your home, your yard, your children, and other pets to find out if their breed is right for you. This information helps match a particular puppy to your family's lifestyle. If you pass the "test" and are honoured with a puppy, expect to sign a contract. A clear and understandable contract with everything in writing and signed by both parties, makes for the best relationship with your breeder during the life of your dog. Your puppy's health will be guaranteed by a reputable breeder in their contract. They should take back their puppies or dogs at any time and will actually request that you return the dog to them if for ANY reason you must give him up. (i.e. They are responsible for each and every puppy they breed for its entire life.) A reputable breeder educates the new puppy owner about potential genetic problems (all breeds have them!) and will not place a puppy in a new home before 7 or 8 weeks of age. They encourage tests for various health problems and ask you to report the results back to them so they have a good knowledge of what is in their lines. The testing and reporting may be required in your contract. A reputable breeder of Wheatens will also give you full details on all the grooming care required and probably provide you with a manual and/or plenty of information. Reputable breeders will also provide an official and correct pedigree for both puppy's parents. A dog that is "CKC" registered should be "Canadian Kennel Club" registered, not "Continental Kennel Club" or "Canines of Kansas Club" registered.

A reputable breeder often keeps a puppy from each litter for their breeding program. A litter is produced after careful consideration of the temperament,



physical qualities, individual strengths, and weaknesses, and how the pedigrees relate. Reputable breeders will often fly a bitch many miles to be bred to just the right stud. After this careful and lengthy process it is not hard to realize that a reputable breeder wants only the very best homes for their puppies.

As [No Puppy Mills Canada](#) says in their web site: "ABOVE ALL, dogs of reputable breeders are beloved family members first! Their canine "kids" live in the house with them, and are loved and respected just like the other family members. If this is not the case when you visit a potential breeder, JUST WALK AWAY!"

Some references from:

<http://www.nopupmillsCanada.ca/>

Read more about puppy mills, backyard breeders and how to identify a good breeder in the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Association of Canada's printable Buyer's Guide found at:

<http://www.jb-ccs.com/scwtac/>

# Questions to ask any breeder

This printable questionnaire can be found at [http://www.nopuppymillscanada.ca/reputable\\_breeders.htm/](http://www.nopuppymillscanada.ca/reputable_breeders.htm/)

The first and most important question to ask is:

Why does the breeder breed? If for any other reason than to improve the health and temperament of the breed, then this is NOT A REPUTABLE BREEDER. You do not need to ask any more questions. Following a favourable response to that first question, here are some other crucial points to find out:

1. What is the breeder's experience in raising and training this breed?
2. How many dogs/breeds of dogs does the breeder have?
3. Where do the dogs live?
4. Is the breeder involved with the breed club?
5. What activities does the breeder participate in?
6. Does the breeder support any health registry by contributing information on dogs in the pedigree, even if those dogs are not going to be bred?
7. What are the potential genetic problems with this breed?
8. What kind of support will the buyer receive before and after the purchase of the puppy?
9. Can the buyer return the puppy for any reason it doesn't work out?
10. How old will the puppies be when placed in their new homes?
11. How do they evaluate the temperament of each puppy?
12. How do they match each buyer with each puppy? Can the buyer just pick any puppy? Or will the breeder interview the buyer and try to make the match?
13. What steps are being taken to properly socialize each individual puppy? Are they exposed to children, other dogs, cats, and a variety of other people?
14. Are pet buyers required to spay/neuter their puppy? At what age, and how is this enforced?

**\*\*Remember\*\*** The breeder should be asking you a lot of questions about you and your lifestyle.



# See How They Grow



Tess had ten beautiful puppies on May 10, 2002. Roz Bacon, Tess's owner, chose one puppy to photograph shortly after birth and then on a weekly basis so we could see how puppies develop and grow during their first eight weeks. Each photo is taken beside the same standard 30 cm (12 inch) ruler. You can see more photos showing the development of this puppy and his litter mates, including the one on the cover, at Roz's web site: <http://www.imagewireless.ca/myweb/wheatndale/index.htm/>



This is the puppy shortly after birth. Roz has placed a different coloured ribbon around each puppy's neck for identification purposes. These have to be removed and replaced weekly because the puppies grow so fast.



During week one the puppy has the dew claws removed and tail docked. It sleeps and eats and is cleaned by its mother.

## The Prairie Wheaten



The puppy continues eating, sleeping and growing during week two.



By week three the puppy's ears and eyes are open. It begins walking, playing and interacting with its litter mates.



The puppy now walks well, can climb (even escape from the pen) and plays with toys and litter mates in week four.



By week five the puppy is starting to eat solid food and enjoys running and playing outdoors.



The puppy becomes more adventurous and loves to play with anything (toys, fingers, toes) he can get his sharp little teeth into during week six.



By week seven he's running and playing and very inquisitive about the world around him.

# The Prairie Wheaten

## Don'ts for Puppies

Don't smell crotches, don't eat plants.  
Don't steal food or underpants.  
Don't eat my socks, don't grab my hair!  
Don't rip the stuffing from the chair.  
Don't chew my shoes, what is this mush?  
Eat your cookies, drink your drink,  
Outta the toilet! Outta the sink!  
Away from the litterbox, it's for the cat.  
(And must you kiss me after that!?)  
Raising a puppy is not for the lazy,  
Those rugrats are funny but also quite crazy.  
Don't despair through the toil and the strife,  
Cause after three years, you'll get back your life.  
So let's go for walkies so you can do your "thing."  
And maybe I'll get back my good diamond ring!

author unknown



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# The Prairie Wheaten

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**Dogs, Cats & Pesticides...** an information sheet  
submitted by Barb Osborne

Your pet is exposed to chemical pesticides through oral ingestion, skin contact, or through inhalation. These chemicals have been linked with a variety of health problems, and even death. Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in dogs and cats today. Lymphosarcoma (a malignancy of blood-forming tissues) has been associated with exposure to the commonly used herbicide 2-4-D.

Some insecticides have been found to increase the risk of bladder cancer in dogs. Compared to humans, dogs develop tumours twice as frequently, and most animal cancers progress at a more rapid rate than the same cancers in humans.

Similarities have been seen in the epidemiology of breast cancer in humans and dogs.

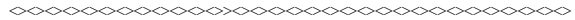
Thyroid problems are more likely to develop in pets exposed to chemical lawn pesticides.

Organophosphate chemicals (eg: Diazinon, Malathion) can affect the neurological transmitters in an animal's central nervous system. Increased levels of aggression have been observed in cats after exposure to organophosphate and carbamate insecticides. Pets accumulate pesticide residues on their feet and fur, ingesting residues while grooming, and tracking

them onto carpets and furniture in your home, where they may accumulate and persist for years. Acute poisoning symptoms in a pet may include: foaming of the mouth, irritability, increased respiratory rate and difficulty breathing, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle spasms, and seizures. Without proper treatment, the animal may die.

Because we live in a virtual toxic stew of man-made chemicals, it is impossible to prove absolutely, the connection between chemical pesticides and morbidity. That's why we refer to the Precautionary Principle of International Law... It says that if there is a possibility that a substance may cause harm, the lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent those harms. In other words, err on the side of Caution!

Animals are naturally curious, and depend on you to be alert for their safety and well-being. Choose environmentally friendly methods of dealing with pests. It may save your pet's life.



Prepared by the London Coalition Against Pesticides with information from the Rachel Carson League Council, the American Animal Hospital Association, and "Are You Poisoning Your Pets?", by N. Anderson & H. Peiper. LCAP can be contacted at [hottopics@hotmail.com](mailto:hottopics@hotmail.com).



## Abbe gets a visit from Max and MacDuff



Yawn ... it's a beautiful September afternoon and I'm bored.



What's that?  
Oh, there's someone at my gate!



Good Grief!!  
What's that big creature?



What a big nose you  
have MacDuff ...  
and such long ears!

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## The Prairie Wheaten

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What is Max doing over there?



Max, is this the paw I use to help you dig under the fence?



We're thirsty ...  
but what a big body  
you have MacDuff.  
Hey! Leave some water  
in the bowl for me!!



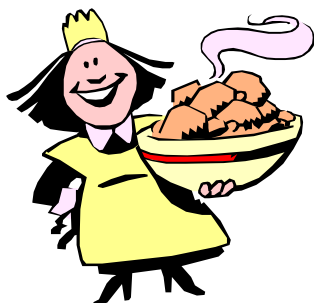
I need a nap.  
Visitors are fun but those two  
big boys wore me out.



## Recipes for Dog Treats

*I'm going back to basics and offering recipes that are nutritious yet quick and easy. With these recipes "time" can never be an excuse for neglecting to bake delicious healthy treats for your dog. After these easy doughs are mixed, you can simply pat them out to bake in one large mass (as in Italian Delights), or cut into treat sized squares to bake. For special occasions or gift-giving, a bone shape or cookie cutter can be used, but dogs don't worry too much about the shape of their biscuit. As usual, these recipes have been tested in Carolyn's kitchen. Kitchen Assistants Max, our Wheaten, and MacDuff, our daughter's Basset Hound, found them all lip-smacking good.*

*Look for interesting and healthy flours to use in your dog biscuit baking. Health Food stores have a wide variety from Soy to Barley to Seven Grain flour. At Safeway I recently found a flour I didn't know existed - gluten free pea flour. I used small amounts in some of these recipes. Be inventive with the "additional ingredients" as well. **Rosemary** stimulates the circulatory system and treats bad breath. **Kelp** is rich in vitamins, contains 30 minerals, aids with brain and nerve function, aids digestion and controls the thyroid. **Alfalfa** aids in healing allergies, stomach ailments and bad breath; cleanses the kidneys and removes poisons from the body. **Ground flaxseed** provides Omega-3 fatty acids, nourishes and is soothing to the stomach and intestinal linings, and also helps put a sheen on the coat.*



### Italian Delights

4 cups assorted flours  
2/3 cups vegetable oil  
2/3 cup powdered milk  
2 eggs  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 tablespoon garlic powder  
1 teaspoon oregano leaves  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley  
1/2 teaspoon rosemary  
Optional: ground flax seed, cracked wheat, chopped nuts, wheat germ

Thoroughly blend all ingredients. Add just enough water (or chicken stock) to form a stiff dough. Roll or pat dough out to a thickness of 13 mm (1/2 inch). Place the dough on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake at 350° for 15 to 20 minutes. For crunchy treats, turn off oven and let the cookie stay in the oven for an additional hour. Allow the giant treat cookie to cool then break into small pieces. Store the pieces in plastic bags in the refrigerator or freezer.

### Chicken-Licken Biscuits

4 cups assorted flours  
2 cups cornmeal  
Pinch of salt  
2 eggs  
6 tablespoons vegetable oil  
2 teaspoons chopped fresh parsley  
1 1/2 cups chicken stock  
Optional additions: ground flax seed, wheat germ, cracked wheat, chopped nuts, 1 tsp kelp, 1 tsp alfalfa

Mix the flours, cornmeal and salt into one bowl. Whip the eggs, oil, parsley, chicken broth and optional ingredients in a separate large bowl. Add the flour mixture to larger bowl and mix until a soft dough forms. Knead the dough and pat or roll it out to 13 mm (1/2 inch) thickness. Use cookie cutters to make bone or holiday shaped biscuits. \* Quick and easy method: cut into squares with a sharp knife.



Place on lightly greased cookie sheets and bake at 400° for 15 minutes. Cool on racks, let harden overnight, then store in airtight container in refrigerator or freezer.

### Cheesy Cookies

2 cups quick-cooking oats  
1/2 cup margarine  
2 cups hot meat stock  
2 cups assorted flours  
1 1/2 cups yellow cornmeal  
1 cup nonfat milk  
2 eggs  
2 tablespoons sugar (opt'l)  
2 cups grated cheddar cheese  
All-purpose flour  
Optional additions: ground flax, wheat germ, cracked wheat, chopped nuts ...

Place the oats and margarine in a large bowl. Add the hot meat stock and mix well. Add the remaining ingredients and optional ingredients if desired. Mix and form into one big ball, adding flour as needed to make a stiff dough. Roll or pat dough out to a 13 mm (1/2 inch) thickness. Use bone shaped or holiday shaped cookie cutters to cut out cookie shapes. \* Quick and easy method: using a floured sharp knife, cut dough into squares.

Place on lightly greased cookie sheets. Bake at 350° for 10 to 12 minutes, or until golden brown. Let the cookies cool on racks and harden overnight. Store in airtight container in refrigerator or freezer.

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# The Prairie Wheaten

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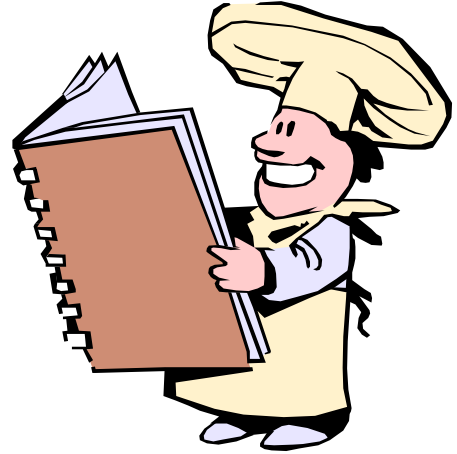
## Bow Wow Biscuits

6 cups assorted flours  
½ cup powdered milk  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley  
2 teaspoons garlic powder  
2 tablespoons active dry yeast  
½ cup warm water  
2 cups warm chicken stock  
1 egg  
1 tablespoon skim milk  
Optional additions: ground flax; 1 tsp alfalfa, kelp, or rosemary; wheat germ; cracked wheat ....

Combine flours, powdered milk, parsley and garlic powder in a large bowl. Dissolve the yeast in the warm water in a smaller bowl for a few minutes. Add the warm chicken stock to the yeast. Combine the liquid mixture into the large bowl and knead for 4 or 5 minutes. Roll the dough out to a 6 mm (1/4 inch) thickness. Cut into bone shapes and place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Beat the egg with the skim milk. Brush the

dough lightly with this glaze. \* Quick and easy method: cut dough into squares with a sharp knife and omit glaze.

Bake for 20 - 25 minutes at 350°. Cool biscuits on racks, let harden overnight then store in airtight container in refrigerator or freezer.



## Special Diet Treats

Some dogs are on prescription or therapeutic diets available only from veterinarians. (Hypoallergenic, Reduced Protein, Kidney Management, Gastro Formula...). In certain cases these dogs may be allowed to eat ONLY that kibble and that kibble alone. Here is cookie recipe for those dogs who may feel they are missing out on treats.

2 cups of therapeutic diet  
1 1/4 cups water (more or less)

Place the dry kibble in a blender. Grind it to a fine “flour-like” powder. Place the powdered kibble in a small bowl. Add enough water while stirring the mixture until it is of cookie dough consistency. Drop teaspoons full of “dough” onto cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Bake longer for a crunchier cookie or larger cookies. Store these cookies in the refrigerator for up to ten days.

## The Best Part About Owning A Dog...

... is the way he will come over to see me, for no reason,  
just to let me know I'm important to him...  
... is the way he is always ready to lick the jelly off my nose...  
... is the way he looks into my eyes and finds contentment in  
simply being near me...  
... is the way he will run all over the yard, fetch a soggy tennis  
ball and bring it back to me as if to say “look mom, it's all  
I have, but it's yours...  
... is the way he wakes me up in the morning by pushing his  
cold wet nose in my ear and snuffing loudly...  
... is the way he shreds toilet paper all over the house, because  
it's fun even though he knows he shouldn't...  
... is the way he comes over to me when he is sad...  
... is the way he wedges himself near me when I am sad and  
push all others away, to console me with his love...  
... is the way he pounces on crickets in the backyard...  
... is the way he doesn't care about bad hair day or overdue bills...  
... is the way he loves you, even when you are impatient with  
him and have no time this morning for a game of tug-a-war...  
... is the way his coat feels like liquid silk under my fingers...  
... is the way he finds wisdom beyond words.



## Regina Wheaten Walk - May 26, 2002

Thirty-one people, twenty-one Wheatens and two other breeds gathered on a beautiful spring day to walk around Wascana Lake.



## Saskatoon Wheaten Walk - June 1, 2002

Twenty-four people, eight Wheatens and five other breeds met at Diefenbaker Center on the U of S campus on a hot sunny day for a walk along the Saskatchewan River. Organizer Adrienne Bedrich thanks all who came out.



## Regina Wheaten Walk - September 29, 2002

On a warm Autumn day, 27 people, 13 Wheatens and 4 other breeds met to walk around Wascana Lake.

Darby, from Prince Albert, came the farthest. Abbe at 13 weeks was the youngest and KC at almost 15 was the oldest.



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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 also that the newsletter is available via e-mail. It saves the club postage and you get the newsletter in colour. Let Alan Fox at [acfox@canada.com](mailto:acfox@canada.com) know if you'd like to be added to the newsletter e-mail list. Previous issues are posted on the Internet at: <http://wheatenguy.tripod.ca/prairie.html>

## Vaccinations

If you need more information to help you decide about vaccinations, this web site may be of interest: <http://www.next2kin.org/vaccination.htm>

**The Merck Veterinary Manual** - this web site is worth bookmarking. You will find information on almost any ailment or disease you may ever encounter with your dog .... or cat, sheep, chicken or cow: [www.merckvetmanual.com/mvm/index.jsp](http://www.merckvetmanual.com/mvm/index.jsp)

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**The Senior Dogs Project** - is a web site "Looking Out for Older Dogs". This site publishes a monthly online newsletter and has many helpful tips on the care and health of the older dog. It also has a chart to help you determine the age of your dog in human years (a 10 year old Wheaten is equivalent to a 60 year old human):

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



## Happy Halloween

Please make your submissions for the next issue to:

Carolyn or Alan Fox

74 Cooper Crescent

Regina, SK S4R 4J7

or email at [cfox@sk.sympatico.ca](mailto:cfox@sk.sympatico.ca)

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