

## **RRCUS CODE OF ETHICS—Revised 2 /96, 1/99, 1/00, 6/06, 1/10, 6/18, 8/19**

This Code of Ethics is presented as a guide to the standard of conduct expected from a RRCUS Member. A Member's foremost aims should be the welfare and improvement of the Breed. The purpose of this Code of Ethic is to set forth principles of practice to which the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States, Inc. would have its members adhere as they strive to accomplish the goals and purposes set forth in the Constitution and By-Laws of RRCUS. These guidelines are presented with the realization that ethics are difficult to regulate and that most individuals desire and intend to do what is right. When a member is in doubt on any of the following points, an ethical owner is encouraged to consult with experienced RRCUS breeders or the Ethics Committee.

### **I. HEALTH**

1. All dogs shall be kept in a clean, healthy, and safe environment
2. Dogs will be provided with the appropriate nutrition, exercise, socialization, vaccinations, internal and external parasite control and veterinary treatment necessary to provide maximum mental and physical well-being.
3. When a Rhodesian Ridgeback (neonate through adult) must be euthanized, the procedure should be humanely performed.

### **II. BREEDING**

**A breeder's aim and foremost responsibility shall be to produce the healthiest and best representatives of the breed possible.**

1. Only purebred, registered (American Kennel Club or equivalent Foreign Registry) Rhodesian Ridgebacks shall be used for breeding.
2. Each litter shall be the result of conscientious planning, including consideration of physical and genetic health, soundness, temperament and conformity to the official standard of the breed as established by the RRCUS and approved by the American Kennel Club (AKC). RRCUS strongly recommends that health testing be performed on all breeding stock. Full disclosure of all health screening results—especially abnormal results—must be made to all parties to the breeding and to all prospective purchasers of puppies resulting from such a breeding.
  - a. In order to protect the health and safety of the stud dog and brood bitch (as well as resulting puppies) it is recommended that both dog and bitch have pre-breeding veterinary screenings to certify that they are in good breeding condition. A test for Brucella is prudent to protect both stud dog and bitch.
  - b. Dogs and bitches bred under the age of 24 months must have preliminary screenings indicating they are clear of hip and elbow dysplasia by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) or comparable foreign registry.
  - c. Dogs and bitches bred over the age of 24 months, must have final screenings certified clear of hip and elbow dysplasia by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), or comparable foreign registry.
  - d. A Penn Hip evaluation of 0.30 or below, is an indication that hip dysplasia is very unlikely to occur, is also acceptable as a final screening.
  - e. Foreign dogs must be screened as appropriate for their country of residence.
  - f. RRCUS has identified other strongly recommended screenings that are outlined in the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) which include a complete thyroid panel from an OFA approved laboratory or ACVIM Board certified Internal Medicine specialist, cardiac certification (OFA or cardiologist evaluation), OFA Companion Animal Eye Registry certification (CAER)\*. Bear in mind that a CHIC number only indicates that testing has been done—it does not certify normal results (\*indicates annual re-test requirement). Additionally, DNA testing is encouraged for the autosomal recessive genetic diseases: degenerative myelopathy (DM), juvenile myoclonic epilepsy (JME) and Early Onset Adult Deafness (EOAD). While it is perfectly acceptable to breed carriers to dogs that have tested clear, to avoid the production of affected offspring, carriers should never be bred to other carriers.
  - g. Breeders shall endeavor to stay current in their knowledge of all known heritable diseases present in the breed and demonstrate reasonable care in eliminating those diseases. For up-to-date date test availability and current RRCUS recommended tests please check the Health & Genetics section of RRCUS.org.
  - h. Only mature adult dogs shall be used in a breeding program. Additional precautions including a veterinarian consultation should be taken when breeding a bitch over seven (7) years and under 18 months of age.
  - i. Dogs born prior to 2000 whose semen has been collected and frozen shall only be required to be certified free of hip dysplasia by OFA or a comparable foreign registry.
3. A litter should only be bred with the intention of producing conformation and performance candidates and healthy, mentally stable companion animals.
4. When entering into a breeding agreement, a written contract should be signed and dated by all owners and co-owners of the sire and dam. Full disclosure of all test results for inheritable disease shall be made available to all parties.
5. Breeders are responsible for the progeny of their dogs. They are required to assist rescue in the placement and care of any dog they bred which is surrendered to rescue. For the purposes of this document "Breeder" is defined as the owner, co-owner or lessee of the bitch at the time of breeding, whelping, selling and/or placing of the puppies. Stud dog owners are also responsible for the progeny of their dogs and are required to assist in the placement and care of any dog in rescue that was sired by their dog. For the purposes of this document "Stud dog owner" is defined as the owner, co-owner or lessee of the stud dog at the time of the breeding.

### III. SALES

**Members must be particularly concerned with the proper placement of adults as well as puppies, both pet and show potential.**

1. Rhodesian Ridgebacks should not be displayed in public places for the sole purpose of immediate sale.
2. Breeders shall require purchasers to sterilize (spay, neuter, vasectomize or perform tubal ligation) on any dog that is not considered breedable quality and make use of limited registrations where appropriate. When puppies with serious defects or faults (Dermoid Sinus, ridgeless) are sold the breeder must take the extra responsibility to see that the dog is sterilized. Dermoid surgery should be performed prior to placing the pup in a new home.
3. Members will not knowingly furnish puppies or adult dogs for wholesale, pet shops, puppy brokers, commercial facilities, guard dog businesses or agents thereof, or dispose of them as "Give away" prizes or auction items; neither will they sell puppies to nor breed to dogs owned by those whom they have reason to believe may do so.
4. AKC (or equivalent) registration papers or a bill of sale stating sire, dam, and date of birth shall accompany puppies to new homes.
5. Breeders shall furnish the buyer with dates of inoculations, deworming, as well as written details on feeding and general care of the dog and the name and address of a licensed veterinarian who has examined the puppy after the age of six weeks. Furthermore, full written disclosure of inheritable disease testing done on both sire and dam shall be enclosed in the puppy packet when the puppy leaves the breeder's home. Puppies should be microchipped between 8 weeks and two years at the breeder's discretion.
6. Responsibility of the breeder does not stop with the sale. The breeder should be available for consultation and to assist in the recovery and placement of any dog sold by the breeder if such need arises at any time in the dog's life. Members will not dispose of dogs or puppies by giving them to the local animal shelter, pound, humane society or any organization of that type. If due to distance or circumstance the breeder is unable to accept physical return of a dog, the breeder should direct the dog's return to Ridgeback Rescue and financially support the animal until it can be rehomed.

### IV. REGISTRATION AND RECORDS

1. All members shall keep complete and accurate records of individual dogs, breedings, litters, pedigrees, and puppy sales as required by the AKC, and abide by the AKC rules and regulations.
2. Whenever a dog changes in ownership all parties shall enter into a signed and dated written agreement.

### V. CONDUCT

**We are the face of purebred dogs. Members shall do all within their power to uphold, promote and protect the interests of the breed by conducting themselves in a manner reflecting credit on the Club, its members, their dogs and the dog world in general.**

1. Members shall abide by the rules and regulations of the AKC (or the rules under which an event is held), exhibit in the spirit of good sportsmanship, and treat all present with respect and courtesy in all manner of interaction adhering to the AKC Code of Sportsmanship.
2. Members should strive to be open and welcoming to newcomers with an interest in our breed.
3. A member does not engage in false or misleading statements regarding a judge, official, exhibitor, fellow member, or another's dog. Nor should any member misrepresent their own dogs through claims or advertising. Use of any electronic or print media or communication platform to intimidate or harass is considered prejudicial to good sportsmanship.
4. It is the intent of open registry and exchange of information to encourage breeders to make knowledgeable breeding decisions; therefore, RRCUS Members shall not use information from open registries and/or full disclosure of health screening results maliciously.
5. Whether attending an event or merely traveling with their dogs, members shall treat hotels, public venues, show grounds and other guests with respect. Owners should pick up after their dogs, attend to disruptive dogs, and leave the premises in a clean condition.
6. Documented misconduct or violation of this Code of Ethics should objectively and calmly be presented to the proper representative of RRCUS or the AKC when appropriate. Members will participate and assist in Ethics Committee investigations if called upon.

Education and communication are the preferred methods of obtaining compliance to this Code of Ethics; however, flagrant, serious and/or repeated disregard of this code may result in formal charges brought before the RRCUS Board of Directors by RRCUS members, nonmembers or the Ethics Committee. Contract violations as well as slanderous or libelous allegations between members shall be adjudicated in the courts prior to presentation to the proper representatives of the RRCUS.