

From the GRCA Health & Genetics Committee

New OFA-ACVIM Advanced Cardiac Database (ACA)

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals and the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine have recently implemented a new cardiac database with the primary purpose, as it relates to Golden Retrievers, of improving data collection regarding disease prevalence and progression. Modeled after the OFA's eye screening program, the new ACA (for "Advanced Cardiac") exam form is a triplicate form, and the research copy will allow aggregate capture of data (with dog and owner identity removed) that will be provided to breed clubs and the research community. This is an important improvement that will benefit our breed over time.

The new examination forms have already been distributed to most cardiologists, so the transition to the new format should be seamless from the owner's perspective. Since only board-certified cardiologists will be permitted to examine dogs for the ACA, there will be a phase-out period during which both the prior and the new databases will co-exist, after which all exams will be limited to cardiologists only. This phase-out period is primarily for breeds that have been accepting examinations by general practitioners and specialists other than cardiologists, and eventually ACA will replace the prior database. Because GRCA's Code of Ethics and CHIC requirements already accept examination reports from cardiologists only, with OFA's counsel, GRCA will be making the transition to the ACA and will no longer accept reports entered into the old database as of September 1, 2016. As with any such changes, this affects examinations on or after that date and is not retroactive.

The full text of the OFA-ACVIM announcement can be read at:

http://www.ofa.org/pdf/ACA_Announcement.pdf Please note that the discussion of a two-tiered clearance in which the second tier includes yearly clearances for adult onset cardiac disease DOES NOT apply as a general recommendation to Goldens, and a single examination after the age of 12 months will still be valid for the dog's lifetime in our breed. However, this second tier database could be valuable when unusual adult onset diseases (such as cardiomyopathy) arise, and owners are encouraged to use the triplicate forms throughout a dog's life for any diagnosis. Reporting via the research copy allows surveillance that can serve as an early warning system as diseases emerge or increase in prevalence in a breed.

In summary, GRCA owners and breeders should not expect any significant changes regarding acceptable cardiac examiners, cardiac examination procedures, or certification. At most, owners and clinic sponsors may wish to verify in advance that the examiner is using and supplying the appropriate triplicate forms.

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