

When we first came into the breed about 15 years ago, we heard veiled references to the Backcross project. The references were always made in hushed tones, and when we asked what the backcross was all about, we'd generally always be told "Oh, it was horrible, nearly destroyed the Club". That was all that would be said. We had no idea what "it" was, nor had we any idea how it could have come close to destroying the club.

Now the membership of DCA is once again presented with the notion of the backcross project. Given how painful the history on this topic was, it is a credit to the membership that the topic has been able to be re-opened and once again put forth as a possible solution for urate stones.

I think a lot of positive steps have been taken to provide more and better information on the project. The membership voted to lift the gag order on the topic. The LUA website was created. The 2008 National Specialty included a parade of the LUA Dals and the dogs were made available to the membership so that folks could see for themselves. All of this was accomplished in about 2 years.

There is more work to be done, and we are certainly on a much better path than we were 20 years ago. We still have strong opinions amongst the membership but that shouldn't surprise anyone. Just sit ringside at a dog show and listen to the animated debate that accompanies any discussion on judging and what the judge selected.

We breeders can be very strong in our convictions. And we have the freedom to act on our convictions. We assess our breeding stock the best we can. We make breeding decisions that cause others to think us either brilliant or insane, and we continue on, each of us pursuing our individual goal of improving our breeding stock and ultimately contributing back to this breed that we all love.

The backcross project has the potential of helping us if not eliminate then greatly reduce the incidence of a known health problem in the breed - the formation of urate stones. I encourage the membership of DCA to continue to support the progression of this project. More information will allow us as breeders to make better decisions.

Am I in support of the project - you bet! It all comes down to choices and I prefer to have as many of them as possible. If a LUA Dal was registered tomorrow would I breed to it? It depends. If the dog was the right match for my bitch based on the criteria I was using to select a stud dog, then yes I would. IF the dog did not fit the overall criteria, then I'd pass just like I'd do with any other stud dog I was evaluating.

I'm voting "yes" on the upcoming ballot. Why? It's a matter of choice!

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