

# Great Pyrenees Club of America

## Health Survey Summary

For the period 9/02 – 12/04



Submitted by: Michael Jourdan  
Health Committee Chairman  
February 2006

## **Health Survey Commentary**

The GPCA, as a part of its concern for the health of the breed, conducts an on-going health survey. For the period of September 2002 through December 2004, we received 416 completed health surveys. It should be noted that of the 416 surveys received, only 93 came from GPCA members. While we can say we know a great deal about our pet and rescue dogs, we know a lot less about our show dog population. We should also remember that the majority of rescue or pet dogs with known pedigrees, GPCA member kennels can be identified in 3 or 4 generations.

Prior to looking at the numbers, I think we should look at surveys in general, and what they hope to accomplish. Surveys, while a useful tool, are only as good as: the design of the survey; the size of the response; and the accuracy of the information given by the people responding. Using hip dysplasia as an example, U.C. Davis published a paper that listed Great Pyrenees that came to their veterinary clinic had a greater than 50% incidence of hip dysplasia.

The results from the 2004 Health Survey list the incidence of hip dysplasia at 35% in those dogs x-rayed. The health survey completed in 1999 listed the incidence at 21%. OFA statistics report the incidence of hip dysplasia in Great Pyrenees at 9.3%; so how do we account for the difference in numbers? The high incidence at U.C. Davis reflects a population with a high number of referrals of dogs with problems. The 35% from the 2004 Survey reflecting the fact that only 20 dogs were x-rayed of the 416 dogs surveyed is statistically insignificant. The 9.3% reported by OFA is almost certainly, by virtue of their screening methods, low. People generally do not send in X-rays of affected dogs.

Looking at percentages and actual numbers found in the survey, serve little purpose. The actual use is in spotting trends. There were no dwarfs reported in this year's survey, though we enrolled 2 families in the dwarf marker project. We obviously need to do something to encourage our GPCA members to fill out surveys if we want to make them useful. We hope to involve the GPCA membership in reviewing this concern.

---

---

## **2004 GPCA HEALTH SURVEY**

The GPCA as part of its concern for the health and welfare of the breed is conducting an on-going Health Survey of the breed. The Health Committee received 416 Health Surveys for the period from: September 2002 through December 2004. Of these, 313 were from Non-GPCA members consisting mainly of rescue dogs and pets with no known name of breeder. 93 of the surveys were from GPCA members. 10 were from pet stores or pet brokers with pedigrees. Note that in determining numbers of dogs that are attributed to GPCA members, the numbers used reflect dog's names that were submitted with Kennel Prefixes belonging to GPCA members.

**Continued on Next Page**

# GPCA Health Survey for the Period of: 09/2002 thru 12/31/2004

Participation from the following States (NOTE – multiple dogs in households and some deceased reported from years ago but survey not completed prior to now).

#Received

416

<b>AK</b>	<b>AL</b>	<b>AR</b>	<b>AZ</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>CO</b>	<b>FL</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>IL</b>	<b>IN</b>
8	5	12	16	19	14	18	2	3	9
<b>IN</b>	<b>IA</b>	<b>KS</b>	<b>LA</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>MD</b>	<b>MN</b>	<b>MO</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>MT</b>
9	8	13	9	23	15	16	12	11	7
<b>NC</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>NJ</b>	<b>NV</b>	<b>NY</b>	<b>OH</b>	<b>PA</b>	<b>RI</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>TN</b>
10	5	14	8	26	32	6	6	11	16
<b>TX</b>	<b>UT</b>	<b>VA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>WI</b>	<b>WV</b>				
14	7	13	12	4	3				

Category: Sex  
Males  
Females

216  
200

Category: Spayed / Neutered / Intact  
Males Neutered  
Males Intact

Females  
Spayed  
Females  
Intact

203  
13  
172  
28

Bred  
Bred

10  
21

Litters  
Litters

21  
52

Living  
Males  
Males

Deceased

188  
22

Females  
Females

183  
17

General Overall Health

Ex Good Fair Poor  
280 126 7 3

Cause of Death – All Dogs submitted as “Deceased” were Euthanized – The breakdown is as follows

Cancer	Loss of Use of Rear	Aggression	Kidney	Addison’s
21	11	2	2	3

**Note below are the numbers that were submitted to the Health Committee by members not by OFA or Penn Hip.**

---

### **Skeletal Diseases**

**Hip Dysplasia** - out of the 416 surveys, **only 20 dogs were X-rayed.** 10 of these dogs were obtained from GPCA Breeders. Out of the 20 dogs, 7 dogs were diagnosed with Hip Dysplasia, 3 of which were obtained from GPCA Breeders. The balance of dogs received a passing score and out of those 13 passing – 7 dogs were from GPCA Breeders. There were no dogs submitted that had a reading from either Penn Hip or GDC.

**Elbow Dysplasia** – 10 Dogs were X-rayed for Elbow Dysplasia and all were obtained from GPCA Breeders. Out of the 10, 7 had “Normal” elbows – balance of 3 not passing. All 7 dogs were registered with OFA.

**Luxating Patellas** – A total of 15 dogs were tested. 12 dogs/bitches reported to have patella problems. All were examined by Veterinarians using the protocol set forth by OFA. Out of the 15 dogs/bitches – 3 had a grade “4” reading, 9 had a grade “2”, and 3 were normal. The 3 that were normal also received OFA Certification. Of these 15 dogs 8 were obtained from GPCA Breeders.

**Panosteitis** – 165 dogs/bitches between the ages of 5 months to 20 months were reported to have at one point suffered from Pano. Out of the 165 dogs, 72 were obtained from GPCA Breeders. The majority of the dogs/bitches onset age was greater between the ages of 5 – 9 months. Note; on a majority of survey’s regarding Rescue Dogs – owner’s who had Vet records on the Rescue dogs submitted as such.

**Arthritis** – 48 dogs/bitches between the ages of 4 – 12.5 years old were reported to have a form of Arthritis, apparently affecting both the front and rear. Of these 48 dogs, the youngest being 4 years old also had Severe Hip Dysplasia, this was also a Rescue Dog.

**Spinal Myelopathy** – Though no one had reported any dog being diagnosed with this, many dogs were put down for “not being able to stand up on their rear”. Would suggest more Education on Spinal D/O.

**Cervical Instability** – As above

**Dwarfism** – None reported.

---

### **Eyes**

Out of 416 dogs only 22 were reported to have eye problems (4 from GPCA Breeders).

**Entropion** – 3 dogs were reported to have had this and all 3 were diagnosed by their Vets (not specialists) (out of the 3 – 2 were from GPCA Breeders)

**Ectropion** – 6 dogs were reported to have had this and only 1 was diagnosed by an Eye Specialist and this dog was from a GPCA Breeder. The balance were not from GPCA Breeders and were diagnosed by their Vet.

**Cataracts** - 13 dogs were diagnosed by their Vets to have Cataracts – these dogs were also over the age of 9 years old. Of these 13 dogs, 8 were from GPCA Breeders.

**Persistent Pupillary Membrane** – None reported.

---

**Ears** –

**Chronic Ear Infections** – as listed above.

**Hearing Impaired** - No one submitted that their dog has been diagnosed using the BAER method.

---

**Skin** - Ear Infections - 298 dogs/bitches of 416 dogs surveyed reported ear problems with onset as early as 8 weeks. None of these dogs/bitches were reported to have been tested for allergies. GPCA# 56 by GPCA members

**Flea Bite Dermatitis** – 17 dogs were reported to have suffered at one time or another with Flea Bite Dermatitis – 10 of the 17 were from GPCA Breeders.

**Chronic Hot Spots** – 36 dogs were reported to have had bouts of Hot Spots and of these 36, 28 were from GPCA Breeders.

**Mange** – 19 dogs were reported to have had Mange – no dog was from a GPCA Breeder. All were from either a Shelter or Rescue and had been turned in with it.

**Food Allergy** – 6 dogs were reported to have had one form of Food Allergy. Only 2 reported a “grain” allergy which was diagnosed through testing by a specialist. These 2 dogs were obtained from GPCA Breeders.

---

**Cancer** – Bone - 17 Lung - 1 Bladder - 1 Stomach Cancer 1 Unknown - 1 GPCA# 9 dogs/bitches were bred by GPCA members

---

**Blood Disorders** – 2 dogs (non GPCA Breeders) were reported to have Anemia. One dog was 13 months old and the other 18 months old.

---

**Hormone Deficiencies** – 39 dogs were reported to have some form of a Hormone Deficiency listed below.

**Addison’s Disease** – 7 dogs were diagnosed by Vets to have Addison’s (all were from GPCA Breeders)

**Thyroid** – 32 dogs/bitches were screened for Thyroid Disease. Of the 32, 7 were conducted by MSU Full Thyroid Panel – all were interpreted as “Normal” – all from GPCA Breeders and only 2 were submitted to OFA for Certification. The balance (25) was diagnosed by owner’s vets of having “hypo- thyroidism”. Of those 25 – 15 were from GPCA Breeders.

---

**Cardiac Disorders** – none reported

---

**Kidney Disorders** – 2 reported at age 9 and 10, from Rescue.

**Reproductive Female** – All from GPCA Breeders

**Irregular Heats** – 16 reported irregular heats varying between cycling once a year to every 4 months.

**Failed to Conceive** – 2 reported as “missed timing”

**Refusal to Accept Male** – 5 reported to “not ready”

**Reproductive Male** – All from GPCA Breeders

**Lack of Interest in Female** – 2 reported due to age 9 +

**Sterility** – 1 reported suspected to an infection.

**Prostatitis** – 1 reported.

---

**Immune Disorders** – none reported though some may conclude that Hormone Deficiencies signifies an Immune Disorder.

---

**Other Disorders**

**Bloat** – 4 dogs were reported to have “Bloated” and died (Euthanized) as a result. All from GPCA Breeders.

**Seizures** – 2 dogs were reported to have suffered from Seizures though “type” was not indicated.

**Temperament** (R=Rescue / GPCA Breeder)

Very Shy		Timid		Reserved		Confident		Protective		Aggressive	
R	GPCA	R	GPCA	R	GPCA	R	GPCA	R	GPCA	R	GPCA
3	8	5	9	123	41	151	14	11	20	3	1