

HERDING GROUP

someone has a bad agility or obedience run, a friendly comment on something that went well may provide much needed encouragement. A sense of humor is needed when showing Pembrokes in any event, so exhibitors and judges will often enjoy a comment about your dog's own behavior. ("Well, he's never done *that* before" is commonly heard in obedience!) Judges have provided me with kind and helpful comments about my dogs' performances. Being told my beginning herder had the best stop of the day was a thrill!

It is not too late to plan to watch our Pembrokes at the annual family reunion, September 27 through October 4. Herding is the first two days in Alger, Ohio; the rest of the reunion is at the Roberts Centre in Wilmington, Ohio. See the club website for complete details.

—Lynda McKee,
TifflynLDM@aol.com
Pembroke Welsh Corgi
Club of America

Pulik

WHEN MICROCHIPS MATTER MOST

Two recent incidents reminded me just how important microchipping is—and why it's worth talking about.

- The devastating flash flood event on July 4 in central Texas resulted in the separation of many pets from their owners. With some collars and tags washed away, the only reliable form of ID was beneath the skin. Microchips didn't just help reunite living displaced pets with their families; they also provided a way to identify dogs who tragically didn't survive, providing confirmation that brought a measure of closure.

- In February 2025, a Puli was taken in by a North Texas animal shelter—but unfortunately, she was not microchipped. Despite the Puli Club of America's Rescue Trust offering a fully vetted, experienced foster with prior Puli ownership standing by, the shelter

declined to release the dog to breed rescue. Instead, the Puli was transferred to a retail rescue group, and the shelter refused to disclose where she was sent—informing Puli Rescue Trust that a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request would be required to track the dog's whereabouts.

A microchip is a tiny device (about the size of a grain of rice) that is implanted just under the skin, usually between the shoulder blades. The chip carries a unique ID number that links to your contact information in a national database. Unlike collars or tags, which can be lost or removed, a microchip is permanent, invisible, and always with your pet.

Microchips are not infallible. While failure is rare, chips can stop working or become difficult to detect. This can happen if the chip migrates from its original location to another part of the body, or if the scanner being used is not compatible with the chip's frequency.

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Studies in both the U.S. and Europe have shown that about 1 to 2 percent of chips shift from the standard implantation site. This is why experienced veterinary teams and shelter staff are trained to scan the entire body, not just between the shoulders. (I owned a Puli that I had scanned in preparation for a health certificate required for travel, but the vet was unable to detect the microchip anywhere on the body—even though it had been successfully scanned years earlier.) There have been isolated reports of adverse effects such as swelling or tumors at implant sites; however,

these events are extremely rare. Organizations like the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) continue to support microchipping as a safe and reliable tool, with benefits that far outweigh any minimal risks.

Microchipping also plays a behind-the-scenes role in responsible dog breeding. Reputable breeders often chip puppies before they go to new homes, ensuring permanent ID. Through programs like AKC Reunite, microchip numbers can be directly linked to registration records, helping prevent fraud and offering a transparent history of ownership, lineage, and health certifications. Microchips are strongly recommended as permanent identification in OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) submissions, particularly for canine health screening (e.g., hips, elbows, cardiac) and genetic testing (when submitting DNA samples for tests through OFA-partnered labs, like Embark

or PennGen). If a dog is registered with the AKC and has a microchip number on file, OFA results can be cross-linked to AKC records more accurately, streamlining pedigree and health transparency.

Studies have shown that problems with microchip data can significantly affect the chances of a lost pet being reunited with its owner. A substantial number of microchipped stray animals have issues such as chips registered to previous owners or organizations, incorrect or disconnected phone numbers, or even unregistered chips. In short, microchipping only works if the chip is registered and your contact information is current. Without that connection, a microchip is just a number with no one to call. Experts recommend having your dog's microchip scanned during annual vet visits to ensure it's still functional and in place. And anytime you move, change your phone number, or update your email, it's

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worth logging into your chip registry to verify both your contact details and that the registry itself is still operating (especially as one major pet microchip company shut down earlier this year).

The AKC provides information on microchips at its website (<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/home-living/how-do-dog-microchips-work/>) and through its program AKC Reunite (<https://www.akcreunite.org/microchipping-mypetfaq/>). The AVMA has an informational brochure at <https://ebusiness.avma.org/files/productdownloads/mcm-client-brochures-microchips-2022.pdf>.

—Dagmar Fertl,
dfertl@gmail.com
Puli Club of America

Shetland Sheepdogs

PERSPECTIVE

In my early art classes, I learned early on the concept of perspective in drawing—the gradual reduction in size of objects as they recede into the background. Our personal

perspective is affected by the priorities we have internalized over our years on this earth. Priorities are constantly changing in our lives and in our pursuits.

When one of your pursuits in successfully learning a breed of dogs, you must continue to advance your knowledge of how that breed and the major lines in that breed tend to reproduce.

This is especially difficult in Shetland Sheepdogs. One of the first things I learned about breeding Shelties is they do not tend to breed true. That was back in the late 1950s and early '60s. Things have improved since then, but this is basically a young breed, created by crosses that happened within the last 150 years.

We are fortunate now that many breeders over the last 60-plus years have been diligently working to retain and improve the quality and breed type of the Shetland Sheepdog. People involved in our breed find it is essential to their longevity in the breed

and the sport to refine their perspective to approach their goals in breeding a better Sheltie with each generation. Usually it takes many generations to try to set a virtue in your breeding program, and just one generation to lose it when you do a breeding where a fault you were not expecting diminishes it.

Breeders are usually looking from a perspective of years to seeing their results. An exhibitor's perspective is more immediate, with the pursuit of points at weekend shows. Everyone enters a show with dreams of winning points and finishing a champion or adding points to their after-champion titles.

Are we all being realistic? Do we actually enter the ring and maintain our perspective of whether we are competitive on that day? Hopefully we have completed our homework, learned how to select our best Sheltie, studied and conditioned this individual, trained since puppyhood, and socialized him or her to attempt to make this precious