From Vol. 32 No. 2 on "150 LIMIT AND RECERTIFICATION TEST"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Gerard C. Penta

We have recently surveyed our membership to see where they stand on the above issues. It is one thing to have a sense of what the membership may think about a particular proposal but quite another to get their direct feedback on the subject. Thanks to all of you who took a moment to respond to our brief survey. Your participation provides us with the guidance we need to more accurately represent your views.

On the topic of the 150 dog judging limit, it was not surprising, given the graying of the judging community, that a clear majority of 55% support such a change. The many reasons which were offered for this support reflect the burden that is imposed on senior judges by facing two, three or four assignments in a row of 175 dogs, multiple groups and an abundance of win photos.

As I have written previously, I for one am in agreement with the suggestion of a 150 dog limit in breed judging. However, I do understand that for those clubs who want, or need, to have all of their judges scheduled to the max, this would pose a financial problem in that they would have to hire another judge. This, I am sure, has a great deal to do with the fact that you have not heard any more from the AKC about the 150 limit proposal.

One possible solution to this problem would be to make 150 the new "normal limit" since most judges support it and then allow those judges who wish to remain on a 175 maximum to do so. This could be accomplished by having a list that these judges may choose to join. The list could be published by the AKC and distributed to all superintendents. A judge's maximum load preference could also be noted on the individual judge's page. Based on our survey results, there are many judges (45%) who are perfectly fine with the 175 limit. This listing would give these judges an advantage when clubs that wish to stick with the 175 limit are selecting their panels. For those who prefer the 150 limit, the above arrangement would prescreen judging invitations as clubs would know before they contact a judge how many dogs they can assign to a particular judge. Surely this would be much more acceptable to most clubs than a "one size fits all" reduction in the maximum.

Now, it should be noted that we are independent contractors and as such we are able to set our own judging limits. A number of us are already limiting our breed judging to 150 and enjoying our assignments all the more for it.

Many who are in favor of such a limit, but do not exercise their right to limit their own maximum, probably fear the possibly of losing an assignment. These judges overlook the screening function of a lower maximum. Any assignments you may lose due to your limit are ones you really don't want. Finding that you lost an assignment because of this limitation should impart a sense of relief. There are many other aspects of a judge's relationship with a club besides judging load, and there may well be a correlation between these other factors and judging load.

Now it is true that most clubs that are not in financial jeopardy and are well run may never intentionally try to schedule one of their judges for 175 dogs and a number of groups. Rather, they

schedule judges so that their entry comes in at around 125 to 145 dogs, so a 150 limit has no effect on their bottom line. You should not be surprised to find that these clubs may be a bit more considerate of their judges when it comes to other matters as well.

On the issue of the recertification test there is an even greater majority (74%) of our members who feel the AKC should abandon the idea of such a test. It is clear that we think judges should have a general knowledge of AKC policy and procedures, but our feelings run deeper in opposition to the recertification test. As your representatives we recognize that we have an obligation to attempt to persuade the policy makers at AKC to abandon this test, but as you know, we can only offer our views, that old saying, “we don’t make the rules” certainly applies here.

Most judges are honest and would not think of having someone else take the test for them. Yes, there were isolated incidents of this sort of thing in the past, but that represented a very tiny minority of the judging community. In the end, all of these tests are taken under an honor system. It is the fact that some judges would rather retire than take the test that shows that they would never cheat to get by. Given the warranted assumption of honesty on the part of dog show judges, why not replace this test with a reading assignment. The AKC could tell all judges exactly what AKC publications contain all of the relevant policies and procedures with which a judge should be familiar. Then require that once every five years each judge submit a signed statement attesting to the fact that the judge has read over this material within the preceding month. No computerized test, no threats, and no unnecessary anxiety.