AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

Performance Events Department

Date: March 2023

To: All Survey Respondents

Subject: **Findings - Pointing Breed Hunting Test Survey**

The AKC Performance Events Department conducted a survey in early February of the primary owners of dogs that had passed a PBHT in 2020 – 2022 and all currently active PBHT judges. There were 1,767 responses, a 33% response rate. Responses were received from owners of 19 breeds. GSP owners were the largest group with 32% of the responses. Responses were received from all regions of the country, with the Lakes States being the largest at 21%.

The following findings from the survey are being emailed to all those that responded.

Q2. 76% are members of a local pointing breed dog club.

Q3. Does your club offer fun days/training days to assist new owners?

Yes	51%
Occasionally	27%
No	22%

Q4. Do judges use UTVs/ATVs at your club's hunting test?

Yes	66%
Grounds Don't Allow It	11%
No	23%

Q5. Does your club run one or two hunting tests per day?

One	28%
Two	37%
Uncertain	12%
It Depends	23%

Q6. 68% are members of a Parent Club.

Q7. Responses were received from all regions of the country.

Q8. 66% feel they have the time, resources, and interest to attempt to achieve the Master Hunter title.

Q9. Master Hunter Invitational Events. Would this benefit the sport?

Strongly Agree/Agree	67%
Uncertainty	26%
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	7%

Q10. Versatile Hunting Dog Program. Would you be interested in participating?

Extremely Interested/Interested	67%
Uncertain	15%
Not Interested	12%
I don't own a versatile hunting dog	6%

Q11. Retrieving. Do you feel it is necessary to retrieve all shootable birds in order to adequately assess a dog's ability to retrieve?

Retrieve first bird – handler/judge can request additional retrieves	46%
Retrieve all shootable birds	45%
Uncertain	9%

Q12. Amateur Walking Puppy Stake. Would you be interested in entering if it held at a hunting test?

Yes.	50%
Uncertain	23%
No	17%
Not sufficient grounds/manpower to hold	10%

Q13. The Buddy Hunt. The Buddy Hunt is meant to engage juniors, family members or friends and to reduce the inhibition many new owners feel about handling their own dog for the first time. The buddy can accompany the handler but cannot assist in handling the dog or flushing birds. It will only apply to the JH level. What is your opinion?

Love It/ Like It	77%
Uncertain	11%
Don't Like It/Dumb Idea	12%

Q14. Please provide your ideas that you feel could enhance PBHTs, attract new participants or retain current participants.

There were 1,342 ideas/comments submitted. The most common –

- There is a large need for training assistance. This includes land, birds, and knowledgeable trainers to provide guidance.
- Clubs and judges need to be friendlier to new owners who are uncertain about what to expect at the event and may be inhibited by the new experience.
- Judges have become "check the box" – they are not refined in their evaluation.
- Judges place too much emphasis on obedience and not enough on the dog's hunting ability.
- More judges are needed and the AKC should make it easier to become a judge.
- Many judges are not knowledgeable and the AKC should make it more difficult to become a judge.
- There should be a testing level added between Junior and Senior. The current jump from Junior to Senior is too significant and many drop out.
- There is a need for more clubs as the closest test is many hours away.

Performance Events Department comments:

- In order to assist new owners, a few clubs have asked about holding a training session prior to a Junior level only hunting test. If your club is interested in doing this and does not want this test to count against your total event limit, please put "**JR Level Only**" in the subject line and email pointingbreeds@akc.org for assistance.

- In order to form a club to hold PBHTs, a group must have a minimum of 20 households. A club can be either a Specialty club (one breed) or an all-breed pointing dog club. If you are interested in starting a new club in your area, please email performanceclublicenses@akc.org for assistance.