

## The Dalmatian Club of America Supports Hearing Registry

### What is the Hearing Registry?

The Hearing Registry is a Congenital Deafness Database of BAER test results. It is designed for use by breeders and researchers and can be thought of as the library of hearing statistics.

### Why use an open registry?

Contrary to a closed registry, which lists only normal animals, an open registry lists both affected and unaffected individuals. This is especially valuable for breeders in their efforts to predict how a prospective breeding dog will produce. In the absence of an open registry, breeders are frequently working with very limited information. They can generally find out about the hearing status of an individual dog. Often the owner of a dog knows the hearing status of the parents and littermates as well. If the dog has been bred before, the hearing status of the pups is also known. Beyond that, information becomes scarce. Unless you have been breeding for a long time, or are dealing with someone who has, you will be in the dark. The average person who becomes involved in breeding or showing purebred dogs stays involved for five years or less. Longtime breeders are rare and in-depth knowledge of pedigrees is just as rare. The information in an open registry survives any individual's involvement in the breed.

In order to be effective, the registry must record data on as large a group of animals as possible, both hearing and deaf. As the registry grows, more and more information will be available on specific lines. It is not a quick fix but a resource that will grow in value over time. The more data that is gathered the more useful such a library of information will be.

Unlike breeders, researchers do not generally need to know the identity of individual dogs in their studies. How the dogs are related is much more important to researchers than who the dogs are. The registry offers researchers the opportunity to study multigenerational hearing statistics. This is an important next step in uncovering the mode of inheritance of deafness. All of the studies done in the United States so far have been limited to one generation of information with only the hearing status of the parents and offspring being noted. The information gathered in the registry will be useful for a variety of studies and will not be lost when any one study is concluded.

### How is the Registry managed?

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) manages the Congenital Deafness Database. A Not-For-Profit Organization, OFA maintains registries for a variety of genetic conditions including hereditary eye disease, thyroid disease, and orthopedic diseases of the hips and elbows.

OFA maintains hard copy files of the BAER tracings that are submitted and computer files that link the dogs to their relatives. Together with DCA and a leading researcher in the field of canine deafness, Dr. George Strain, OFA has established a standard BAER testing protocol. The protocols are listed on the [application form](#).

## How do I register my dogs?

Thousands of dogs were BAER tested prior to the establishment of the registry. With the cooperation of breeders, the BAER results of those dogs will form the foundation of the database. The owner or breeder of any dog may enter them into the registry by submitting an [application form](#) and a copy of the BAER test tracing directly to OFA. This allows breeders to register the important ancestors of the dogs of the future. Applications will only be accepted for dogs that are tested by an [approved tester](#). The signature of the tester is required and each dog or puppy must be identified by at least one of the following - AKC number, microchip or tattoo. If there is no Microchip or Tattoo the dog's OFA identification number will have a number ending with the letters "NOPI" to let people know there is No Permanent Identification. This also means that you must have the puppy "blue slips" in hand at the time of the BAER test if you do not microchip or tattoo the pups.

## What is the cost?

The charge for an individual bilaterally hearing dog is \$15.00. To encourage the registration of the many dogs that were tested in the past OFA will accept individuals at \$7.50 each with a minimum of 5 individuals submitted as a group and owned or co-owned by the same person.

There is no charge to register a unilaterally or bilaterally deaf dog. An authorization to release abnormal results must be initialed by the registered owner on the application form for unilaterally or bilaterally deaf dogs.

There is a special litter charge of \$30.00 for breeders who submit an entire litter of 3 or more at one time. Information on entire litters is crucial to the success of the registry. We need to know the hearing status of whole litters, the sex, color, number of patches and eye color in order for the registry to work as intended.

**The OFA will continue to register BAER Hearing Test Results for whole Dalmatian litters at **NO CHARGE**. The fees are being underwritten through a generous grant from DCAF (the [Dalmatian Club of America Foundation](#)).**

## Why register every dog?

Breeders must always consider their own long-term goals as well as the best interest of the breed. Each dog registered in an open registry brings crucial information to help support the improvement of the entire breed. It is recommended that every dog in a litter be registered whether or not the owner expects to breed it. The knowledge of the hearing status of each individual is important in order to establish the genotype of any relative that is considered for breeding stock. The registry gives information to breeders for the selection of dogs whose bloodlines indicate a reduced risk of producing deafness.

## Rate of progress

In the United States the incidence of totally deaf Dalmatian puppies has fallen from approximately 12% a decade ago to approximately 8% percent now. This is certainly a step in the right direction, but that rate is still significantly higher than the rate in many other countries and higher than most other breeds. We have the tools to dramatically reduce the number of deaf puppies born. BAER testing is widely accessible and the registry will help to identify individuals that are at low risk of producing deafness in their offspring.

**For more information**

Contact the director of the DCA Study Group on Hearing, [Darlene Chirolas](#)

Or

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). They can be reached by phone (573) 442-0418 or fax at (573) 875-5073.

Their web address is [www.offa.org](http://www.offa.org).

Write to them at 2300 E. Nifong Blvd., Columbia, MO 65201-3856.

**Please submit your comments, requests and suggestions to**

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