

Carol Falk

## Show Me the Carfax

“**Show me the carfax**” is a catchy phrase that I hear frequently in radio and TV commercials in my New England area. You can be sure that many consumers about to purchase a “previously owned auto” will be asking the dealer to “show me the carfax.” I googled carfax online, and although a carfax doesn’t guarantee you a complete “health history” on a particular car, it is defiantly a step in the right direction. As a responsible breeder, one of the first questions I would like to have prospective puppy buyers ask is “**show me the CHIC numbers.**”

One of the most important jobs of a health committee is to educate the membership concerning health issues that affect their breed. Once identified, it is then important to address these problems. I feel that we have taken a giant step in the right direction concerning both of these issues. It is now important that as a club and as individuals, we educate the puppy-buying public.

What distinguishes a Norfolk Terrier from a Puggle, Yorkie-Poo, Cava-Poo, Schnoodle, or any one of the myriad “designer breeds” that seem to be all the rage today? Why should someone purchase a Norfolk puppy and not an equally cute, possibly less costly, bundle of fur with a very catchy name? The answer is health, temperament, the knowledge that comes from years of breeding experience, and the NTC, our AKC-sanctioned national club.

As breeders, it is imperative that we **educate the public.** It is our responsibility to explain why we belong to a national club, why we participate in dog shows and other performance events, why we have donated more than \$50,000 to the Canine Health Foundation (CHF) to support health research for our particular breed, and why our club, **the Norfolk Terrier Club, participates in the CHIC program.**

Many of us have worked very hard over the past decade to try and insure that we breed healthy dogs. We need to make sure that the public understands Norfolk health concerns and what we are doing to address these problems. **CHIC is a wonderful tool**, both for the breeder and the puppy-buyer, but it only works if we all participate. No dog should be bred without a CHIC number. This does not mean that all our dogs are perfect, only that we have checked their knees, hearts, eyes, and hopefully hips, and have made these results public. As responsible breeders, we can then make an informed decision about which animals to use in our breeding program. In making these decisions, we must take into consideration health, temperament, conformation, type, trainability, pedigree etc.

Thousands of dogs in shelters are euthanized yearly. None are destroyed because they are missing incisors, have low tail sets, bad fronts, or soft coats. As breeders, we are concerned about these things, but we need to be most concerned about health and temperament. We must demonstrate that responsible breeders care about health, and that we test for defects and support research into canine health. CHF has given us a wonderful tool by developing the CHIC program. The NTC has seen the value in having the Norfolk Terrier become a “CHIC breed”. Participate in the CHIC program and explain the purpose of this program to all who inquire about a puppy.

Carol Falk, Health Chairman