

# MO CAT & COW VETERINARY CLINIC

Rt 82 Box 2201

Koshkonong, Missouri 65692

417.867.3262

On December 6, 2017 a kennel inspection was made at Marlissa and Randy McAlmond's. Previously on November 8, the inspector had required a consultation with a veterinary practice because of 25 dogs and puppies that she felt were underweight. We discussed this issue on November 9 and a treatment protocol was approved for deworming. At the time of our visit, the McAlmonds had already treated the dogs with Drontal Plus. And already the dogs were gaining weight, very active, and had healthy haircoats. Because of the active lifestyle of these breeds, I felt that having only 6.25% of dogs in this kennel considered underweight was impressive and probably more due to individual variation than disease manifestation.

Since then, on January 26, 2018, 21 adults were treated with praziquantel injectable. Stormy, Jade, Chips, and Windy are still somewhat underweight. Treatment with panacur is scheduled to follow.



M. Ann Nichols, D.V.M.

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ANN NICHOLS DYE, D.V.M.  
593 County Road 387  
Koshkonong, MO 65692  
(417) 867-3262

Since the early fall of 2019, this Kennel has experienced problems getting delivery of high energy sport mix dog food. Because of this delivery issue, the dogs have had to adapt to different brands of dog food. This past week, they have been thru 3 different brands due to availability. As a result, there have been dogs experiencing diarrhea and weight loss. The feed supplier is currently attempting to eliminate this problem.

Since this is a Kennel of high energy, active dogs that are normally lean anyway, this issue has contributed a higher percentage of thin dogs.

*A. Nichols*  
3/17/2020

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A program of Veterinary Care has been established between me, M. Ann Nichols, D.V.M., and Marlisa and Randy McAlmond of HCR 64 Box 29 in Alton, Missouri since January of 2015. This kennel has followed the protocols set forth in our agreement which include aspects of animal health and husbandry.

We are required to inspect this kennel once yearly. However, we make almost monthly trips to this facility at the owner's request. Sometimes these visits were to perform health checks on puppies prior to marketing. At least two health checks – and often more- are done on each puppy before they leave for their new home. (Besides our trips to their premises, the McAlmonds also come to our practice to bring in animals, etc.)

Sometimes the reason of our visit is to do a general look-over of the breeding animals. At this kennel, the dogs are happy and active. The dogs here have ample room to run. With rare exceptions, they all run up to greet us. This is in contrast to what we have seen on other kennel premises. In some situations, the dogs do meet their minimum space requirements but they don't seem to have room enough to "be a dog". In other places, we've also seen where the dogs were not as friendly and certainly did not approach us.

Sometimes the reason of our visit is to address a problem or a complaint. Recently this kennel has experienced problems with their feed supply. Because of distribution issues with their supplier, they have had to change brands. Understandably, these dietary changes have resulted in GI signs (mostly diarrhea) in some of the breeding dogs. This problem has resolved itself as a suitable feed is now available.

Along with the diarrhea problem, there have also been complaints about the thin condition of some of the dogs. At one of the last state inspector visits, fourteen dogs were cited as being underweight. With puppies and adults both counted on that day and numbering over 300, this seems like a low percentage for this size population. I feel like one needs to consider the breeds of dogs involved (some lines of these dogs are lean), the activity level of these breeds, and the fact that these dogs recently had a big dietary change. The resulting diarrhea can obviously cause weight loss.

Because these dogs are active and have plenty of room, they do burn off calories. The fact that they aren't lethargic is also an indication that they aren't undernourished.

Fairly recent studies have estimated that more than 50% of American dogs are overweight. Another recent study shows that by reducing dietary intake by 25%, the life span of dogs can be significantly increased and the onset of "old age" diseases is greatly delayed. This is not to say that I feel like one should purposely limit food intake but I do think that maybe what the public perceives as an underweight dog may actually be closer to a healthy weight.

The presence and sheer number of puppies on the premises of the McAlmond kennel is proof that these questionable dogs are probably a

healthy lean. Malnourished animals are not so efficient at reproduction and lactation.

This kennel is certainly not the showiest or fanciest, but it is functional. I also feel that the McAlmonds excel at what they do which is raising litters of healthy puppies.

They are the very best of our breeders at doing genetic and OFA testing. Because dogs must be 2 years or older for OFA certification, this kennel does have to maintain bigger numbers of potential replacements for a longer period of time than kennels that do not place an emphasis on raising sound animals. This kennel is not just churning out puppies. Their goal is to produce a healthy, good tempered, long-lived dog free of any inheritable defects. Animals that fail to earn OFA certification are culled from the breeding program. Likewise, animals showing the presence of genetic problems (mostly thru Paw Print Genetic's breed specific tests) are eliminated from the breeding program.

Because these are also working dogs, the breeders have strived to keep those breed characteristics present in their product also. They have generations of bloodlines of dogs that are bred to do what they are meant to do.

From my veterinary vantage point, I feel like the McAlmonds produce very healthy and sound animals. Rarely do we see puppies with problems that are much too common in other kennels – like heart murmurs, dentition issues, inguinal hernias, luxating patellas, cryptorchids, etc. I feel like their puppies are ready to go out into the world.

In contrast and from the opposite end, I often do exams for clients who have recently purchased puppies from elsewhere, in state and

otherwise. So many of those clients have spent a fortune on a puppy from a much fancier facility and those puppies show a myriad of problems. Those are the ones that should be considered the puppy mills...

We have <sup>seven</sup>~~six~~ 2-3inch binders containing all the documentation of our association with this kennel. Please call if any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Ann Nichols". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

M. Ann Nichols, D.V.M.

04.19.2020