

# Microchipping Comes of Age



Before we get to the main subject, let's examine the role of the AKC, the American Kennel Club. It was originally formed as a means to record, and protect, the pedigrees of Pure-Bred Dogs. Despite popular belief, it had no brief on the welfare of dogs as a whole. Over the years, it became the organ of Shows, Judges, and records.

Latterly, it has become responsive to public demands that it fill other roles and is much more active in efforts to abolish puppy mills and to ensure accurate dog identification and pedigrees. To these ends, AKC is endorsing both DNA identification and microchipping. There are two programmes for this purpose. The first, the DNA Certification Program, is available to all members of the pure-bred dog fancy, at \$40.00 per head; a certificate will be granted and the information will be added to AKC Registration Certificates. The second, the Companion Animal Recovery Program, records identification numbers for all pets, permanently identified by microchip or tattoo, at a cost of \$12.50 per head (or \$9.00 each, where 5, or more, pets are registered at one time).

Material on both these programmes will be available after this talk.

## Microchipping.

This is the premier method of identification endorsed by AKC. That body has become allied with the Schering-Plough Animal Health Company and recommends the Home Again system ..the company buy their chips from the manufacturers, Destron Fearing. Presently, this system is only available to veterinarians. To date, more than 15,000 scanners (which can read the presence of all types of microchips) have been distributed nationwide; a portion of the AKC registration fee helps fund distribution of these universal scanners to animal shelters. The individual price, per dog, is at the veterinarian's choice.

We are not, however, limited to that one system. Breeders, and dog owners, may use other microchip sources. One is the Avid System, advertised in the AKC Gazette consistently for some ten years; it is available both to veterinarians and breeders. I have used it on my Boxers for about that time. It has been used successfully on birds, fish and large animals. The company manufactures their own microchips and has two scanners available; one reads all the Avid numbers and the other reads both Avid and Home Again chips. Avid price their kits (a minimum of 5) according to the number bought, with or without registration materials or scanner .. currently, with registration materials (collar tag, brochure and certificate), a batch of 25 sells for \$250.00. This company has distributed thousands of scanners to animal shelters and AKC refers chip buyers to them.

## The Microchip.

Unlike tattoo inks, which are carcinogenic (in humans, dogs rarely live long enough for these effects) the microchip is inert in the Boxer's body, until it's scanned. Each microchip comes with its own special



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### Microchips.Ctd

unique, identifying alphanumeric code number embedded as a transponder during its manufacture and it cannot be changed. Transponders are passive devices which are only activated in response to use of electronic scanners and they contain no batteries.

The microchip unit is encased in a hypo-allergenic glass shell which is impervious to body fluids and has a polypropylene skin, which encourages its ready attachment to the Boxer's tissues. This tiny bead is inserted into a device, which is similar to a regular syringe and needle, and this unit, together with labels bearing its assigned code, is pre-sterilised.

### Insertion of Microchips.

Necessary skills are familiarity with the Boxers' anatomy, use of syringes and injections. An assistant is helpful, especially with puppies. A fold of skin is pulled up above the withers (the standard site), normal skin preparation is made, the device's needle is slid beneath the skin fold and the pellet is injected. I find it useful to insert the needle with its bevel parallel to the spine, rotate it 180 degrees and then inject the pellet. There is a minor variance between the two companies products. The whole device is smoothly removed and momentary pressure applied. Pain is no more than with other injections and most Boxers barely notice the event.

The area is then scanned to confirm microchip placement.

Please pass this clean, used device around so that you may see its details. No. its microchip is gone!

### Future of Microchipping.



Presently, the use of microchipping to identify, and protect, our Boxers, becomes more, and more, widespread. Many veterinarians, and animal shelters, have electronic scanners so that checking of all dogs is commonplace. The American Kennel Club, and many fanciers, foresee that soon dogs will be identified, at ringside, by scanning their microchips. It is also possible that, in the future, each animal's DNA number will be embedded in its transponder - incontrovertible proof not only of its identity but of its genetic inheritance. We're just now at the inception of these advances.

Thank you for your attention. Any questions.

