

Looking after BREEDERS at McMaster & Heap

At McMaster & Heap Vets we offer everything a breeder needs with one visit. Your dog can have PennHip X-rays of hips and elbow X-rays with Dr McMaster, an eye exam with Dr Steve Heap, a cardiac check and Echocardiography with Dr Richard Lucy and we can also do genetic testing. PennHIP is required by some breed standards to enable "safe, measured breeding" practices.

PennHIP objectively assesses a dog's risk of developing Hip Dysplasia, by measuring "passive hip laxity" as early as 16 weeks of age. Unlike traditional extended - hip radiographs, PennHIP uses a distraction index to quantify joint looseness. This is the strongest predictor of future osteoarthritis associated with hip dysplasia.



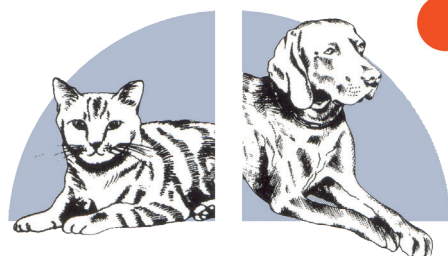
Michele McMaster taking Pennhip radiographs

This screening test allows breeders to make informed selection decisions to reduce the prevalence of hip dysplasia in breeding lines of dog. Identifying "at risk dogs" before degenerative changes occur, PennHIP supports both long term joint health and responsible breeding practices.



A distracted Pennhip view

For Pennhip radiographs, dogs are sedated and 5 X-rays of the hips are taken and submitted for interpretation in the USA. The patient can be reversed from its sedation and discharged once awake without the need for take home medications. This procedure is painless, easy to perform and provides valuable information on the state of your dog's hips



McMASTER & HEAP
VETERINARY PRACTICE



Steve Heap examining the anterior structures of the eye with a slit lamp

and whether this dog is a good candidate for breeding.

A thorough anterior and posterior **Eye examination** should be performed by a registered ophthalmologist (Dr Steve Heap), who will carefully examine the eyelids, cornea, lens, retina and other internal structures. This is designed to detect inherited and developmental eye disorders. Drops are placed in your dog's eye so as to dilate the pupil and allow for easier examination of the structures behind the lens. This exam is painless but the dog has to keep still to allow Steve a close look into the eye.

Diseases commonly screened for include:

- Progressive retinal atrophy
- Cataracts
- Retinal Dysplasia
- Collie eye anomaly

Often these breeding dogs need a certified eye examination annually because some inherited eye conditions develop later on in life. **Cardiac health screening** is important especially for breeds that are predisposed to inherited heart disease. It should be performed by a veterinary cardiologist.

Richard Lucy has been an internationally accredited veterinary cardiac examiner for almost 30 years. He is involved in breed standard testing in New Zealand, Australia and the UK for a wide range of patients including Maine Coon cats, Dobermans, Golden Retrievers, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Newfoundlands, Great Danes, Boxers and many more.

Common cardiac problems that are evaluated include: mitral valve disease, pulmonic stenosis,



Richard Lucy listening to heart sounds

aortic stenosis, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) and dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM).

Richard evaluates patients using **Auscultation** (listening to the heart with a stethoscope) to check for heart murmurs (abnormal heart sounds associated with leaky or narrowed valves). He also uses a special portable **Ultrasound** machine to visualise the heart to check the valves and measure the pressure gradient across the valve, check for leaks and look at the size and function of the heart. These are all painless procedures that are performed on a conscious pet without any need for sedation or forceful restraint.

He may also check an **ECG** to look at the heart rhythm and blood biomarkers to look for heart muscle damage or inflammation. His clinics are well supported by responsible breeders who wish to provide their prospective new puppy or kitten owners that their new family member will be as healthy as possible and able to live a long, active and happy life!



An Echocardiogram of a Cavalier King Charles

Genetic testing in a breeding dog is used to identify inherited diseases, traits and genetic risks before breeding. The goal is to reduce the likelihood of passing harmful genetic conditions to puppies and be able to make informed breeding decisions. A genetic test is usually performed with a "cheek swab".

Common reasons this is done are:

- Screening for breed specific diseases such as PRA (progressive retinal atrophy), Degenerative Myelopathy, or exercise induced collapse
- To determine if a dog is a "carrier", is "clear" of diseases or "affected" by a genetic mutation
- Confirming parentage and genetic diversity
- Testing for coat colour, coat type, or other inherited traits

If you are interested in this breeders package, then you will need to book a day when all the above vets are working (Mondays or Wednesdays). Pennhip X-rays need to be done on a sedated dog, so the eyes and heart would be checked first. Sedation can be reversed, so your dog can go home as soon as awake. Feel free to call the clinic for more information.

Dr Michele McMaster, July 2026

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