How to certify my Entlebucher for breeding

And what is BCOE?

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The Entlebucher Mountain Dog breed is one of the American Kennel Club's (AKC) "Low-Entry" breeds, meaning that relatively few puppies are registered each year. Without dedicated owners stepping forward to breed responsibly, the future of our breed in North America could be at risk. Unfortunately, the situation is not much better in the breed's native regions of Switzerland and Germany.

NEMDA encourages all Entlebucher owners to consider breeding their dog, at least once in their lifetime, contributing their unique collection of genes to the future of this wonderful breed. Dogs are physically mature at about 2 years of age and can be bred on the following heat cycle (or any other heat cycle until they are 8 years old). Breeding for the first time before 5 years of age is often encouraged, as younger dogs may adapt more easily to the physical demands of pregnancy and whelping. Nemda has developed resources to help new breeders get started. Nemda.org/Breeder-FAQ

Step 1: Is your dog a good breeding candidate?

Health

Physically healthy
Good temperament
Appropriate body condition
Meets breed standard



How can you decide if you should breed your dog? Would breeding your dog benefit the overall breed? The following outlines the steps required to prepare your Entebucher for breeding responsibly.

First, you want to ensure that your dog is generally healthy, at an appropriate weight and of good temperament. Physical challenges can sometimes be inherited, and temperament matters just as much as appearance.

Bitches with significant anxiety may pass along a predisposition to anxious behaviour, making puppies more challenging to socialize successfully. Females that are over weight or underweight can have a difficult time conceiving, carrying a pregnancy and delivering puppies safely. Males may not produce enough sperm or be able to maintain a breeding tie. Your veterinarian can help you manage your dog's diet and exercise to achieve a healthy breeding weight and fitness over a few months.

So, step one is a visit with your regular vet to discuss your dog's health status and their breeding soundness. Next, you need an evaluation of your dog's physical stature compared to the breed standard. https://nemda.org/Entlebucher-Breed-Standard



Breed Standard

Body height to length 8:10 ratio
Strongly muscled, agile, balanced
Forelegs short, sturdy, straight, parallel
Paws point forward, well arched toes
Colour – Black, white & tan to fawn
Markings symmetrical
White blaze and from chin to chest
White on all four feet
Gait – ground covering, drive from rear
Head – slightly wedge shaped
Muzzle to skull 9:10 ratio
Expression alert, attentive, friendly

For assistance with your physical evaluation, consider the following options;

1. Attending an International All Breed Canine Association (IABCA) show (www.iabca.com), where judges will identify the physical strengths and weaknesses of your dog.

2. Participating in a Comprehensive Entlebucher Breed Assessment (CEBA) evaluation (https://nemda.org/ceba), which will provide an overview of both temperament and physical attributes.
3. Your breeder (or a BCOE breeder) may also be able to help with this assessment of physique and temperament.
4. Your local dog training club will have someone that understands structure and gait to give you a first idea. Be sure to provide them with the NEMDA breed standard for reference.

NEMDA Entlebucher Breed Standard	Disqualifying FAULTS
Height - M 17.5-20.5", F 16.5"-19.5"	Too tall or Too short
Body – strong and agile	Too heavy or light bone
Top Coat – short, harsh, shiny	Absence of under-coat
Under-coat - dense	
Eyes - smaller, round, dark, with pigmented rims	Blue eyes Yellow 'hawk' eyes
Jaw & Dentition - Scissor bite, Even bite allowed	Over or Under shot Jaw Wry mouth

Terms to Understand

Breed Standard

Fault vs. Preference

Disqualifying vs Desirable

Remember, there is no "PERFECT" dog. Every dog has strengths and weaknesses. When breeding, it is important to eliminate any heritable traits that are lethal, painful, or difficult to manage. Next, try to offset any "weakness" in your dog with a strength in that same area in the selected mate. **Avoid breeding two dogs with the same weakness or undesirable trait.**

Step 2: Complete the CHIC health testing for your dog

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals, (OFA), provides a centralized database of all dog health testing. Health tests which qualify a dog for breeding, under the breed club rules, are stored in the Canine Health Information Center, (CHIC) database. CHIC certification does not require the dog to be "perfect", but it evaluates each known heritable disease and records the dog's status for transparency. If a dog receives a CHIC number, you know that they have met all the health testing requirements. Always login and check on the CHIC status of any dog you are considering as a mating partner. OFA.org/chic-programs/

If your Entlebucher meets the breed standard and is healthy and ready to breed, you should get them certified to breed by completing health testing. The current health testing requirements can be found at OFA.org/chic-programs/browse-by-breed/?breed=EB. Most of the tests are 'one time' but an eye exam is required annually. The tests can be done in any order – I usually start with the least expensive, the microchip and DNA tests which are about $40 each and then the ACVO eye test. The eye exam, about $70, must be done by a qualified ophthalmologist and requires a special trip. Sometimes the eye exam is offered

at a dog show, so check that option. https://ofa.org/health-clinics-test/ The x-rays can be done at your regular vet's office but may cost $500 or more.

What are the required health tests?

OFA requires that your dog have a unique identifying microchip. If your breeder didn't already provide this, ask your vet to select a brand that meets the requirements for the American Kennel Club, (AKC) or Canadian Kennel Club (CKC).

Health Testing

- ✓ Microchip
- ✓ DNA sample
- ✓ PRA-prcd genetic test
- ✓ Hip xray
- ✓ Patellae exam
- ✓ Elbow – optional xray
- ✓ Annual eye exam







NEMDA requires a DNA sample be included in the breed registry. This can be either a blood draw or cheek swab. Check the box for DNA Repository and print the submission form. https://ofa.org/applications/ You will receive a cheek swab kit in the mail with further instructions. These samples are used for genetic breed research.

For the genetic eye disease PRA-prcd, you need to get another cheek swab analyzed and then submit the results to OFA. Order a test at UCDavis.edu/test/pra-prcd, then use this form to submit the results to OFA https://ofa.org/applications/?form=DNA. This disease causes gradual blindness, but only if both breeding partners have the affected copy of the

gene. Your test will be either Type A - unaffected or Type B - carrier. By careful mate selection, BCOE breeders have eliminated Type C – affected dogs. We need all Entlebuchers that are qualified, to breed, so don't worry if your dog is a carrier. Just be sure to always **mate a carrier to a clear dog**.

An eye exam is required within 12 months of breeding to screen for potential heritable eye conditions. Use https://www.acvo.org/ophthalmologist-search and type in your state and city. It will return a list of veterinarians that are able to perform the ACVO eye exam (previously called CAER). Make an appointment to have your dog's eyes examined. These appointments can take some time to schedule, so don't delay on this step. After the exam, make sure to submit the results to OFA, https://online.ofa.org/login/. Make sure to check the box to include all results, regardless of outcome, in the public database.

Like most medium to large breed dogs, Entlebuchers can suffer from Hip dysplasia. This disease starts with hip joints that are not structurally sound. Over time, with activity, the fit of the ball into the socket becomes looser and their gait is affected. This causes significant pain and poor quality of life. We know that dogs with good hips produce pups that have mostly good hips, so we test prospective parents to ensure that hips are well formed prior to breeding. OFA will score your dog as Excellent, Good, Fair, Mild Dysplasia, Moderate Dysplasia or Severe Dysplasia. If your dog ends up with a Fair score but is still qualified to breed, choose a mate with Excellent hips if possible. Careful selective breeding can improve hip scores over generations.

For information, here are examples of hip x-rays that were graded "Severe" and "Excellent" by OFA. Proper positioning is important for a good image, but the "balls" of good hips are tightly held within the "socket" even when the body is not completely aligned. Make sure your vet has done OFA Hip x-rays before and is familiar with the set-up. Most dogs require light sedation to hold the required position.



Severe Hip Dysplasia



Excellent Hips

While you are doing the x-rays at your vet's office, you can include the elbows if desired, (not required). The exam for patellar luxation is required but can be completed by your regular vet. Patellar luxation is a slipping kneecap which is also quite debilitating.

Once your x-rays and exam are complete, make sure to submit the files to OFA using the forms below.

Hip & Elbow Dysplasia – use the form at https://ofa.org/applications/?form=HE

Patellar Luxation – use the form at https://ofa.org/applications/?form=PA

Your x-rays will be evaluated by the team at OFA and you will receive their decision by mail. It will also be recorded in the database online, (be sure to check the box to record all results, regardless of outcome). If all the health tests are complete, you will also be issued a certificate and number for CHIC. Every new and renewed CHIC certification is noted in the Entlebook each quarter, so look for your dog every year when you update your eye exam.

Step 3: Join NEMDA's BCOE

When your CHIC certificate arrives, submit your results to NEMDA and update your dog's information in the online pedigree database. https://nemda.org/Pedigree-Database Read the Breeder Code of Ethics (BCOE, https://nemda.org/Breeder-FAQ#member) and apply to become a member of NEMDA's BCOE, https://nemda.org/BCOE-Breeder-Application. You will need two letters of recommendation (ask another breeder or dog friend that can attest to how you treat your dogs). Your BCOE application will also require conformation type photos of your dog which you will post on NEMDA's Recommended Breeder page. Write up a short description of what you want to achieve as a new BCOE breeder – this is your Breeder Philosophy and might include ideas such as a focus on breeding families, performance titles or great family dogs.

Breeding your dog responsibly will require a significant amount of your time and attention. Be sure that your dog is suitable for breeding and that you have the time and resources to make the commitment to a successful litter. Breeding and whelping will involve late nights, lots of cleaning and numerous visits to your veterinarian. It will require ongoing education and special purchases, just for breeding and whelping. Finding good homes for puppies can take a lot of time and effort. You may need to build visibility and contacts by participating in dog shows or competitions. And breeding includes its share of heart ache. We encourage you to breed your Entlebucher, but we want you to be prepared.

Becoming a BCOE breeder is a big step. There will be lots more to learn before you welcome puppies but you are on your way. Consider joining Good Dog Breeders https://www.gooddog.com/#direct_signup=breeder-sign-up to access some excellent educational materials for dog breeders. Formerly known as AVIDog, these materials are absolutely top quality and will provide you with the knowledge and confidence to breed your dog successfully. AKC and CKC also offer breeder seminars periodically and the NEMDA BCOE can also help with educational materials and ideas.

NEMDA appreciates your efforts to



support our
wonderful breed.

**Welcome to
the pack!**