

The following individuals serve to assist the Berner community with answers to specific questions:

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Help Us Help Berners With Your Tax-deductible Donation

Funding for the Berner-Garde Foundation comes from gifts and fund-raising projects offered by friends of the breed. Memorial and celebration contributions are encouraged. BGF's long-range goal is to establish an endowment to fund permanent protection of the BMD. Data requests are charged a minimal fee to help defray the costs of maintaining the database programs, entering data and disseminating information. All donations are tax deductible. Please consider a generous donation today for the love of a Berner. Mail your donation to:

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Stewards of the Open Bernese Mountain Dog Database



The Berner-Garde Foundation was established to collect, maintain and disseminate information about genetic diseases observed in the Bernese Mountain Dog. The Berner-Garde Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, not-for-profit corporation.

Why was Berner-Garde Created? *For the Love of a Berner*

The mission of the Berner-Garde Foundation (BGF) is to ensure that all Bernese Mountain Dogs (BMD) have a long and healthy lifespan of 12-14 years.

To accomplish this goal, the incidence of several serious hereditary diseases must be decreased and, over time, eliminated. It is the hope of all who know and love a Berner that the work of the BGF will lead not only to an understanding of genetic disease(s) in an individual dog, but also in the BMD breed as a whole.

What is the Berner-Garde Foundation?

The Berner-Garde Foundation was established to collect, maintain and disseminate information about genetic diseases observed in the Bernese Mountain Dog. The BGF is comprised of a voluntary Board of Directors, several committees and, at its core, a computerized database. The database contains information which has been compiled over many years from **voluntary submissions** of data from owners and from other public sources of information, including the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) and the Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF).

The information in the BGF database is available upon request to BMD owners and clubs (national and international), to veterinarians, to approved researchers and to other appropriate users who are working to reduce genetic disease in the BMD.

Access to the BGF database is by written request to either the central Database Manager or the appropriate Regional Site Operator as listed in the ***Berner-Garde Guidebook***. Research proposals and grants are approved on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Directors.

Why is a Breed-specific Database Needed?

A breed-specific database can reveal trends before they might otherwise be noted by any one individual. By pooling data, it is possible to identify common concerns. No one individual can begin to uncover trend data by themselves. This is why the breed-specific database is so valuable.

How Can Berner-Garde Help Me?

The BGF serves those who need support and information on BMD health issues. Most indi-

vidual breeders choose to have small kennels, making it difficult for them to collect adequate data for breeding decisions. BGF facilitates communication among breeders and aids in the identification of carriers of inherited problems. Breeders can reduce genetic disease in their dogs by considering the health status of siblings and offspring at the same time they are selecting for good temperament and type. **Only by working together and sharing information openly can any long-term control of genetic disease be achieved on a breed-wide basis.**

The BGF database has been used and continues to be used as a resource for researchers of tumors in Bernese Mountain Dogs. BGF has supported an ongoing collection of tumors over a number of years. Currently, the registry contains data on over 900 tumors. As of this printing, however, The Institute for Genetic Disease Control (GDC) where the tumors are archived is merging with OFA. GDC is maintaining the tumor registry for now. BGF will monitor the progress of this merger and communicate through its website any new information on these developments.

How Can I Participate?

To accomplish the BGF mission, all BMDs need to be included in the database. It is a responsibility of each BMD owner to voluntarily submit data on each dog, regardless of whether the dog will be bred. Reporting should begin at the time of birth. Every breeder is encouraged to submit data on every puppy born. Forms for submitting data by either the breeder or owner are available in the ***Berner-Garde Guidebook*** and can also be downloaded from the BGF website at www.bernergarde.org or submitted on-line via the BGF website.

What is BGF's relationship to the BMDCA?

The Berner-Garde Foundation is a separately incorporated, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, but it has a strong link to the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America (BMDCA). The BGF's bylaws require that at least three members of the Board of Directors have been either current or past members of the BMDCA Board. There are close working relationships between the breed club and BGF. The BMDCA Health Committee and BGF coordinate activities to be supportive of each other. Through this type of mutual cooperation all Bernese Mountain Dogs benefit.

Leave a Legacy!

All BMD owners need to include all of their dogs in the BGF database. Periodically request that the File Manager send you proofs to update and check your data for accuracy. Consider a donation to the BGF to help defray the costs of the database, tumor collection and its other activities. Remember, all donations are tax deductible. Volunteer! The BGF relies upon dedicated Berner lovers.

Want More Information?

Visit the BGF website at www.bernergarde.org. To obtain a ***Berner-Garde Guidebook***, send a \$15 donation to:

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20 Tynan Way

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E-mail: tc_godfrey@hotmail.com or Ph: (650)851-2215

BGF Forms: ***Guidebook***, File Manager, Site Operator, or website: www.bernergarde.org.