



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

Doug Ljungren
Assistant Vice President
Performance Events

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To: All Pointing Breed Clubs

Subject: **NEW PEOPLE – NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

Pointing breed field events are some of the oldest sporting dog activities in the United States. However, there are long-term social trends that are making the time spent with our hunting companions in the field an unfamiliar activity to a growing percentage of the population. It is becoming increasingly common for new field event participants to not have been involved in actual hunting activities. Their interest is usually driven by consideration for their dog – they feel it should be allowed to participate in the activity it was bred to do. This is a very positive motivation; however, the transition into the sport can be difficult given the new owners' background.

All new participants need a helping hand to get started and this will become even more the case in the future. Good old fashion club fun days can help a new person become familiar with the general routine of field events. The next logical step is participation in the Hunting Test program. A field trial club that does not hold hunting tests should consider becoming licensed for these events. Field trials can be a bit intimidating due to the difficulty of observing the action and the presence of horses. Walking field trials, or walking stakes at horseback trials, can serve to ease the transition into the sport. A recent analysis showed 40% of the field trials in the Northeast include AWP / AWD stakes, while only 11% of the field trials on the West Coast hold these stakes.

The Juniors Program is designed to increase involvement of young people (ages 9 to 18). The Pointing Breed Hunting Test Regulations were recently modified to allow dogs with Master or Senior Hunter titles to enter the Junior Hunter level if they are handled by a junior handler. For more on the Juniors Program, contact Lisa Carroll, Manager of Performance Events, at LAC@akc.org.

New participation is required in order for pointing breed field events to remain strong over the long run. Please consider what your club can do to ease the transition for new participants.

Sincerely,

Doug Ljungren

