

ESSFTA Bench Vice President Report April 17, 2022

By Dr. Bev Sigl Felten

1. The Covid pandemic greatly influenced Bench side activities in 2021. The National Specialty was initially planned to be held at Purina Farms in Missouri with multiple Covid restrictions regarding space. These restrictions finally were deemed not conducive to holding the event. Plans then changed for the 2021 National Specialty to be held in Texas. Entry numbers continued to be influenced by the pandemic, this time in fall with the Delta variant. Health risk was and still is a real concern for in-person participation with exhibitors and several governors. A quorum was not met for voting at the Texas national. Every location has environmental concerns of some sort. The Texas location had some issues of theft, not otherwise historically seen at Purina, the planned location for 2022.
2. Financial support via donations and sponsorship was increased for the Top 20 Event at the National. This writer believes more support has already been obtained for 2022.
3. The Bench Board of Governors did not approve the revised Illustrated Breed Standard, as a quorum had not been met. In addition, some of the text in the document still needed editing, along with disagreement with some of the illustrations. Positive changes are still in process with feedback. The chair of the Judges Education Committee resigned. A new Chair is now in place, and with the assistance of a specific Bench Governor, work is progressing to get this document to a more acceptable version.
4. Related to the Illustrated Standard issue, The American Pointer Club recently sent out a laminated one page brief printed illustrated summary insert sent to all AKC conformation judges. A one page insert like this may be an excellent resource to provide support for judges until the formal Illustrated Standard can get approved, printed and disseminated.
5. President Healy asked this writer to spear head the AKC "Meet the Breeds" program. Again, due to the pandemic, the planned program with specific freestanding locations, initially envisioned by the AKC, was dropped due to logistics. This writer has found it to be very difficult to foster local breed exhibitors to drive to an event, put the time in at a show other than exhibiting their own dog. There was, however, interest from the Field side. This writer observed only one well attended "Meet the Breed" program, embedded within activities at the Land O'Lakes KC show in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Multiple numbers of breeds were not seen, but the program in Minnesota had law enforcement demonstrations of working pure bred dogs, and obedience training. No springers were represented at the Land O'Lakes show.
6. The Covid pandemic continues to force change in the ESSFTA organization and in all aspects of AKC events. Where in the past, physical presence was required to vote, often a problem due to lost work time, and cost. Serious life-threatening health risks now can force members and governors to not attend important meetings, regardless of cost, restricting the organization's ability to function. Sudden airline and train travel disruptions similarly can result in governors not being at meetings in person for required votes. This organization can no longer depend only on in person presence to conduct business.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Bev Sigl Felten
Bench Vice President