

## For the HEALTH of It by Georgia Edwards MD

### What is the CHIC Certification Program?

When looking for a breeder, you'll want to know if they do "health testing." For Bouvs, that means hips, elbows, eyes, and heart. You can look up a Bouvier's pedigree on the pedigree website at <https://www.bouvierpedigrees.com/>.



The health testing results are certified and centralized by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). That nonprofit was founded in 1966 with an initial focus on preventing joint issues by doing radiographic evaluation, data management, and genetic counseling to prevent canine hip dysplasia. Today the OFA's mission is expanded, "To improve the health and well-being of companion animals through a reduction in the incidence of genetic disease."

The Canine Health Information Center, also known as CHIC (<https://ofa.org/chic-programs/>), is a centralized canine health database jointly sponsored by the AKC Canine Health Foundation and the OFA. CHIC, working with participating parent breed clubs, provides a resource for breeders and owners of purebred dogs. The information is available to owners and breeders and for those studying health issues prevalent in specific breeds. Different breeds have different testing and monitoring for specific health issues. You can check their website and [browse by breed](#). You can browse the different requirements. For example, some have thyroid testing, certain genetic markers and specific temperament tests.

For the Bouvier, the CHIC requirements are (<https://ofa.org/chic-programs/browse-by-breed/?breed=BF>) :

1. OFA radiographic hip evaluation, age > 24 months to evaluate for dysplasia
2. OFA radiographic elbow evaluation, age > 24 months to evaluate for dysplasia

3. ACVO Eye exam, age > 18 months; ABdFC recommends testing be repeated every 2 years until at least age 8. The ACVO exam (also called CAER exam) is identical to the prior CERF exam. Done with the eyes dilated, it includes slit-lamp and indirect ophthalmoscopy only. It does NOT include gonioscopy or measurements of intraocular pressure (IOP). The most common heritable eye problems in Bouviers are cataracts and entropion (turning in of the eyelid margin) which can be detected on the CAER exam, and glaucoma, which cannot be detected or risk-assessed on this screening exam. Many Bouvier breeders and owners understand the value of going beyond the basic required tests and get gonioscopies (and echocardiograms) on their dogs in addition to the CHIC certification.

4. Cardiac evaluation: ONE of the following, done age > 12 months – either a Basic Cardiac Exam: Auscultation only (listening to the heart with a stethoscope) or Advanced Cardiac Exam – done by a board-certified veterinary cardiologist plus echocardiogram



Dogs automatically are entered into the CHIC database when their assessment information is submitted. You can search the CHIC database by kennel or AKC number to see the testing results. The information is collected to allow research and maintain information on the health issues prevalent in breeds, and it allows breeders to make more informed decisions about breeding two animals.

The BHF (Bouvier Health Foundation) usually draws blood at the nationals for the OFA DNA repository. This is the place where DNA is stored for researchers to use. It also where a dog owner can send DNA to have their DNA sent for a specific test. They can ask OFA to send the DNA to a lab for the requested tests. Researchers can request the DNA for their research projects from the DNA pool at the OFA.



BHF recommends that all Bouviers should be registered with AKC and should have OFA/CHIC testing done as a minimum. Even if you are not considering breeding, these basic tests can advise you of your dog's health and the information can be important for looking for health problems and trends in your dog's line. The CHIC certifications of both parents should always be looked up on the OFA website when you are considering getting a Bouvier puppy.