

UNUSUAL BREED IS A SIDELINE BUSINESS FOR THIS NORTH DAKOTA FAMILY

Chinese Shar-Pei Dogs Becoming Popular Here

North Dakotans John and Stephanie Stober, of Goodrich, are breeding Shar-Pei dogs, a native Chinese breed and one of the rarest and most unusual in the world, as a sideline to their farming operation. The couple currently has two female Shar-Peis and will be selling the puppies from their litters.

"A black tongue and incredibly loose and wrinkly skin are the two distinguishing and unusual characteristics of the breed," says Stephanie. "As pups, they appear to have enough skin for a full-grown dog but, as they grow, they fill into the skin. At maturity, the only wrinkles remaining are in the neck and head area."

Otherwise, the dogs have more familiar characteristics. They grow to be about 50 lbs. and 20 in. tall — about the size of a Cocker Spaniel. They have short hair with either a brush-type or horse-type coat and are usually cream, fawn or chocolate colored with a darker strip down the back. They're also loyal, good watchdogs and very intelligent, according to Stephanie.

One unusual but common problem the breed has is that the puppies' excess skin sometimes makes it difficult for them to open their eyes. In a simple veterinary procedure, the skin above the eye is tucked up over the eye with a couple of stitches.

Shar-Peis originated in China around 202 B.C., a fact determined by

artwork from the era, says Stephanie. They were popular as watchdogs for peasants and later as fighting dogs, although she speculates they were drugged because of their mild-mannered disposition.

John points out that Shar-Peis were popular as a fighting dog because of its small ears and eyes and its loose skin which enabled it to turn around and attack the dog which was biting it.

As the political situation changed in China the dogs slowly disappeared. Initially, they were taxed heavily so only the wealthy could afford them and then in the 1940's when the communists took over, dog breeding was outlawed in the country and the breed vanished.

"Fortunately," says Stephanie, "a few were smuggled into Hong Kong and later brought to the United States. The breed, which was down to about 63 dogs in the world, is now built back up to around 7,000."

Shar-Pei pups, depending on their quality and heritage can bring from \$500 to \$5,000, says Stephanie.

The breed isn't registered with the AKC but does have its own club.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John and Stephanie Stober, Rt. 1, Box 5, Goodrich, N. Dak. 58444 (ph 701 884-2732).

Or, FARM SHOW Followup, American Chinese Shar-Pei Club, 55 Oak Court, Danville, Cal. 94526.



Photo courtesy The Bismarck Tribune

Shar-Peis are distinguished by their incredible loose and wrinkly skin.

"A CAREFUL MAN I NEED TO BE FOR A LITTLE FELLOW FOLLOWS ME"

Distinctive Posters To Brighten Your Day

"They're selling like hotcakes," says Iowa farmer Ken McKee, of Emerson, who teamed up with his wife Pat, and nephew Brett Wellhausen, of Clarinda, to create distinctive posters with a message.

"We created them ourselves right here on the farm," says Ken. "My wife Pat took the color photos. Brett and I were the actors and co-producers."

An anonymous poem Ken clipped and saved is inscribed on the "Like Father Like Son" poster. The inscription reads:

*"A careful man I need to be,
For a little fellow follows me
He says like me he's going to be
That little guy who follows me
I'm molding for the world to see
That little chap who follows me*

The second poster shows Brett behind a desk with a sour expression on his face as he laments the day's dismal crop and livestock price reports. "Farming! If it wasn't so much fun, I'd quit!" reads the inscription below.

Both prints are 11 by 17 in. and printed in full color. They sell for \$2.95 each, plus \$1.50 per order for shipping and handling.



For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ken and Pat McKee, Rt. 2, Box 40, Emerson, Iowa 51533 (ph 712 824-7817).

PASSING MOTORISTS GET THE MESSAGE

Grain Bin Mural Promotes Agriculture

By Dianne L. Beetler

"I've wanted to do this ever since we moved here," says Sharon Carlson, who lives on a farm near Wataga, Ill.

What Sharon wanted to do was to promote agriculture by painting a slogan, "Agriculture . . . America's Heartbeat," on one of the grain bins on the farm operated by her and her husband Larry.

The Carlsons' farm is next to Interstate 74, a natural site to promote a message and to reach a large number of people.

Sharon designed the mural to complement the corrugated metal of the grain bin. The mural includes a red barn and silo, a blue barn roof with white stars, four lines (representing furrows) and lettering in black.

At first Sharon intended to paint

the bin herself, but then decided to involve others in the project. The Galesburg Agency for Local Art, in nearby Galesburg, funded the project. Teenagers Steve Edwards and Jim Norris, Galesburg art students, did the painting. A local agricultural supply firm donated the paint.

"I wanted it to be a joint effort to promote agriculture in a positive way," says Sharon of the 10 by 15-foot mural.

She hopes the idea of murals promoting farming catches on elsewhere.

Sharon's mural features a red barn and silos, a blue roof with white stars, and four lines representing furrows.

