

# Canine Nutrition At Windy Hill Kennel

By Ben Hickerson, B.S.

Nestled in the hills of Holmes County, Ohio, you will find Windy Hill Kennel, owned and operated by Robert Beachy. Robert's interest in dogs and dog breeding started as a young boy when his father owned a few dogs as a hobby breeder. In the spring of 2000, Robert expanded on his interest and started a new endeavor with a small kennel consisting of Boston Terriers, Shiba's, and English Bulldogs. After 12 years in the dog breeding industry, Robert decided to take his facility to the next level and make it the best it could be. A 6,500 square foot expansion to the kennel in 2012 led to a 860 square foot breeding facility expansion that quickly followed in 2014. Robert had a passion for advancing the quality of the breeds he was working with and took a special interest in carefully choosing breeding stock to help further improvements in breed conformation, temperament and health but his mission for continual improvements did not stop there. During his pursuit to breed and produce top quality dogs, Robert experienced many challenges. In order to achieve better body condition, sperm counts and more consistent heat cycles, Robert began to explore options with different types of nutritional supplements. When that approach did not yield the

results he hoped for, he began looking for a new dog food. As luck would have it, during this time, Tim Yoder and Jonathan Miller from Maysville Elevator visited Robert and shared information on a dog food line from Canine Health Forward that is available through Crystal Creek®.

The goal of the Canine Health Forward line of dog food is to provide top quality nutrition. In the past, Robert evaluated the quality of dog foods by the percent of protein and the cost per bag, as is typical in the dog breeding industry. After talking to Tim and Jonathan from Maysville elevator, he learned there is much more to a quality dog food. *"Most folks just want to know what the protein percentage is and how much does it cost."* Robert said. When discussing the change to this new dog food, Robert said *"What jumped out to me right away was the higher quality. Crystal Creek® took the time to educate me on nutrient quality and its availability to the dog. Once I learned about all the attributes, I was convinced it was worth the value."*

Robert was correct; this dog food contains the appropriate protein, fat and carbohydrate sources that are highly digestible to the dog. This unique formulation created with chelated trace minerals



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helps support a stronger immune system, healthier hair coats and improved reproductive function because of its higher bioavailability. Antioxidants like astaxanthin, provide for a preventative nutrition focus on the prevention of diseases, overall aging and the conditions associated with it such as atherosclerosis. When looking at a dog food, ingredient quality is not the only factor to evaluate. Assessing the extrusion and cooking process of how the kibble is created is very important. A slow baked cooking process will help maintain ingredient integrity (preventing damage to key ingredients such as protein, fat and starch) and aid in increased gelatinization which makes carbohydrate sources more easily digestible.

## The Results

In the fall of 2018 Robert started several dogs on the Canine Health Forward line of dog food through Crystal Creek® and he could not be happier with the results. Within the first 30 days he could visually see an improvement in the hair coat and body condition of the dogs. Within 4-5 months the consistency of the female's heat cycles started to improve and the amount of food intake had decreased. The concentrated, higher quality feed was paying off, proving that if you provide a dog with highly available and digestible nutrition that can be easily utilized, it will result in less food needing to be fed while still meeting (if not exceeding) nutrient requirements. Robert's results were saving him money while giving increased performance. The statement of *"I'm feeding 35% less dog food!"* was said with much enthusiasm.

Today, well over a year from starting on the Canine Health Forward dog food program, Robert is seeing many more benefits than he anticipated. In addition to the more consistent heat cycles and improved body condition, he is also seeing better semen quality, increased litter sizes, and better milk production for nursing pups. One of the best aspects of Robert's story is the fact he no longer feeds supplements. When assessing the value of a nutrition program, it is not the cost per bag of dog food that should be looked at but the cost per pound of kibble consumed per day along with the cost of additional nutritional supplements that need



to be fed to achieve the desired performance of the animal. When all costs involved were looked at, it became obvious to Robert that the higher quality dog food that negated the need for extra supplementation was a sound investment. In his own words, Robert exclaimed with a smile, *"Canine Health Forward costs more, but I spend less money than I previously did, and I got rid of all the supplements! Its more, but it's less!"*

## Robert's Advice

As 2019 comes to an end Windy Hill Kennel continues to thrive and grow. In the past year another 1,800 square feet has been added to the current kennel and a brand new 2,800 square foot breeding facility has been built. Robert lives on-site with his family and they employ one full-time and one part-time employee. When asked if he had any advice for people thinking about trying the Canine Health Forward dog food line through Crystal Creek®, Robert stated, *"We plan to keep breeding healthy pups and I appreciate the nature of Crystal Creek® and Maysville Elevator"* (Robert's local dealer), *"Everyone wanted to help educate me on canine nutrition so that I could make the best decisions. Our experience is it's working, and I don't see any reason why it wouldn't work for you."*