Breed Ledger

EDITION 2026

REGISTRAR'S HANDBOOK

The Registrar's Handbook.

Running a breed registry your next registrar can pick up



CONTENTS

What is inside.

Foreword 4

How to use this handbook 5

Before you start: the registrar’s role 6

What a registrar is · The authority map · Decisions you make alone, and decisions you refer · Conflicts of interest · Your registry's documents

01 Applications and required fields 10

What an application is for · The core fields · Required, optional and conditional · Photos · Fees · Deadlines and late registrations · Common problems

02 Reviewing a registration 14

Before you open the request · The review, step by step · Asking for more · Rejecting · Approving · Recording the decision · Common problems

03 Numbers and designations 18

What a good number does · Choosing a format · Animals from other registries · Designations · Awarding and removing a designation · Common problems

04 Certificates and the verify page 22

What a certificate should show · Why a verify page matters · Issuing · Reissuing · Revoking · Common problems

05 Transfers and corrections 26

Transfers · Corrections · Common problems

06 Foundation animals and outcrosses 30

Open and closed studbooks · Foundation animals · Imports · Outcrosses and grading up · Inspection · Common problems

07 Public and private registrations 34
Three kinds of information · Who decides · What members should be told · Who inside the registry can see what · Requests for information · Common problems

08 Handing over to the next registrar 38
What the next registrar needs · Access, given and taken away · The overlap · What stays with the registry · After you leave · Common problems

A COI basics 42
What COI is · What COI depends on · Expected COI for a pairing · What a registry decides · What to tell members

B Record retention 45
Keep for the life of the registry · Keep for a defined period · Personal data · Backups and copies

C Moving off spreadsheets 48
Signs it is time · Before you move · During the move · After the move · Common problems

Edition 2026. The example registration number AVR-2026-0612 comes from the Alder Vale Registry, a fictional registry.

Foreword.

I breed animals, and I have filled in a club's registration form from the member side more times than I can count. I have waited on a certificate. I have chased a transfer that sat in someone's inbox. And I have watched clubs lose years of records when the one volunteer who understood the spreadsheet stepped down.

None of that came from bad registrars. It came from good people doing a hard job with no written procedure, no time to write one, and a board that changes every year or two. The rules lived in one person's head, and they left with that person.

This handbook is my attempt to write those rules down in a form any club or registry can adopt. It does not tell you what your rules should be. A closed studbook and an open one, a registry that grades up and one that never does, a club with a health program and one without: each is a legitimate choice. What every one of them needs is the same set of decisions made in advance, written down, and applied the same way to every member.

If your registry already runs this way, use the handbook as a checklist. If it does not, start with the chapter that causes the most trouble today. For most registrars that is the chapter on transfers and corrections.

Dusty Mumphrey
Founder, Breed Ledger

How to use this handbook.

Read it once from start to finish, then keep it open while you work. Each chapter covers one part of the job:

- what the work is and why it matters
- the decisions your club or registry has to make before the work can be done the same way every time
- a checklist you can copy into your own procedures
- the problems registrars run into most often, and how to handle them

The handbook is written for any species. Where a rule differs between species (offspring called a litter or a clutch, a sire and dam or a cross of lines), the text says "your rules" and leaves the detail to your registry. Fill in your own terms as you go.

Most chapters end with a short box headed **How Breed Ledger handles this**. Everything outside those boxes applies to whatever system you use, including a spreadsheet and a filing cabinet.

Before you start: the registrar's role.

What a registrar is The authority map Decisions you make alone, and decisions you refer
Conflicts of interest Your registry's documents

A registrar keeps the studbook. That sounds simple until the first hard case arrives: an animal registered to the wrong dam, a transfer the seller disputes, an animal whose parents were never registered at all. In each of those moments the registrar has to know two things before acting. What do the rules say? And who decides when the rules do not say?

This section is about the second question. Settle it before you touch a single record.

What a registrar is

In most clubs and registries the registrar is an officer or a volunteer appointed by the board. The registrar does not make the rules. The members, the board or a breed council make the rules, usually in the bylaws, the registration rules and the breed standard. The registrar applies those rules to each request, keeps the record of what was decided, and reports to the board.

That separation matters. A registrar who quietly changes a rule to fit one case has made a rule for every case that follows, without the authority to do it and without anyone else knowing. A registrar who refers the case to the body that can decide it, and records the answer, has done the job.

The authority map

Write down, in one page, who decides what. A short table is enough:

DECISION	WHO DECIDES	WHERE IT IS WRITTEN
Accept or reject an ordinary registration	Registrar	Registration rules
Accept an animal with an incomplete pedigree	Board, or a named committee	Registration rules, admissions section
Reverse an approved registration	Board, on the registrar's recommendation	Bylaws, discipline section
Change a required field	Board	Registration rules
Award or remove a designation	Registrar, or a named committee	Designation rules
Release member contact details	Nobody, without the member's consent	Privacy policy
Waive a fee	Treasurer, or the board	Fee schedule

Your table will differ. What matters is that every row has an answer, and that the answer is written somewhere the next registrar can find it.

Decisions you make alone, and decisions you refer

A useful rule of thumb: if the rules give a clear answer, you decide. If the rules give no answer, or two rules disagree, you refer the case to whoever the authority map names, and you record both the question and the answer.

Over time, the referred cases become your registry's case law. When the board answers the same question twice, propose a rule change so the third case is yours to decide.

Conflicts of interest

Registrars are usually breeders, and breeders register their own animals. That is normal and unavoidable in a small community, but it needs a written rule:

- Another officer reviews any registration the registrar submits, owns or bred.
- The registrar does not decide a disputed transfer that involves a friend, a co-owner or a business partner.
- Any conflict is noted on the record, with the name of the officer who decided instead.

None of this implies wrongdoing. Independent review makes the decision defensible, and it protects the registrar as much as the registry.

Your registry's documents

Before you start, collect these in one place and check that they agree with each other:

- the bylaws or constitution
- the registration rules, including admissions and corrections
- the breed standard or standards your registry follows
- the fee schedule
- the privacy policy, or whatever your club tells members about their data
- the designation rules, if your registry awards titles or grades
- the board minutes that changed any of the above

Where two documents disagree, do not pick one. Raise it with the board, and keep a note of the conflict until it is resolved.

Checklist

- I have an authority map that names who decides each kind of case.
- I know which decisions I make alone and which I refer.
- My registry has a written conflict-of-interest rule, and someone else reviews my own registrations.
- I have the current version of every governing document, and I know they agree.
- I have somewhere to record referred cases and their answers.

How Breed Ledger handles this

Roles decide who can change what: a registrar, an admin and a member each see the actions their role allows. Registrar decisions are recorded with who made them and when. If your club approves paid registrations automatically, those are recorded as approved automatically, with no registrar name.

CHAPTER 01

Applications and required fields.

What an application is for · The core fields · Required, optional and conditional · Photos · Fees · Deadlines and late registrations · Common problems

Most of a registrar's time goes on requests that arrive incomplete. A missing date of birth, a dam listed by call name instead of registration number, a photo that shows the wrong side of the animal. Each one costs an email, a wait and a second review. The fix is not more effort at review time. It is a better application.

What an application is for

A registration application has one job: to give the registrar everything needed to decide, in one pass, whether the animal meets your rules. Anything it asks that does not feed that decision is clutter. Anything the decision needs that the form does not ask is a delay.

Start from the decision and work backwards. For every rule in your registration rules, ask what evidence would prove the animal meets it. That evidence is a required field.

The core fields

Almost every registry needs these, whatever the species:

FIELD	WHY IT IS NEEDED
Name of the animal	Identifies the animal on the certificate and in the studbook
Sex	Determines where the animal sits in a pedigree
Date of birth or hatch	Ages the animal and orders the offspring of a pairing
Sire and dam, by registration number	Links the animal to the studbook. A name alone is not enough
Breeder	The person or kennel, cattery, aviary or farm that bred the animal
Current owner	The person the certificate is issued to
Color, pattern or other description your rules use	Distinguishes the animal from its siblings
Photos your rules require	Evidence of description, and sometimes of conformation

Then add the fields your rules depend on. A registry with a health program may need test results. A registry that records lines or bloodlines may need them named. A registry that admits animals by inspection needs the inspection report.

Required, optional and conditional

Sort every field into one of three groups:

- **Required.** The request cannot be decided without it.
- **Optional.** Useful, but the decision does not depend on it.
- **Conditional.** Required only in some cases, such as test results for animals over a certain age, or an inspection report when the parents are not registered.

Write the condition down in plain words next to the field. "Required if either parent is not registered with this registry" is a rule a member can follow. "See section 4.2" is not.

Photos

Photos cause more back-and-forth than any other field. Be specific:

- which views (left side, right side, head, a marking close up)
- the age at which they should be taken
- whether the animal must be standing, held or shown in a particular way
- the smallest acceptable size or resolution
- whether a photo can be reused from an earlier application

Publish an example of a good photo set. Members follow pictures far better than they follow instructions.

Fees

State the fee for each kind of application in the same place as the form, including what happens to the fee if the application is rejected or withdrawn. Decide in advance whether a fee is refunded, held against a corrected application, or kept. The registrar should never have to invent a refund policy while replying to a member.

Deadlines and late registrations

Many registries charge more, or ask for more evidence, when an animal is registered late. If yours does, define "late" in days from the date of birth or hatch, and say what extra evidence a late application needs. Without a definition, every late application becomes a judgment call.

Common problems

- **The parent is "registered" but not with you.** Decide whether you accept registrations from other registries, which ones, and what evidence of the other registration you need. Then put that list on the form.

- **The member does not know the sire's number.** Your studbook should be searchable enough for a member to find it. If it is not, accept a name and the sire's owner, and look it up yourself, but count how often that happens. It is a sign the form or the search needs work.
- **The same animal is submitted twice.** Check for a duplicate before you start a review: same dam, same date of birth, same description.
- **The form asks for something your rules no longer require.** Remove it. Every unused field teaches members that fields do not matter.

Checklist

- Every required field traces back to a rule it proves.
- Conditional fields state their condition in plain words.
- Photo requirements are specific and illustrated.
- Fees, refunds and late registration are defined before an application is submitted.
- The form names the other registries you accept, if any.

How Breed Ledger handles this

A registration request arrives with the fields and photos your rules require. If something is missing or unclear, you request changes with a note saying what you need, and the request is marked as needing action from the member.

CHAPTER 02

Reviewing a registration.

Before you open the request · The review, step by step · Asking for more · Rejecting · Approving · Recording the decision · Common problems

A review is a decision with three possible outcomes: approve, reject, or ask for more. The quality of a registry depends less on which outcome a registrar picks than on whether the same request would get the same outcome from a different registrar on a different day. That is what a written review procedure buys you.

Before you open the request

Work from a queue, not an inbox. Every request should have:

- a status (new, in review, waiting on the member, decided)
- the date it arrived
- the date it last changed

Review in order of arrival unless your rules give a reason to do otherwise, such as a show entry deadline. Write the exception down. A registrar who reviews friends' requests first, even with good intentions, is the start of a fairness complaint.

Set a target for how long a request should wait. Members can live with almost any turnaround if it is published and kept. What they cannot live with is silence.

The review, step by step

Use the same order every time. A fixed order is what stops a tired registrar from missing a step.

1. **Identity.** Is this a new animal, or a duplicate of one already registered or already in the queue?
2. **Eligibility.** Is the submitter a member in good standing, if your rules require it? Is the animal eligible under your rules for the kind of registration requested?
3. **Parentage.** Are the sire and dam registered, with the sex your rules expect, alive or recorded at the date of breeding, and old enough to have bred? Do the dates make sense? A dam cannot produce two sets of offspring a week apart.
4. **Required fields.** Is every required and conditional field present and readable?
5. **Photos and evidence.** Do the photos show what your rules ask for? Do they match the description?
6. **Fees.** Has the fee been paid, or waived by someone with the authority to waive it?
7. **Decision.** Approve, reject, or ask for more.

If a step fails, stop and decide whether the problem is something the member can fix. If it is, ask for more. If it is not, reject with a reason.

Asking for more

Asking for more is the most common outcome and the most often done badly. A good request for changes:

- names the exact field or photo that is missing or wrong
- says what would be acceptable
- says how long the request will be held before it is closed
- is polite. The member is usually a volunteer too.

Avoid "please check your application". The member will check it, find nothing, and send it back unchanged.

Rejecting

A rejection needs a reason that cites the rule. "Rejected under rule 3.4: the dam was not registered at the date of breeding" can be understood, appealed and audited. "Rejected: does not meet requirements" cannot.

Decide in advance:

- whether a rejected request can be resubmitted, and on what terms
- whether the fee is kept, refunded or held
- who hears an appeal, and how long a member has to make one

Approving

Approval is the point at which the animal enters the studbook. From that moment, other records will depend on it: its offspring, its transfers, its certificate. Treat it as permanent. If you are not sure, do not approve; ask for more or refer the case.

Recording the decision

Every decision should record:

- what was decided
- who decided it
- when
- the reason, for any rejection or exception

This record is what the next registrar will read when a member asks, years later, why their animal was registered the way it was.

Common problems

- **The pedigree is right but the dates are not.** Ask for more. Dates are often a typing error, but an approved record with an impossible date will fail every check that relies on it later.

- **The member disagrees with a decision.** Point to the rule and the appeal process. Do not change the decision in an email thread.
- **The request sits waiting on the member for months.** Close it on the date you said you would, with a note. An open request that nobody is working on hides the real size of the queue.
- **You disagree with the rule.** Apply it, and propose a change to the board. A registrar who applies only the rules they agree with has stopped running a registry.

Checklist

- Requests are worked from a queue, in order, with a published target time.
- Every review follows the same steps in the same order.
- Requests for changes name the exact problem and a deadline.
- Rejections cite the rule and explain the appeal process.
- Every decision records who, when and, where needed, why.

How Breed Ledger handles this

Requests wait in a review queue with their status and how long they have waited. You approve, reject with a reason, or request changes with a note. Registrar decisions are recorded with who made them and when, except a request approved automatically on payment, which records no name.

CHAPTER 03

Numbers and designations.

What a good number does · Choosing a format · Animals from other registries · Designations · Awarding and removing a designation · Common problems

A registration number is the one piece of a record that everything else points at. Pedigrees, certificates, transfers, show results and health records all use it. Get the numbering scheme right once and it disappears into the background. Get it wrong and you will be explaining it for the life of the registry.

What a good number does

A good registration number is:

- **Unique.** No two animals, living or dead, ever share it.
- **Permanent.** It never changes, even if the animal changes owner, name or status.
- **Never reused.** A number from a rejected, withdrawn or revoked registration is retired, not handed to the next animal.
- **Readable.** A member can copy it from a certificate and type it into a form without error.

Anything beyond that is optional. Many registries encode extra information in the number, such as a prefix for the registry, the year, or the kind of registration. That can be useful, but every piece of meaning you add is something that can become wrong later. A number that encodes the owner's initials is wrong the day the animal is sold.

Choosing a format

Write the format down as a pattern with an example:

PART	EXAMPLE	MEANING
Prefix	AVR	Your registry
Year	2026	The year of registration, not of birth
Sequence	0612	The next number in the year
Full number	AVR-2026-0612	

Then answer, in writing:

- Does the sequence restart each year, or run continuously?
- What happens when the sequence outgrows its digits?
- Are numbers assigned on approval, or reserved when the request arrives?
- Do foundation or imported animals get a different prefix? (See the chapter on foundation animals and outcrosses.)

Assign numbers on approval if you can. Numbers reserved at submission leave gaps when requests are rejected, and gaps prompt questions.

Animals from other registries

When you register an animal already registered elsewhere, record the other registry's name and number alongside your own. Do not replace it. Members and other registries will search by the number they already know.

Designations

Many registries award designations: titles, grades, awards, health clearances or a status such as "approved for breeding". A designation is a statement your registry makes about an animal, so it needs the same care as the registration itself.

For each designation, write down:

- what it means, in one sentence a member can understand
- the evidence required to award it
- who can award it, and who can remove it
- whether it expires, and when
- whether it appears on the certificate and in the public registry

A designation without a written definition becomes whatever the current registrar thinks it means.

Awarding and removing a designation

Award a designation the same way you approve a registration: check the evidence against the definition, record the decision, and give the reason. Remove one the same way, with a reason that cites the rule.

Removing a designation is often more sensitive than awarding it, because it can affect an animal's value or a member's reputation. Make sure the authority map in the chapter on the registrar's role names who can do it.

Common problems

- **A member asks for a "nicer" number.** Decline. Vanity numbers break the sequence and invite every other member to ask.
- **Two animals were given the same number in the old records.** Do not renumber either one silently. Keep both records, flag the conflict, and refer it to the board. One of them will need a new number, and every pedigree that cites the old one will need a note.
- **A designation's definition changed.** Decide whether animals awarded under the old definition keep it. Record the date of the change so a later reader can tell which definition applied.
- **Show results arrive as a list of names.** Match each result to a registration number before you award anything on the strength of it.

Checklist

- The number format is written down as a pattern with an example.
- Numbers are unique, permanent and never reused.
- Other registries' numbers are kept alongside your own.
- Every designation has a written definition, evidence, authority and expiry.
- Awarding and removing a designation both record a reason.

How Breed Ledger handles this

Approval assigns the next registration number in your club's own format, or keeps the number the animal already has if your club turns that on. Granting a designation asks for a reason.

CHAPTER 04

Certificates and the verify page.

What a certificate should show Why a verify page matters Issuing Reissuing Revoking Common problems

A certificate is the registry's promise, in the owner's hand. Buyers ask to see it. Show secretaries check it. Other registries accept or refuse animals on the strength of it. That makes it the record most worth protecting, and the one most often copied, altered or kept after it stopped being true.

What a certificate should show

Keep the certificate to what a reader needs to rely on it:

- the registry's name and seal
- the registration number
- the animal's name, sex, date of birth or hatch, and description
- the sire and dam, with their registration numbers
- the breeder
- the owner at the date of issue
- the date of issue
- any designations your rules say belong on the certificate

- a way to check that the certificate is genuine and current

Leave off anything that changes often or that the owner may not want shared, such as an address or a phone number. A certificate travels further than you expect.

Why a verify page matters

A printed certificate is a snapshot. The day after it is issued, the animal may be sold, the registration may be corrected, or a designation may be removed. The paper does not change. Anyone holding it has no way to know.

A verify page fixes that. It is a public page, reached from the certificate, that shows the registry's current answer: is this registration valid, and is this the current version of the certificate? It turns every certificate from a statement that was true once into a statement anyone can check today.

Decide what the verify page shows. A good minimum is:

- valid or revoked
- the registration number and the animal's name
- whether the certificate being checked is the current version

Keep owner contact details off it. A buyer needs to know the registration is genuine, not where the seller lives.

Issuing

Issue the certificate when the registration is approved, from the approved record, not from the application. If anything on the application was corrected during review, the certificate must show the corrected value.

Decide whether you issue paper, a PDF, or both, and who pays for postage. If members print their own, say so clearly, and make the verify page the thing that proves a printout is genuine.

Reissuing

Reissue a certificate when something on it changes: an ownership transfer, a corrected detail, a new designation that belongs on the certificate. Each reissue should:

- record the reason
- become the new current version
- make the old version check as no longer current on the verify page

Decide whether a reissue is free, and whether the owner must return or destroy the old certificate. Most registries cannot enforce the second, which is another reason the verify page matters.

Revoking

Revocation means the registry no longer stands behind the registration. It is rare and serious: proven false parentage, fraud, an animal registered twice. Treat it as a board-level decision unless your rules say otherwise.

A revocation should:

- cite the rule and the evidence
- record who decided and when
- make the verify page show the registration as revoked
- notify the owner, with the appeal process

Do not delete a revoked registration. Its offspring, transfers and history still need to make sense, and the record of why it was revoked is part of the studbook.

Common problems

- **A member has lost the certificate.** Reissue it as a new version, and note that the old one was reported lost.
- **A buyer says the certificate looks wrong.** Send them to the verify page rather than answering from memory.
- **The seal or layout changes.** Older certificates remain valid under their original layout. Note the date of the change.

- **The owner on the certificate is not the owner today.** That is expected after a sale. The verify page and the transfer record answer who owns the animal now.

Checklist

- The certificate shows what a reader needs and nothing private.
- Every certificate can be checked against a public verify page.
- Certificates are issued from the approved record.
- Reissues and revocations record a reason and update the verify page.
- Revoked registrations are kept, not deleted.

How Breed Ledger handles this

Once your club sets up certificates, a certificate is issued on approval from the approved record, with your club's seal once uploaded. Every issued certificate has a verify page that anyone with the link can open. It shows whether the registration is valid or revoked and the facts printed on the certificate, and it never shows the owner's contact details. Reissuing a certificate and revoking a registration each ask for a reason.

CHAPTER 05

Transfers and corrections.

Transfers Corrections Common problems

Transfers and corrections are where registries lose the most trust. A sale that is not recorded leaves the wrong person holding the certificate. A correction made quietly leaves two people with two different versions of the truth. Both are fixed by the same habit: every change to an approved record goes through a written process and leaves a trace.

Transfers

A transfer moves an animal from one owner to another. It sounds like a single field change. In practice it is an agreement between two people, and the registry is recording that agreement, not making it.

Who can start a transfer

Write down who may start one:

- the current owner
- a registry officer, on evidence that the owner agreed (a signed form, a bill of sale)
- never the buyer alone

Starting a transfer from the buyer's side, on the buyer's word, is how registries end up in the middle of disputes.

What a transfer needs

ITEM	WHY
The animal's registration number	Identifies the animal beyond doubt
The current owner's agreement	The owner is giving something up
The new owner's acceptance	The new owner is taking on the record, and sometimes obligations
The date of transfer	Orders the history and settles disputes about who owned the animal when
Any fee your rules set	
Any condition the sale carries that your rules recognize, such as a co-ownership	

Ask both sides. A transfer that only one party confirmed is half a transfer.

Co-ownership

Decide whether your registry records co-owners, and if so how many and with what rights. Who can sign for the animal? Who receives the certificate? Who can start a later transfer? If you do not record co-ownership, say so, so members do not assume the registry is enforcing an agreement it has never seen.

Disputed transfers

When a buyer and a seller disagree, the registry's job is narrow. Record what each side has provided, keep the record as it stands until the dispute is settled, and refer the case to whoever the authority map names. The registry is not a court, and should not behave like one.

Corrections

A correction changes an approved record because it was wrong: a misspelled name, a wrong date of birth, a mistyped sire number. It differs from a transfer, which changes a record because the world changed.

Sort corrections by risk

Not every correction carries the same weight:

KIND	EXAMPLE	WHO CAN APPROVE IT
Clerical	A misspelled name, a typing error in a color	Registrar
Material	Date of birth, sex, description	Registrar, with evidence
Pedigree	Sire or dam	Board, or a named committee, with evidence

Pedigree corrections are the most serious, because they ripple. A changed sire changes the pedigree of every descendant, and may change COI figures, eligibility for designations, and earlier decisions that relied on the old parentage.

How to make a correction

1. Record the request: who asked, what they want changed, and why.
2. Collect the evidence your rules require for that kind of correction.
3. Decide, or refer the decision.
4. Change the record, and keep the old value in the history.
5. Reissue the certificate if anything printed on it changed.
6. For pedigree corrections, list the descendants affected and decide whether any of them need a note or a reissued certificate.

Never overwrite a value without keeping the old one. "It used to say X; on this date, on this evidence, it was changed to Y" is the sentence that saves you two years later.

Reopening a decision

Sometimes a registration was rejected in error, or a revoked registration turns out to have been sound. Your rules should say who can reopen a decision and on what grounds. Reopening returns the case to review. It does not approve it.

Common problems

- **The seller has died or cannot be reached.** Decide what evidence your registry accepts in place of the owner's agreement, such as an estate letter or a bill of sale, and who approves it.
- **The animal was sold years ago and nobody told the registry.** Record the transfer with the real date if you can establish it, and note that it was recorded late.
- **A member asks to "just fix" a parent.** Treat it as a pedigree correction, with evidence, however small the request sounds.
- **A correction was made in the old spreadsheet with no note.** You cannot reconstruct what you never recorded. Note the gap, and start keeping history from today.

Checklist

- The rules say who can start a transfer, and the buyer alone cannot.
- Both owners confirm every transfer.
- Co-ownership is either recorded with defined rights or explicitly not recorded.
- Corrections are sorted by risk, with the right approver for each.
- Every correction keeps the old value and the reason.
- Pedigree corrections include a list of affected descendants.

How Breed Ledger handles this

When your club turns on member animal records, the owner or an admin opens a transfer of a registered animal to another member, and the new owner accepts or declines it. The transfer completes once the new owner accepts it, is recorded with who and when, and the record keeps its history. A rejected or revoked registration can be reopened, which returns it to review.

CHAPTER 06

Foundation animals and outcrosses.

Open and closed studbooks Foundation animals Imports Outcrosses and grading up Inspection Common problems

Every studbook starts somewhere. The first animals in it had no registered parents, because there was nothing yet to register them in. Many registries keep a door open after that too: for animals imported from elsewhere, for outcrosses brought in to widen a narrow gene pool, or for animals graded up over several generations. These admissions are where a registry's rules matter most, because they decide what the studbook means.

Open and closed studbooks

Start with the question your registry has to answer: is the studbook open or closed?

- **Closed.** Only the offspring of animals already registered can be registered. Admissions from outside are not accepted, or are accepted only in narrow cases such as imports from a recognized registry.
- **Open.** Animals from outside can be admitted under defined conditions.
- **Partly open.** Admissions are allowed only into an appendix or supplementary register, and their descendants move into the main studbook after a set number of generations.

None of these is right for every breed. A breed with a small population may need outcrosses to stay healthy. A breed with a long, documented history may value a closed book above everything. Make the choice deliberately, write it down, and record the date the rule took

effect.

Foundation animals

Foundation animals are the animals a studbook was built on. When a registry is founded, or when an existing registry moves onto a new system, foundation records are entered with whatever history is known.

For each foundation animal, record:

- the name and any existing registration number from earlier records
- the sire and dam, if known, even if they are not themselves registered
- where the information came from: an earlier studbook, a breeder's records, an import certificate
- who entered the record and when

Do not invent parents to make a pedigree look complete. "Unknown" is an honest answer and a useful one. A guessed parent can never be tested, corrected or explained.

Imports

An import is an animal already registered with another registry. Decide:

- which registries you accept, by name
- what evidence you need: the original certificate, a certified pedigree, a transfer document
- how many generations of the other registry's pedigree you record
- whether the animal keeps a link to its original number (it should; see the chapter on numbers and designations)

Outcrosses and grading up

An outcross brings in an animal from outside the breed, or from a different line, to add genetic diversity. Grading up registers the offspring of an outside animal, then their offspring, until after enough generations the line is treated as purebred.

If your registry allows either, the rules must say:

- which animals are eligible as outcrosses, and who approves each one
- what evidence of the animal's own history is needed
- which register or appendix the offspring go into
- how many generations before descendants move into the main studbook
- how the status appears on certificates and in the public registry

Track the generation count on every record. It is very hard to reconstruct later, and a mistake in it changes which register an animal belongs in.

Inspection

Some registries admit animals by inspection: an approved inspector examines the animal against the breed standard and recommends admission. If yours does, write down who can inspect, what they check, what form the report takes, and who makes the final decision. An inspection report is evidence. The admission is still a registry decision.

Common problems

- **A breeder wants to register a line with no paperwork.** Apply the admissions rule as written. If there is no rule for this case, refer it.
- **The founding records disagree with each other.** Record both versions and the source of each. Choose one only if the board decides.
- **An outcross line is three generations in and nobody tracked the count.** Reconstruct it from the records you have, note what you could not confirm, and refer the result to whoever approves admissions.
- **A member asks why their animal is in the appendix.** Point to the rule and the generation count on the record.

Checklist

- The studbook is declared open, closed or partly open, with the date of the rule.
- Foundation records name their source and use "unknown" rather than a guess.
- Accepted registries for imports are listed by name.
- Outcross and grading-up rules define eligibility, the register and the generation count.
- Inspection reports are treated as evidence, with a separate admission decision.

How Breed Ledger handles this

An admin can add a foundation animal with its existing registration number and its known parents, and can register it in the same step. Parents who were never registered can be recorded by name.

CHAPTER 07

Public and private registrations.

Three kinds of information · Who decides · What members should be told · Who inside the registry can see what · Requests for information · Common problems

A registry holds two kinds of information that pull in opposite directions. The studbook is meant to be shared: buyers, breeders and other registries rely on being able to look up an animal and its parents. The people behind the animals are not: owners and breeders have addresses, phone numbers and sometimes good reasons not to be found. A registrar needs a written rule for where the line falls, and needs to apply it the same way for every member.

Three kinds of information

Sort what your registry holds into three groups:

KIND	EXAMPLES	USUAL DEFAULT
Animal record	Name, number, sex, date of birth or hatch, parents, description, designations	Can be public, if your registry publishes a studbook
Breeding record	Breeder name, kennel, cattery, aviary or farm name	Often public, because buyers look for it
Personal details	Owner address, phone, email, payment history	Private, shared only with consent or by law

Your registry may draw the line differently. What matters is that the line is written down, that members can read it, and that it is applied to every record rather than decided case by case.

Who decides

Visibility is a registry policy, not the registrar's personal call. The board or the members decide:

- whether the registry publishes a public studbook at all
- which fields of an animal record appear in it
- whether new registrations start public or private
- whether members can choose to hide their own animals, and on what terms

The registrar applies that policy. When a member asks for an exception, check whether the policy allows one. If it does not, refer the request.

What members should be told

Members are entitled to know, before they register, what will be visible and to whom. Put it on the application form in plain words:

- what appears in the public registry
- what appears on the verify page for a certificate
- what officers can see
- how to ask for a correction, or for their personal details to be removed where your rules or the law allow it

Do not rely on a privacy policy nobody reads. One clear paragraph at the point of registration does more.

Who inside the registry can see what

Not every officer needs every detail. A show secretary needs entries, not payment history. A treasurer needs payments, not pedigrees. Decide which roles see personal details, and give each officer the least they need to do the job.

When an officer steps down, their access should end the same day. See the chapter on handing over to the next registrar.

Requests for information

You will be asked for information about members, often by other members. A breeder wants a buyer's address. A buyer wants to know who owned an animal before. A rival wants to know how many animals someone registered last year.

Your default answer is that the registry does not share personal details without consent. If the request is reasonable, offer to pass a message on instead. If someone presents a legal request, refer it to the board before acting.

Common problems

- **A member wants their animal removed from the public registry.** Check the policy. If hiding is allowed, hide the record, but do not delete it. The pedigrees of its offspring still depend on it.
- **An old record shows an owner's address in a free-text note.** Remove the personal detail from anything public, and keep the note private.
- **A former officer still has the spreadsheet.** Ask for it to be returned or deleted, in writing, and record the request.
- **A buyer asks the registrar to confirm an animal's history over email.** Point them to the public registry and the verify page, and answer only from what those show.

Checklist

- The registry has a written rule for what is public, what officers see and what stays private.
- The board or members, not the registrar alone, made that rule.
- Members are told on the application what will be visible.
- Officers see only what their role needs.
- Hidden records are kept, not deleted.

How Breed Ledger handles this

Your club decides whether it has a public registry and whether members can register and manage their own animals. These are club settings, off until your club turns them on. Where the registry is public, members choose Private or Public when they register an animal.

CHAPTER 08

Handing over to the next registrar.

What the next registrar needs Access, given and taken away The overlap
What stays with the registry After you leave Common problems

Every registrar is temporary. Terms end, volunteers move on, people fall ill. The test of a well-run registry is not how it runs under its best registrar. It is how it runs in the first month after that registrar leaves.

Start planning the handover on your first day, not your last.

What the next registrar needs

Write a handover pack, and keep it current. It should hold:

- **The documents.** The current governing documents from the chapter on the registrar's role, and the board decisions that changed them.
- **The authority map.** Who decides what, and the cases you referred, with their answers.
- **The procedures.** Your own working version of the checklists in this handbook.
- **The open work.** Every request in review or waiting on a member, with its status and the next step.
- **The exceptions.** Every case you decided outside the ordinary rules, why, and on whose authority.

- **The access list.** Every system, inbox, account and filing cabinet the registrar uses, and who holds the keys to each.
- **The calendar.** Deadlines that come round every year: renewals, show entries, annual reports, fee reviews.
- **The contacts.** Other registries, inspectors, the printer, the treasurer, and anyone else you deal with regularly.

The pack should let a capable stranger do the job. If it only makes sense to you, it is not finished.

Access, given and taken away

Access is the part of a handover most often done badly, and the most dangerous to get wrong.

- Give the new registrar their own accounts. Never hand over a password.
- Remove the old registrar's access on the day the role changes, unless the board agrees a defined overlap.
- Check every shared inbox, cloud folder and spreadsheet for copies in personal accounts.
- Record what was changed and when.

Shared logins are the reason so many registries cannot say who made a change. If two people used the same account, the record says it was made by both of them and by neither.

The overlap

If you can, overlap for one full cycle of the work, usually a month. In the first half, the new registrar watches. In the second half, they do the work and you check it. Do the hard cases together: a disputed transfer, a pedigree correction, a referral to the board.

What stays with the registry

The records belong to the registry, not to the registrar. That includes:

- the studbook and every version of it

- the history of decisions and corrections
- correspondence about registrations
- any spreadsheet, database or paper file used to keep them

Make this explicit in your rules, so nobody has to argue about it when a volunteer leaves on bad terms.

After you leave

Offer to answer questions for a short, defined period. After that, step back. A former registrar who keeps answering members' questions makes the new registrar's job harder, however well meant.

Common problems

- **The outgoing registrar has gone and left nothing.** Start from the records themselves. List the open requests, recover access to every system, and write the pack you wish you had been given.
- **Part of the history lives only in someone's memory.** Interview them now, write it down, and mark what could not be confirmed.
- **Two registrars disagree about how something was always done.** The written rule wins. If there is no written rule, refer it and write one.
- **A volunteer will not return the files.** Ask in writing, record the request, and refer it to the board.

Checklist

- A handover pack exists and a stranger could use it.
- Every officer has their own account, and access ends when the role does.
- Open requests and exceptions are listed with their next step.
- The rules state that records belong to the registry.
- The overlap and the former registrar's support period are defined.

How Breed Ledger handles this

When officers change, an admin gives the new registrar the registrar role. The new registrar signs in to the same records with their own account, and earlier registrar decisions keep who made them and when.

APPENDIX A

COI basics.

What COI is What COI depends on Expected COI for a pairing What a registry decides What to tell members

Members will ask the registrar about the coefficient of inbreeding, or COI, more and more often. You do not need to be a geneticist to answer well. You need to know what the number means, what it depends on, and what your registry's policy says about it.

What COI is

The coefficient of inbreeding is the probability that an animal inherits two copies of the same gene that both trace back to a single ancestor. It is written as a percentage. An animal whose parents share no ancestors in the pedigree has a COI of zero. The offspring of two full siblings has a COI of at least 25 percent.

The standard method is Wright's coefficient, calculated from the pedigree. Every path from the sire, up through a common ancestor and back down to the dam, adds to the total. The closer the common ancestor, the more it adds.

What COI depends on

A COI figure is only as good as the pedigree behind it. Three things change the answer:

- **Depth.** The number of generations counted. More generations usually means a higher COI, because more distant common ancestors are found. A five-generation COI and a ten-generation COI for the same animal are different numbers, and both are correct.
- **Completeness.** Every unknown ancestor is treated as unrelated to everything else, which lowers the result. A pedigree with gaps produces a COI that looks better than it is.

- **Accuracy.** A wrong parent produces a wrong COI for every descendant. This is one more reason pedigree corrections matter (see the chapter on transfers and corrections).

So only compare COIs calculated to the same depth, from pedigrees of similar completeness.

Expected COI for a pairing

For a planned pairing, the useful figure is the expected COI of the offspring, calculated from the pedigrees of the sire and dam together. Do not average the parents' own COIs. Two unrelated parents with high COIs can produce offspring with a COI near zero, and two related parents with low COIs can produce offspring with a high one.

What a registry decides

If your registry reports COI, write down:

- the depth used, in generations
- how missing ancestors are treated, and whether a figure is shown when the pedigree is too incomplete
- whether lab or genomic results are recorded, and whether they replace the pedigree figure
- who can see COI figures: officers only, the owner, or the public
- what the figure is used for: information, a recommendation, or a rule

Many breed clubs publish a breed average and suggest breeders aim at or below it. If yours does, state the depth, the population the average was calculated from, and the date it was last updated. A breed average without those three facts cannot be compared with anything.

A one-page COI policy template is available at breedledger.co/guides/coefficient-of-inbreeding.

What to tell members

Keep it short and honest:

- COI is an estimate based on the ancestry recorded in the studbook.
- It is one factor among many, alongside health testing, temperament and conformation.
- A low figure from an incomplete pedigree is not a reassurance.

> **How Breed Ledger handles this**
>
> Where pairing analysis is on, an organization admin can set your club's own COI bands in pairing settings, and the pairing view labels each result with its band. With no bands set, the COI shows without a label.

APPENDIX B

Record retention.

Keep for the life of the registry Keep for a defined period Personal data Backups and copies

A studbook is meant to last longer than anyone who works on it. Some records should be kept for the life of the registry. Others should be kept for a set time and then removed. A written retention schedule tells the registrar which is which, and protects the registry from both losing what it needs and keeping what it should not.

Keep for the life of the registry

These records are the studbook. Never delete them, even when an animal dies, is revoked or is hidden from public view:

- every approved registration, including revoked ones
- the parentage of every registered animal
- every transfer, with its date
- every correction, with the old value, the new value and the reason
- every designation awarded or removed, with the reason
- every certificate version issued
- the governing documents and every board decision that changed them

Keep for a defined period

These records support decisions but are not part of the studbook. Set a period for each, and write it down:

RECORD	A COMMON PERIOD	NOTES
Rejected or withdrawn applications	Several years	Long enough to handle an appeal or a resubmission
Correspondence about a registration	Several years	Keep anything that explains a decision
Payment records	As your tax and accounting rules require	Check with your treasurer
Supporting evidence (photos, test results, bills of sale)	As long as the decision might be questioned	Pedigree evidence is often worth keeping permanently
Former members' contact details	Only as long as there is a reason	Remove when the reason ends

The right periods depend on your registry, your country and your rules. Check them with the board and, where money or personal data is involved, with whoever advises your club on law and tax.

Personal data

Keep personal details only as long as you need them. When a member leaves, their name may need to stay on the records of animals they owned or bred, because the studbook depends on it. Their address, phone number and email usually do not. Decide in advance what is kept, what is removed, and when.

Backups and copies

A record kept in one place is a record at risk. Make sure:

- the studbook is backed up, and someone other than the registrar can reach the backup

- old copies in personal email, laptops or memory sticks are found and either returned or deleted
- someone other than the registrar holds an export of the records in a format another system can read

Test the export once a year. A backup nobody has tried to restore is a hope, not a backup.

Checklist

- The retention schedule lists what is kept permanently and what is kept for a period.
- Revoked and hidden records are kept.
- Personal details are removed when the reason to keep them ends.
- The studbook is backed up and the backup has been tested.
- Copies outside the registry's own systems are accounted for.

How Breed Ledger handles this

Admins can export selected roster members and the registration queue as CSV. Your club keeps ownership of the records it uploads or creates.

APPENDIX C

Moving off spreadsheets.

Signs it is time Before you move During the move After the move
Common problems

Most registries start on a spreadsheet, and many stay on one for decades. A spreadsheet is a fine way to keep a list. It is a poor way to keep a studbook, because it cannot stop two people editing the same row, cannot keep the history of a change, and cannot tell you who did what. If your registry is thinking about moving, this appendix covers what to do before, during and after.

Signs it is time

- Only one person understands how the spreadsheet works.
- Two copies exist and nobody is sure which is current.
- Members wait weeks for a certificate because one volunteer has to type it.
- Nobody can answer "who changed this, and when?"
- A pedigree question means opening three files and a box of paper.

Before you move

Moving records is mostly about preparing them. The more of this you do first, the smoother the move.

1. **Find every source.** List every spreadsheet, database, paper file and inbox that holds registry records, and who holds each one.

2. **Pick the master.** Where sources disagree, decide which one wins for each kind of record, and note the exceptions.
3. **List your fields.** Write down every column you use and what it means. Note columns that mean different things in different years.
4. **Fix the worst problems.** Duplicate animals, parents recorded by name instead of number, impossible dates. You do not have to fix everything, but you should know what is wrong.
5. **Freeze the rules.** Agree with the board that no rule changes take effect during the move.

During the move

- Map each of your fields to its place in the new system, and agree the map before any records move.
- Keep the old system available, read-only, until the board is satisfied the new one is right.
- Check totals after the move: number of animals, number of members, number of registrations per year. If a total does not match, find out why before going further.
- Spot-check records your registrar knows well: a famous sire, a complicated pedigree, an animal with several transfers.

After the move

- Tell members what changed, what they need to do, and who to ask.
- Keep a list of problems found after the move, and fix them in the new system, not the old one.
- Archive the old files where the registry, not one person, can reach them.
- Update the handover pack (see the chapter on handing over).

Common problems

- **Planning to clean it up after the move.** Some of it, perhaps. But records that were wrong before the move are still wrong after it. Fix the worst first.

- **A column nobody understands.** Ask the people who used it. If nobody knows, keep it as a note on the record rather than dropping it.
- **Members' email addresses are years out of date.** Plan how members will be told about the new system before you rely on email to tell them.

Checklist

- Every source of records is listed, with an owner.
- A master source is chosen for each kind of record.
- Fields are mapped and agreed before records move.
- Totals are checked after the move.
- The old system stays read-only until the board signs off.

How Breed Ledger handles this

Migration is currently free. Send your spreadsheets or pedigree database export, and Dusty Mumphrey, Breed Ledger's founder, moves your records himself, with you. You can keep the old system read-only until your board is confident.

BOOK A DEMO

See the registry the handbook describes.

Book a demo with your registrar.

Book a demo

breedledger.co/demo