

## Know The Facts Before Breeding

We think it is extremely important to learn the facts and possible consequences in advance if you are contemplating breeding your dog. In today's over-crowded world, we, the wardens of our domestic pets, must make responsible decisions for them and for ourselves. The following points should be reviewed carefully.

- **QUALITY** AKC registration is *not* an indication of quality. Most dogs, even purebred, should not be bred. Many dogs, though wonderful pets, have defects of structure, personality, or health that should not be perpetuated, such as hip dysplasia, hereditary eye defects and bleeding disorders. Breeding animals should be proven free of these defects before starting a reproductive career. Breeding should only be done with the goal of improvement—an honest attempt to create puppies better than their parents. Ignorance is no excuse—once you have created a life you can't take it back, even if it's blind, crippled or a canine psychopath!
- **COST** Dog breeding is *not* a money-making proposition, if done correctly. Pre-breeding health exams, health care of dam and puppies, vaccines, diagnosis of problems, proof of quality, stud fees, advertising, etc. are all costly and must be paid before the pups are sold. An unexpected C-section or emergency intensive care for a sick puppy will make a break-even venture become a big liability. AND this is *IF* you can sell the pups.
- **SALES** First-time breeders have no reputation and no referrals to help them find buyers. Many potential purchasers have done their homework, and will only deal with long-term established breeders with a stellar reputation. Previous promises of "I want a dog just like yours" evaporate. Consider the time and expense of caring for pups that may not sell until four months, eight months or more! What would you do if your pups did not sell? Send them to the pound or a rescue organization? Dump them in the country? Sell them cheap to a dog broker who may resell them to labs or other unsavory buyers? Take them to a pet store to have them sold to homes who are simply buying on impulse? Veteran breeders with a good reputation often don't consider a breeding unless they have cash deposits in advance for an average-sized litter.
- **JOY OF BIRTH** If you're doing it for the children's education, remember the whelping may be at 3:00 a.m. or at the vet's on the surgery table. Even if the kiddies are present, they may get a chance to see the birth of a monster or a mummy, or watch the bitch scream and bite you as you attempt to deliver a pup that is half out and too large. Some bitches are not natural mothers and either ignore or savage their whelps. Bitches can have severe delivery problems or

even die in whelp—pups can be born dead or with gross deformities that require euthanasia. Of course there can be joy, but if you can't deal with the possibility of tragedy, don't start.

- **TIME** Veteran breeders of quality dogs state they spend well over 130 hours of intensive labor in raising an average litter. That is over two hours per day, every day. The bitch cannot be left alone while whelping and only for short periods for the first few days after. Be prepared for days off work and sleepless nights. Even after delivery, mom needs care and feeding, puppies need daily checking, weighing and socializing. Later, grooming and training, and the whelping box needs lots of constant cleaning. More hours are spent on paperwork, pedigrees, and interviewing buyers. If you have any abnormal conditions such as sick puppies or a bitch who can't or won't care for her babies, count on triple the time. If you can't provide the time, you will either have dead puppies or poor ones that are bad tempered, antisocial, dirty and/or sickly—hardly a buyers delight!
- **HUMANE RESPONSIBILITY** It's midnight—do you know where your puppies are? There are three and a half million unwanted dogs put to death in pounds in this country each year, with millions more dying homeless and unwanted through starvation, disease, automobiles, abuse, etc. Nearly a quarter of the victims of this unspeakable tragedy are purebred dogs “with papers”. Purebreds “without papers” number even higher. The breeder who creates a life is responsible for that life. Will you carefully screen potential buyers? Or will you just take the money and not worry if the puppy is chained up all it's life or runs the street to be killed? Will you turn down a sale to irresponsible owners? Or will you say “yes” and not think about the puppy you held and loved now having a litter of mongrels every time she comes in heat, which fills the pound with more statistics—your grandpups? Would you be prepared to take a grown puppy back if the owners can no longer care for it? Or can you live with the thought that the baby you helped bring into the world will be destroyed at the pound?
- **YOU DON'T BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE TOO MANY CASUALLY-BRED PUREBREDS?** If you think all of the above is hype so established breeders won't have “competition” I would suggest that you call Seattle Purebred Dog Rescue and speak to them. They can quote you astonishing numbers of purebreds that come into their program. Case-in-point: over 450 Rottweilers needed new homes last year through SPDR *alone*. During 2003 Dane Outreach received over 150 contacts on unwanted Danes!

## **A responsible breeder.....**

- Has educated himself on the breed he is contemplating breeding. He has read the Breed Standard, knows the faults within his breed, and has honestly evaluated the physical and mental attributes of his particular dog. He has consulted with a long-term established breeder to have a better understanding of his dog's pedigree and basic breeding practices.
- Prior to breeding, he has had all of the health exams and clearances done as recommended for his breed. If his dog has failed any of the health clearances, he understands his dog should not be bred. He has learned the optimum breeding age for his dog, being cautious not to breed at too young of an age.
- He has everything ready prior to whelping; a room set aside for the birth, a whelping box, time booked off of work and supplies on hand. He's prepared to commit almost all of his free time for the next eight weeks to the puppies.
- He's consulted with an established breeder and learned how to screen homes. He cares about his breed and wants to make sure all the puppies go into good homes. He knows that a family can be nice, but not necessarily right for his puppies. Potential purchasers are told all the good and bad aspects of owning his breed, and he can knowledgeably and correctly answer questions they may have. He requires a fenced yard and that pet puppies, as graded by an experienced breeder or show handler, be sold on spay/neuter contracts.
- At time of sale, the puppies have been wormed and vaccinated. He's socialized and handled the puppies. New owners are provided with written veterinary records, diet sheet, and general care instructions. Information is given to the purchaser on crate training, and puppy kindergarten classes.
- He will always take a dog of his breeding back if the purchaser can no longer keep it.

***Become a part of the solution, not the problem. Spay or neuter your pet!***

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