



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB

AKC Breeder

SPRING 2010

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THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR BREEDERS

FROM THE AKC

The American Kennel Club's Breeder of the Year Award presentation took place on December 13 in Long Beach, California, at the Ninth Annual AKC/Eukanuba National Championship, where Claudia Orlandi, of Topsfield Basset Hounds fame, was named our 2009 Breeder of the Year. See page 5 of this issue for a photo of the presentation and all of the Breeder of the Year group recipients. Congratulations to all!

Also in this issue we have the third and final installment of "Whelping Preparedness," entitled "Countdown to the Big Day," written by our feature writer, Arliss Paddock, who interviews many of our top breeders for their input in her always-informative articles. Royal Canin's excellent contribution this issue is "Weaning More Puppies," by Dr. Bretagne Jones.

In our "Advice from the Breeder" column we have a wonderful article by our 2009 Toy Group recipient of the AKC Breeder of the Year Award, David Fitzpatrick, a man whose name is synonymous with his breed, the Pekingese, on the pertinent topic of mentoring. David has been in our sport almost his entire life and gives back so very much as a breeder, mentor, and as a great sportsman.

"Inside the AKC" this issue are three items of interest: a comprehensive overview of an AKC affiliate organization, The American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation; the introduction of the new and eagerly awaited Champions Bred Report and the Champions Finished Report; plus the exciting new e-mail bulletin, the AKC Weekly Wins Gallery.

I hope that you will enjoy our newsletter and look forward to hearing from you.

Ronald N. Rella

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Mary Bloom

Whelping Preparedness

What to Expect, What to Do, and When to Call the Vet

Part Three: Countdown to the Big Day

By Arliss Paddock

The sight of beautiful, healthy newborn pups nestled against their contented dam is at the heart of every dedicated breeder's hopes and dreams. Doing what we can to ensure a safe, successful whelping that goes as smoothly as possible entails much education beforehand. In this series of articles we have aimed to provide an introduction to the learning process that will surely continue for the breeder-with every litter, with ongoing study, and with the guidance of experienced breeder-mentors.

In Part One (Fall 2009 *AKC Breeder*) we presented an overview of some of the physical changes in the pregnant female leading up to and during whelping, and in Part Two (Winter 2009) several knowledgeable breeders shared their tips and insights. To conclude our look at the whelping process and how to prepare for it, in this issue two more experienced breeders provide advice from a chronological perspective.

One Week Before the Due Date

Longtime Basset Hound breeder Sanda Launey, of Texas, is a firm believer in good planning. She has progesterone testing of her bitches performed during the breeding period to identify the time of ovulation, which allows pinpointing of the due date within a day or so. With a clear sense of the likely whelping date in mind, preparations can be made in a timely and thorough manner.

One week before whelping, Launey makes sure that all supplies have been

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AKC MISSION STATEMENT

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB IS DEDICATED TO UPHOLDING THE INTEGRITY OF ITS REGISTRY, PROMOTING THE SPORT OF PUREBRED DOGS AND BREEDING FOR TYPE AND FUNCTION. FOUNDED IN 1884, THE AKC AND ITS AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS ADVOCATE FOR THE PUREBRED DOG AS A FAMILY COMPANION, ADVANCE CANINE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, WORK TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL DOG OWNERS AND PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP.

AKC Breeder articles are selected for their general interest and entertainment values. Authors' views do not necessarily represent the policies of The American Kennel Club, nor does their publication constitute an endorsement by the AKC.

“WHELPING PREPAREDNESS” *continued from previous page*

assembled and that the room and the whelping box prepared for the big day.

“By the week before the due date all necessary changes to the room have been made,” she says, “including lighting and redirection of air vents to prevent drafts near the whelping box. My whelping box has been put up and dressed with linens. My bitch has been introduced to it and spent time in it for successively longer periods of time. All other canine housemates are restricted from the whelping box and the area around it.

“A week before, the weight scale and whelping supplies are laid out at the ready next to the whelping box, along with stacks of freshly laundered linens and a heating pad. My cell phone and charger are placed in the room. Two boxes have been lined with linens in case puppies need to be transported to the clinic along with their mother. A hot-water bottle is with the boxes—ready to be filled and used if necessary.”

Launey also makes sure at this time to prepare for any possible contingencies, such as a trip to the vet:

“My car is made ready a week before whelping with necessary linens and supplies should an emergency trip to the veterinarian be indicated. I usually put an emergency driver on notice—if a trip is necessary, it is best to have a friend at the wheel while you are in the back attending to your bitch and puppies.”

Other preparations that Launey is sure to make include having ready nutrition for the dam during labor and supplies for supplementing or tube-feeding the puppies.

“In my kitchen I have stocked up on cans of chicken broth that I can heat and offer to my bitch during her whelping rest-periods, as well as any delicacies that will entice her to eat after whelping,” she says. “I also have laid in a supply of formula, with bottles and nipples for supplementing puppies that will nurse, and tubes and syringes for tube-feeding puppies unable to nurse.”

Keep a Whelping Diary

Launey has found it extremely helpful to keep a journal of observations and data during the late pregnancy and the whelping. She begins making notes one week before the due date.

“The week before whelping I begin an observational diary and keep it next to the

whelping box,” she says. “Several pages are reserved for observations about the bitch several days prior to, during, and several days after whelping. The diary begins with the recording of the mother-to-be’s baseline morning and evening temperature and also includes behavioral observations, such as what she has eaten, how much, and when.

“The diary also includes one prepared page for each of the expected puppies, plus two extra. On each ‘puppy page’ is a basic outline of a generic puppy body so that significant markings can be noted. Each also has a place to indicate sex, time of birth, whether the placenta was delivered with the puppy, and birth weight, as well as space to note subsequent weights. This diary is invaluable if there is a need for veterinary intervention for either dam or puppies.”

The Pre-whelping Vet Visit

One week before whelping is a good time to touch base with your veterinarian regarding the pregnancy and also to clarify what medical supplies he recommends you have on hand for the delivery.

Like many breeders, Launey usually has the bitch X-rayed at this time.

“At the beginning of the last week of pregnancy, I have my bitch X-rayed so that we know how many puppies to expect and whether the whelps are uniform in size. The visit strengthens the bond between you and your veterinarian for the upcoming event. At this time you can discuss whether or not you can expect to manage the whelping at home, and you can confirm what phone number to call if there is an emergency, what symptoms would indicate the need for emergency care, and which vet or emergency clinic to contact if emergency services are needed.

“All information is kept next to the whelping box along with cell phone, diary, and supplies. If you have to make a trip to the emergency clinic, the diary goes with you. It is a valuable record that is not as tired or stressed as you are.”

Whelping Day

Launey tries to give her vet a heads-up during the day if she suspects whelping is likely that night. “Usually litters are born at night,” she says. “I make it a practice to call the clinic before it closes and let them know

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Advice from the Breeder

What Are Friends For?

David Fitzpatrick of Pequest Pokes says mentoring is as satisfying to give as it is to receive.



Courtesy David Fitzpatrick

A friend called the other day to report that his new puppy had won a major, a first major win for his owner too. I was very pleased for him as I remembered his start in the breed a few years ago. He did not start at the top, his stock needed much improvement to get to the point where the results could compete for a major win.

Pekingese are a difficult breed to get a start in. Declining in popularity at shows, good breeding stock is hard to come by. Breeders do not always want to part with their best bitches as they need to carry on their own breeding programs. Litters are small, averaging two to three. A newcomer often has to accept the challenge of breeding up.

My friend whose pup had won the major has worked hard to improve his dogs and listened carefully to my advice. He was a good student who you could take pride in. It is enjoyable to share your experience and knowledge with new people in the sport.

“Will You Be My Mentor?”

Analyzing people showing dogs this past weekend, I asked myself some questions: *Why do the same people always seem to have the better dogs? Why do some people usually have the same average quality animals? Why do some people improve their stock and move up the ladder of success?*

Finding a good mentor you can work with can make the difference between success

and failure, breeding average dogs or breeding outstanding examples of your breed. When I started breeding, my first litters were pets. In the ring if there were five in the class I would go fifth with my little dog.

Mentoring was not a word used commonly then in the dog world. If you wanted to learn you would help, observe, ask questions, did whatever it took to absorb knowledge from the people who were successful. Shows were often benched making it easier to pick the brains of the top dog people. Everyone was there for the whole day not just an hour or two. There was a captive audience and if you were willing to learn you had a unique opportunity. People did not realize they were mentoring, they were just sharing their knowledge and trying to help eager young people with a passion for dogs.

Today people come up to you and actually ask, *Will you be my mentor?* I always say yes, and many follow up on the request and stay in touch and learn. One mentor, or role model, I always think of to this day is the late Peggy Hogg, unsurpassed as a handler and breeder of talent. She was also blessed with a lovely nature and wit. I learned much from watching her work at the shows, she was always willing to share her experiences. To this day when having a problem I will ask myself, *What would Peggy do?*

Another mentor of mine is Mr. R. William Taylor, of Canada. A world famous judge and breeder, a true gentleman in a not always gentle sport. He is always willing to share his encyclopedic knowledge of dogs. From Mr. Taylor I have learned so much about the essence of breed type.

Also Bert Easdon, of the famous Yakee Pekingese, is another who freely shares his experiences. Though he lives far away in Scotland, I have probably learned more about dogs from him as anyone. A natural breeder of animals, he could probably breed rabbits and in a few generations have the best rabbits in the world. His

funny, commonsense sayings are always ringing in my ears.

Make the Right Match

If you are hoping to climb the ladder of success, whether it be as a breeder of quality stock or as a successful handler, finding a good mentor willing to guide you and take you under their wing can help you follow the right path.

Try to find someone you admire and respect. You should feel comfortable with that person, as you will have to hear plenty of constructive criticism. Mentors love to pass along their stories of triumph and tragedy. Hopefully you can extract some pearls of wisdom. They may have to guide you through a difficult whelping in the middle of the night, teach you how to evaluate the subsequent litter, and probably give you advice as to how to socialize and train, when to start showing them, and help advise when it is time to breed them. You will be amused at times by your mentor and at times not pleased to hear the truth.

It is important to ask yourself, *What are my goals?* If the answer is to breed and show the finest stock possible, capable of competing on a national level, then find a mentor who has achieved that. Find someone at that level and figure out what they had to do to get there.

The Payoff

Mentors are more willing to invest themselves in someone who is sincere, earnest, hardworking, and that they can relate to, rather than someone looking for instant success. Keep your expectations realistic for your time spent in dogs.

Everybody makes mistakes and has failures—that is part of life. Your mentor can help you learn from the failures and hopefully avoid those pitfalls the next time around. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses; your mentor can point them out and help you develop your eye and skills to become a top breeder.

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Inside AKC

Weekly Wins Gallery

Fanciers say new e-gallery is e-ffective, e-fficient, e-normous!



In January the AKC introduced a weekly e-mail bulletin, the AKC Weekly Wins Gallery, which showcases wins and photos from dogs across the country. The Gallery allows fanciers to see exactly what they are interested in—quality dogs—and lets exhibitors share their news with the fancy in a format that is both immediate and visually impressive. The early reviews have been wonderful. One enthusiastic exhibitor wrote us: *Loved this e-mail. Please keep them coming.*

The Gallery was launched after the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship with a promotional issue that featured a variety of National Championship winners, including Best in Show, Best Bred-by-Exhibitor, World Challenge Champion, Best Junior, AKC Obedience National Champion, the five Agility Invitational winners, group winners, and Bred-By group winners.

E-mailed every Wednesday directly to 100,000 fanciers including judges, handlers, and exhibitors, the Weekly Wins Gallery contains up to 20 paid listings a week. Also featured prominently on akc.org's popular "Weekly Wins" web pages, drawing 97,000 unique visitors monthly, the Gallery was designed to reach exhibitors right away, before they leave for the following weekend's shows.

In an elegant, clutter-free style, each listing includes a jumbo, full-color photo along with the dog's registered and call names, show, award, date, judge, owner(s), breeder(s), sire, dam, handler, web address, and a personalized headline. This format allows recipients to see only the information that matters, in a simple, easy-to-read manner.

The Weekly Wins Gallery puts win information together in a way that is visually pleasing, informative, and able to reach a wide audience in a timely manner—all with the efficiency of e-mail. There is no other publication in the dog world that allows fanciers to see photos of great dogs with just the facts.

The Gallery is a great way to learn what is happening now and catch up on past wins you might have missed, as listings are accepted for wins from any time and all AKC-sanctioned events.

Recipients and exhibitors who have utilized the Gallery have been overwhelmingly positive in their feedback. Here are just a few samples:

- "It looks wonderful!"
- "It is hard to argue with such a direct and dedicated audience as the one AKC can reach."

- "Having the Gallery on the site with the popular Weekly Wins for additional traffic is a great idea."
- "I really think you have a winning idea here that can be built upon for years to come."
- "It was well worth the money."

The Gallery is limited to 20 listings a week, and placement within the e-mail is determined on a first-come, first-served basis, so if you are interested in placing a listing be sure to reserve your spot early. To be included, submit your dog's photo, the completed authorization form, and payment. A \$395 production fee covers the graphical e-mail design and transmission. Proceeds from the Gallery help support vital AKC programs and services. ♦

More Information

To learn more or to subscribe to the Weekly Wins Gallery, visit akc.org/weeklywinsgallery. While there, you can view the Gallery archive. If you have questions or would like help in submitting your listing, contact Samantha Smith at 212-696-8259; winshot@akc.org.



Orlandi Named 2009 AKC Breeder of the Year



Meghan Lyons ©AKC

Claudia Orlandi, of Topsfield Basset Hounds fame, was named 2009 AKC Breeder of the Year at the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship in Long Beach, California. Orlandi, shown center above, is flanked by AKC Board Members Patti Strand and Walter F. Goodman. Other group recipients were, left to right, David C. Fitzpatrick (Pequest Pekingese), Judith G. Cooper (Tip'N Chip Great Pyrenees), Leslie Russell (Avon Farm Irish Setters), Michelle Edling (Sky Acres Belgian Tervuren), Jean & Robert Hetherington (Mr. Hetherington not pictured; Hetherbull Bulldogs), and Maripi Wooldridge (Terrydale Airedales).

New Breeding Reports Available



The AKC Electronic Reporting department has introduced two new reports in 2010. The Champions Bred Report gives breeders a history of the overall number of Champions and titled dogs they have bred or co-bred with the AKC. This report is ideal for breeders who would like to proudly display their breeding accomplishments over the years and to show the total number of titled offspring they have bred with the AKC.

The Champions Finished Report is a

history of the overall number of champions and AKC-titled dogs an owner (at time of title) has finished. This report is geared toward dog owners and fanciers who would like to see their history of AKC titles accomplished, or for prospective judges who may be submitting a new judges application.

To order a report, and for more information on pricing, availability, and requirements, write the Electronic Reporting department at reports@akc.org.



Inside AKC

A Solid Foundation

Since 1995, the CHF has provided bedrock support for canine health.



Many people don't know this, but the American Kennel Club has always supported canine health research. Historically, contributions were made to Cornell University and the University of Pennsylvania (the proximity and relationships between the universities and members of the fancy made them ideal candidates).

In fact, in the 1970s the AKC was instrumental in funding the research that led to the parvovirus vaccine. Because of the AKC's support, parvo is now relatively rare in the American canine population. In the early 1990s, the AKC Delegates suggested that the American Kennel Club develop an organization that could focus all its efforts on funding health research and education. As a result, in 1995, the Canine Health Foundation (CHF) was created.

Since then, the CHF has allocated nearly \$24 million to canine health research. Landmark projects such as the Canine Genome Sequence and the first cancer therapy for dogs were initially supported by the foundation. The CHF has also sponsored many projects that subsequently developed genetic tests, which have become useful to breeders for testing their breeding stock and preventing illness in future generations.

The CHF funds four basic areas of research: 1) the causes and origins of disease, 2) earlier, more accurate diagnoses and prognoses; 3) better more effective treatments; and 4) educational programs so that breeders, veterinarians, and pet owners alike can have the best, most up-to-date information available to them to provide their companions and clients the best possible care.

Club, Nestlé Purina PetCare Company, parent and other dog clubs, and many individuals and organizations that love their dogs and want to support a healthier future. Projects have been funded in North and South America, Europe, and Australia, in such areas as cancer (lymphoma, osteosarcoma, hemangiosarcoma), genome mapping, neurology (epilepsy, degenerative myelopathy), ophthalmology (PRA, cataracts), orthopedic disorders (elbow and hip dysplasia), and renal and urological disorders (kidney stones, nephritis, Fanconi Syndrome). More than 80 AKC-recognized breeds representing every group have benefited from breed-specific research funded by the CHF. Additionally, clinical research funded by the foundation helps all dogs regardless of breed.

The CHF is a proponent of health testing for breeding stock. Together with the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals, the CHF has sponsored the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC). Originally conceptualized by the AKC Delegate Parent Club and Canine Health committees, CHIC is a centralized canine-health database that collects health-test results, makes results from multiple sources available in a publicly accessible database, and recognizes those dogs that have been tested in

Funding for these important research programs comes from the American Kennel

accordance with a protocol recommended by the specific breed's parent club. CHIC is about encouraging testing and health awareness and recording the results.

The CHIC DNA Repository, also co-sponsored by the CHF and the OFA, collects and stores canine DNA samples along with corresponding genealogic and phenotypic information to facilitate future research. It is important for clubs to participate in the CHIC DNA Repository because all researchers have access to the samples and it allows for the prevention of "sample fatigue," allowing one sample to participate in many different research projects. ♦

More Information

For more information about the Canine Health Foundation and the programs it supports, visit CanineHealthFoundation.org. For additional information about CHIC, visit CanineHealthInfo.org.

GENOME BARKS PODCAST

Here is a partial list of podcasts currently in our library, found at www.akc.org and www.akcCHF.org.

- *Novel Cancer Therapies*, with Dr. David Vail
- *Purina Parent Club Partnership Program*, with Mike Allway
- *Nestlé Purina Pro Club*, with Ann Viklund
- *Tick Borne Diseases*, with Dr. Ed Breitschwerdt
- *Bartonella Infections*, with Dr. Ed. Breithschwerdt
- *Veterinary Nutrition*, with Dr. Kathy Michel
- *Responsible Breeding*, with Dr. Jerold Bell
- *The CHIC DNA Database*, with Eddie Dziuk
- *One Health Concept*, with Mike Sampson
- *How Can Great Danes and Chihuahuas Be Related?*, with Dr. Heidi Parker

Don't forget to check the Genome Barks archives— a new podcast is released every two weeks.



The Science of Breeding by Royal Canin

BREEDER'S HANDBOOK

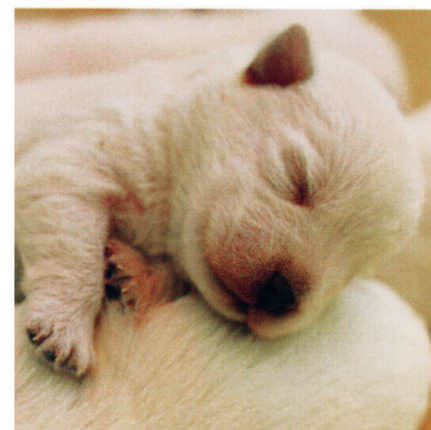
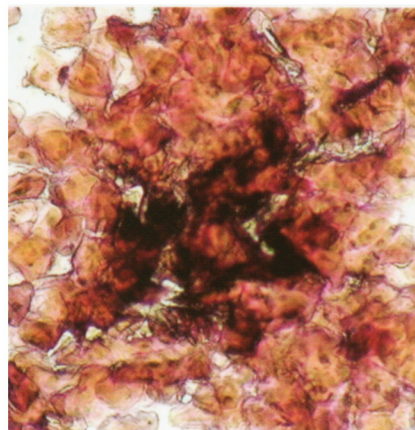
WEANING MORE PUPPIES

By Dr. Bretaigne Jones

Senior Scientific Communications Manager

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Photos courtesy Royal Canin



Since 1967, Royal Canin has been at the forefront of developing innovative nutritional responses in the field of dog breeding. Even if nutrition is fundamental in breeding, it cannot give all the keys for success. Application of reproduction techniques is the deciding factor.

The last three weeks of pregnancy and the first eight weeks of life are the most vulnerable time for a puppy, but particularly immediately before and after birth. Regardless of how many puppies were born, it is the number of puppies weaned that determine how successful that breeding will be.

What happens when the pups that are successfully weaned are not the full number of pups born?

There are three times of particular concern here, the last three weeks of gestation, birth, and the first days and weeks of life. Some threats to the puppies' survival are potential at all three of these stages, while other threats are greatest at a

particular point.

Infectious agents are one of the threats that can impact survivability at each of these times, though the level of threat may vary. For instance, canine herpes virus can trigger abortion and stillbirths if the dam is exposed late in pregnancy. If the pups are exposed to the virus during birthing, they will likely die within three to four days. The impact of canine herpes virus is generally much less when the animal is exposed outside of the critical time periods for pregnancy and neonates.

There are two canine parvovirus types that cause disease in





dogs. The one most commonly known is parvovirus type 2, causing the hemorrhagic gastroenteritis with the metallic smelling diarrhea, that is so strongly associated with “Parvo.” Canine parvovirus type 1, also known as the Minute virus, can cause abortion and still births. The challenge with type 1 is that it can be very difficult to diagnose, and there is no effective vaccine. It is estimated to have a prevalence of approximately 50% throughout the United States.

Bacteria can be pathogenic and manifest through fetal death, stillbirths, and early neonatal death. *Brucella canis* is one of the most common offenders. It is an active threat to every dog breeding facility, and prevention demands consistent testing of all breeding animals, with special emphasis on new dogs, or dogs that have been out of the kennel for breeding, and are returning. One must pay attention to the time at which the dogs are tested, as it does take some time for the dog to show a positive response to the test after exposure. Don’t breed the dog until you have a reliable negative test.

Other bacterial agents that can cause puppy loss, before and after birth include *campylobacter spp.*, *E.coli*, *beta-hemolytic strep*, and *mycoplasma*.

Parasites *toxoplasma gondii* and *neospora caninum* can cause loss of fetal life from abortion or stillbirths. Roundworms and hookworms are generally not acknowledged as primary concern to survivability of puppies, but heavy infestations can significantly pups and render them more vulnerable to secondary factors, and metabolic problems from enteric disease. The same can be said for coccidia and Giardia.

The length of the pregnancy can be a determining factor in the survivability of the neonates. It is normal for large litters

to have slightly shorter pregnancies. Likewise, small or singleton litters may have slightly longer gestations. If there is a problem with ovarian tissue (follicular cells that evolve into luteal cells) maintaining active secretion of progesterone, the pregnancy can terminate prematurely. Sometimes the presence of infectious agents will shorten a normal gestation. Outside of the slightly shorter gestation due to large litters, survivability is greatly affected negatively by shortened pregnancy.

Litter size can influence other factors in the pregnancy from gestation length to survivability of the neonates. Large litters have higher number of pups born dead, and higher neonatal death losses. Typically, those pups born in a large litter will have smaller birth weights. Conversely, very small litters can experience more frequent dystocia issues from the pups growing too large and causing obstruction problems.

Not surprisingly, the time it takes a bitch to deliver her pups directly influences survivability. When events are put into effect and the whelping process has started, already the uterus is preparing for the separation of placenta. If there are several pups gradually being squeezed down the lengths of the uterine horns, there may be too much separation to maintain oxygen levels and the fetus suffocates. Once a pup dies within the uterus, the breakdown of tissues and blood can cause problems for the adjacent pups and placentas. Generally speaking, a normal delivery should complete within 12 hours.

One of the greatest predictors of survivability is the birth weight. Each breed has its own normal range of birth weights, which tend to run very similar to other breeds within its size classification (toy, small, mid-size, large, and giant breeds). This range can exist

due to size differences within the breed, litter size, length of gestation and environmental conditions. Puppies that are only 75% of average weight, or lower, have a higher risk of suffering hypothermia, hypoglycemia, bacterial infection and pneumonia. Breeders need to record the birth weight of each pup as soon as possible. Not only does this identify those neonates that may need closer watching, but it can help establish a normal range for that breeding operation. With that baseline value, the breeder can monitor growth rate with daily weighing. The very first indication that something is wrong, regardless of the nature of the problem, is often decreased, or stalled, weight gain. When a lower than expected weight gain is found, alarms should be ringing because something is going on and that pup is at risk. Corrective or supportive actions can be implemented and many times, the disaster averted.

It is best to use a gram scale for weighing pups as it is much more sensitive and accurate than an ounce scale. Considering there are just over 28 grams per ounce, it’s easy to appreciate that greater accuracy is provided with grams. With the toy and small breed puppies especially, this difference can be critical.

Another factor in survivability of neonates is the colostrum they get. The ingestion of colostrum provides maternal antibodies which provide passive protection in the newborn. It is considered passive because the pup’s own body did not make the antibodies in response to a pathogenic challenge.

There are three big threats to the lives of neonates after birth. These are hypothermia, dehydration and hypoglycemia. Any of the three can trigger the other two conditions as if a domino pattern is in place.





The neonate is dependent on its littermates, its mother's attention, and on the ambient temperature of its environment to maintain body heat. Newborns have relatively large body surface areas without insulating fat, which leads to rapid heat loss. During the first week of life the newborn's body temperature should range between 96° and 98° F. They don't have the ability to shiver yet, which normally stimulates heat production. The blood vessels in the skin and underlying layers are not capable of constricting to slow down heat loss. By week two, their body temperature is usually about 99°. It isn't until week four that the pup is able to fully stabilize its body temperature.

The surrounding area temperature is vital to the ability of the pups to maintain body heat those first weeks. The recommended ambient temperature during the first week is between 85° and 90° F. Weeks two through four, 80° F is usually adequate. By week 5, it is safe to lower that ambient temperature to 70° F. It is evident that the newborn is dependent on ambient temperature to help maintain a healthy body temperature.

An important feature in a hypothermic pup is that they are incapable of digesting food at lower body temps and won't attempt to nurse. If they are fed, or force fed while hypothermic, there is a good chance of aspiration pneumonia.

Never attempt to feed a cold pup until it has returned to normal body temperature.

Conversely, a puppy whose body temperature is over 100° F is hyperthermic. This is as damaging as low body temperature. Newborn temperatures should be monitored as it is possible to over heat. Overheated neonates often cry constantly.

Toy breed pups are particularly vulnerable to low blood sugar, or hypoglycemia. Frequent feedings can help prevent this from occurring, but the risk and intermittent occurrence can extend for weeks to months. When the pup goes to the new home, they are especially prone to hypoglycemia, so it is vitally important that the new owners rigidly follow feeding guidelines.

Since newborn pups have little body fat, and no real capacity to make glucose from precursors metabolically, frequent nursing is vital. Even short time fasting can trigger a hypoglycemic state. If the puppy has not become hypothermic and still has a swallow reflex, oral fluid and glucose administration can often times replace the blood glucose allowing the pup to begin nursing again.

Dehydration can happen very quickly. Puppies are approximately 75%–82% water, with skin that is not capable of minimizing loss of hydration, and kidneys that cannot yet concentrate urine. The pups also lose water through the lungs with normal breathing. Water

turnover in a newborn is two to three times that of an adult animal. They need to nurse frequently to replenish this water balance.

The daily weighing of neonates is the best indication that mom may not be producing enough milk. Large litters' demand for sustenance may outpace the dam's ability to provide milk. If inflammation has started in any of the mammary glands, it can decrease the volume of milk produced. Likewise, infection or inflammation of the uterus will have a negative chemical feed-back effect and reduce milk production. Mom is going to need constant availability of clean water in order to continue to produce enough milk. She also needs to eat a diet that is nutrient dense and palatable and always available.

Normal preweaning losses can range from 10% to 30%, with the majority of those losses occurring from stillbirths and death within the first few days. Good record keeping will help the breeder establish what is normal for her own kennel. If neonatal deaths exceed 25% to 30%, there is a problem and it needs to be investigated. Without dedicated recordings of stillbirths, and puppy losses at each week, the owner has no real appreciation for what is average, or normal, for their facility. Likewise, expecting to wean every puppy born is unrealistic. Not every lost puppy signifies a substantial problem.



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“WHELPING PREPAREDNESS”

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whether or not I suspect I will be whelping middle-of-the-night puppies. My vet returns the call at the end of the day. The dam’s chart has been reviewed, and we discuss my afternoon observations.”

Lhasa Apso breeder Cassandra de la Rosa, of Olympia, Washington, likewise advises making notes before and during the whelping. “Always take notes on what is happening during labor,” she says. “Knowing the time a bitch starts having contractions, their spacing and strength, what time you see the ‘bubble’ appear, and any other observations—all are important information in case you need to call your vet. If the bitch is having a series of hard, pushing contractions every couple of minutes, I don’t let this go for more than an hour before calling my vet, whereas a few contractions every 10 minutes is no cause for alarm. When you call your vet, you can read from your notes so he knows exactly what the situation is and can give advice.”

Assisting Normal Delivery

De la Rosa routinely assists with aspects of the delivery to help ensure that all goes smoothly. “When a puppy presents,” she says, “I immediately break the sac and wipe the face of fluid, even when the pup is not completely out. I clamp the cord and let the bitch tear it up to the clamp to avoid having her cut it too short. If the placenta has not delivered, I use two clamps—one close to the pup and one to hold the cord—so the placenta can be drawn out after the pup is cleaned off.

“I place clean, dry puppies in a warm box as new puppies arrive. I try to get the puppies nursing as soon as possible, as this stimulates hormones in the bitch that keep labor moving along.”

Launey likewise offers some basic support at every whelping. “The more litters you have whelped, the more experienced an observer you become and are less tempted to interfere. I routinely protect the newborn’s belly from the possibility of being herniated by the mother while I allow her to sever the umbilical cord and then consume the first few placentas. I routinely suction newborn noses and throats with a bulb syringe. If the puppy is somewhat subdued upon presentation, I may support him between both hands and swing him from overhead to my knees in a gentle downward arc, then suction again.

“It is important to quickly dry and stimulate puppies by rubbing them with clean towels. I tie the umbilical cord close to the body with dental floss, and then I paint the severed end of the umbilical cord with iodine. This must all be done quickly so that puppies are never allowed to chill. The puppy is then given to the dam and allowed to nurse, as nursing of the first puppies helps stimulate the birthing process.”

When Problems Arise

Although most deliveries go normally for both breeders, they each are sure to have necessary emergency supplies on hand and to be alert for any signs of a problem.

“I keep sterile gloves at hand yet try not to have to use them,” Launey says. “It’s not uncommon in our long-backed Basset Hounds, which have long uterine horns, to take a rest for as long as a few hours mid-whelping. This is one example of how having the diary with exact observations and times is very helpful. When I know I have more puppies due, and contractions are coming close together yet are milder and weaker than before and nonproductive, I make a phone call to describe to my vet the history of the whelping thus far.

“To determine whether the bitch is experiencing secondary uterine inertia, he’ll need information such as how long since the presentation of the last whelp, the contraction history of this particular whelp, whether this puppy’s water has broken, and whether the puppy has passed into the birth canal or presents with a contraction but at the end of the contraction retreats out of reach again. At this point the bitch may need an injection of post-pituitary hormone to help her deliver the remaining whelps.”

Other situations can be cause for concern as well, as De la Rosa explains: “Other sure danger signs are a foul, smelly discharge or one with fresh blood. If a placenta arrives before a puppy, there is trouble if the puppy does not follow quickly.”

In cases where the bitch is having a problem delivering a pup because of poor positioning in the birth canal, sometimes de la Rosa will carefully intervene to try to alleviate the situation. “A breech presentation—when the puppy is coming tail-first—can be harder to deliver. I try not to pull a leg, but if you can get hold of the puppy’s body [using sterile gloves], you can very gently pull or rock it back and forth in a downward direction toward the bitch’s

hocks, *only with a contraction*. To help deliver a stubborn pup that is protruding from the vaginal opening, you also can stand the bitch on her hind legs, reach low onto the outside of her abdomen with your free hand, and push gently downward—again, *with a contraction*.”

Conservative measures taken by the breeder can sometimes help less-than-ideal positioning of the pup to resolve on its own.

“If a bitch is straining and you do a vaginal check and feel a shoulder, back of the head, or nothing, there is difficulty with the puppy presenting properly,” de la Rosa explains. “Before you call your vet, you can try this old trick: Stand the bitch on her front legs and walk her around the room a couple of times. This usually draws the puppy back up the canal enough to allow it to reposition normally. The bitch’s labor will slow down, as she has to move the puppy back down the canal, but hopefully it will then be in a better position for normal delivery.”

If the difficulty is not resolved quickly, however, a trip to the vet is advised. “Puppies that present ‘upside down’—that is, face-up rather than face-down—are difficult and painful for the bitch to deliver, though not impossible. This presentation frequently signals the need for help from your vet.”

Post-partum Care

On the day after whelping, both Launey and de la Rosa take the bitch and her puppies to the clinic for a health check. “We always take the bitch in for an exam 24 hours after whelping,” says de la Rosa, “particularly if we have lost any placentas. We monitor weight daily to ensure that everyone is nursing adequately and gaining weight. We rarely supplement.”

Last But Not Least

With preparation, study, and the guidance of your veterinarian and experienced breeder-mentors, you’ll help to ensure a safe, successful whelping. Your next step, of course, will be to nurture these contented newborns into becoming the beautiful, healthy, wonderful companions they’re meant to be. ♦

Arliss Paddock breeds and shows English Cocker Spaniels, is former Managing Editor of the AKC Gazette, and is editor of the magazine’s Breed Columns.



AKC Breeder

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*We're more than champion dogs.
We're the dog's champion.*



Mary Bloom

"WHAT ARE FRIENDS FOR?"

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Without my role models and mentors I would not be enjoying as much success in this world of dogs. Many are not with us today. Many I am sure did not think of themselves as mentors but were just sharing stories, giving advice, taking an interest in someone young and enthusiastic, possibly much like themselves at one point.

Being needed and making a difference in a person's life and in the dog world is a rewarding payoff. Seeing quality dogs in the ring, ones you had a small hand in creating, is the ultimate reward and your contribution to keeping the sport moving forward. ♦

David Fitzpatrick, of Pequest Pekingese, is the American Kennel Club's 2009 Toy Group Breeder of the Year recipient.

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