AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

AKC Breeder

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THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR BREEDERS

Frozen Semen

Time and money? Sure. But it's worth it!

By Amanda Lowery

I recently bred a litter using frozen semen, and following is based on my personal experiences and research. (Remember to of course consult your own veterinarian for further information; this is not veterinary advice.)

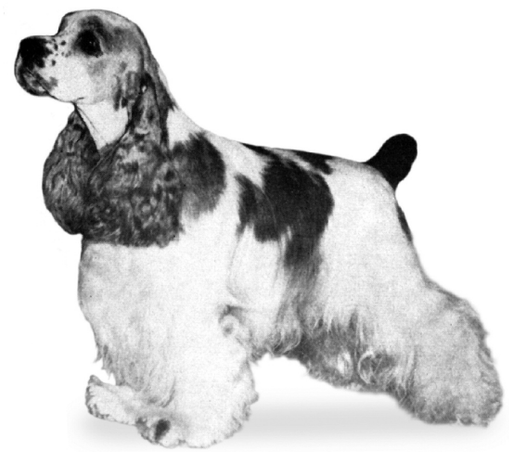
The use of frozen semen can open up a range of possibilities for the breeder, as it allows you to use dogs who are deceased, neutered, or geographically inaccessible.

When considering breeding a litter with frozen semen, in addition to the usual considerations, you must also take into account the quality of the semen. The stud owner should be able to supply you with a copy of the semen evaluation done at the time of collection. The general rule with frozen semen is that the younger the dog is when collected, the better the quality.

If you do not own the stud, you must arrange to purchase the semen and arrange for shipping when you are ready to use it. Contracts, other paperwork, and logistics are best done ahead of time, so that when the time comes you just need to make one phone to have the semen shipped.

Statistically, the best chance of success with a frozen-semen breeding is through surgical artificial insemination (AI). A veterinarian with good surgical technique, using appropriate anesthetic technique and monitoring, will minimize surgical risk.

Using frozen semen can be an expensive hassle, but in my experience, it can also be very rewarding! —*excerpted from the author's December 2012* AKC Gazette *Swedish Vallhund breed column*



COURTESY AMERICAN SPANIEL CLUB

Ch. Honey Creek Heirloom was an influential and sought-after sire—and monorchid.

Our Stolen Future

Musings on Monorchidism

By Patricia Trotter

Dog breeders face many difficult decisions every time they consider whether a particular individual is worthy of being put into the gene pool. When it's unclear whether certain traits are influenced totally by heredity, totally by environment, or by some mysterious combination of the two, decisions become even more difficult for those who would breed quality animals.

The issue of the undescended testicle in male dogs is certainly a fascinating subject for one who remembers when monorchids were acceptable and could be exhibited at American dog shows, not only gaining their championship titles but going on to establish themselves as sires of merit. It wasn't until January 1956 that the American Kennel Club eliminated monorchids from bench-show competition; indeed, a prominent red and white particolored Cocker Spaniel of the late 1940s and early '50s, Ch. Honey Creek Heirloom (AKC #S353240), was a premier sire of his day in spite of being monorchid.

Similarly, the great Thoroughbred and 1992 Horse of the Year, A.P. Indy, recently was selected as a *chef-de-race* of the blood-horse world based on his accomplishments on the track and at stud in spite of his status as a *ridgling* (monorchid) with an undescended testicle. Such a lofty hall-of-fame designation among Thoroughbreds is reserved for those sires who significantly influence their breed. His 2008 stud fee of $300,000 per mare

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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.

reflects the respect Kentucky breeders have for this sire of sires, whose son Mineshaft is also a Horse of the Year honoree and whose daughter Rags to Riches and son Bernardini are also classic winners. When A.P. Indy sold as a yearling for $2,900,000 at the 1990 Keeneland sales, it was proof that Thoroughbred breeders were not put off by his condition.

But dog breeders *are* put off because their purebred animals are *not* able to compete in the very arena that tests canine breeding stock—the show ring. I have faced this dilemma in my own family of dogs. It wasn't until the late 1990s that I had my first experience with an undescended testicle in my Norwegian Elkhounds, even though I had linebred for decades. (My total of monorchids since I registered my first litter in 1951 has now reached four.)

When the second case occurred several years later, I began researching the subject and found a fascinating book, *Our Stolen Future* (E.P. Dutton, 1996). The authors, Theo Colborn, Dianne Dumanoski, and John Peterson Myers, summarized the work of numerous scientists and researchers. These studies indicate that undescended testicles are a known consequence of prenatal hormonal disruption caused by synthetic chemicals (such as pesticides), plastics, and even some edible plants that mimic estrogen. Because I had always believed the problem to be strictly hereditary—even though I did not know the mode of inheritance—the book's explanation of the prevalence of estrogenic chemicals in our environment raised some serious questions.

According to *Our Stolen Future,* abnormal sexual characteristics are becoming increasingly prevalent among animal populations in the Everglades, Lake Michigan, Lake Ontario, and elsewhere all over the world, wherever synthetic chemicals get into the groundwater or run off into lakes and rivers. But the jury is still out on whether such pollution is a contributing factor to the monorchid condition in our dog population.

Other Species, Other Studies

My investigation of numerous livestock experiments served only to complicate my understanding of the issue. For example, one group of Angora goats with a high incidence of monorchidism became the object of intense inbreeding to see if the mode of inheritance could be determined. In some of the animals a pattern was established that convinced the stockmen that yes, the condition was hereditary.

Yet inbreeding on other affected sires caused these same breeders to conclude that some cases are *not* truly hereditary, and that the predisposition for the condition can be caused by outside factors having little to do with genetic inheritance. Exactly what effect living on farmland treated with pesticides, using parasite preventives, and just existing in our polluted world may have had is open to inquiry. The goat breeders concluded that some of their incomplete animals were dangerous to their future gene pool and others were not dangerous at all. Of course determining which is which is the big uncertainty.

Swine and cattle breeders have also conducted studies on undescended testicles occurring in their stock.

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COURTESY BREEDERS CUP

Hall-of-famer A.P. Indy: Not bad for a ridgling.

Pedigrees: The Breeder's Roadmap

AKC GAZETTE ARCHIVES

Tokalon champions of the mid-1940s: "a mental image of the overall look of the family"

By Marianne Sullivan

What kind of traveler are you—the adventurous type who takes off without a map and explores unknown byways, or the planner who carefully maps a journey with a very specific destination? Or are you so trustful and dependent of GPS that you fail to notice the landscape or landmarks along the way? Are you an embracer of new and challenging destinations, or are you the type who is comfortable going to the same vacation spot year after year?

Travel and pedigrees have a lot in common. With travel, maps can show us the most direct route or take us on a scenic byway, and they can even show us the topography of an area.

Pedigrees are the breeder's roadmap. They tell us where we've been, and they can help guide us in the future. However, a pedigree is only as good as the information behind the name. If we don't know the individuals, if we've never seen the dogs, if we have no picture of the journey it took to arrive at that destination, then it is like driving at night with the headlights off. We are creeping along in the dark.

Even when we think we know the terrain very well, there can be surprises. So why not study the map as best we can?

Beginners in the journey find it more difficult when some or all the dogs are unfamiliar. I still have the pedigree of my first show dog. I knew none of the dogs firsthand, but I was very familiar with the beautiful photographs of the Tokalon Collies, which gave me a mental image of the overall look of the family. Like names on a map, however, without ever visiting the town, you have no idea what that place is really like.

Whether our dogs are for companion, performance, show, or breeding, that sheet of paper is the sum total of a cute little bundle of fur. There's blood, sweat, and tears behind those names, and four generations of health, temperament, and conformation history spelled out in neatly typed rows. Breeding or buying is often a matter of trust, but the information is there, and the first clue to the story is a name.

Years ago I researched my foundation bitch's pedigree as far back as possible. I printed her registered name in the middle of the first page, and as the roll of shelf paper slowly unfurled, I traced her family tree to the very beginning of American Collies. I searched for photographs of as many of the dogs on that long sheet of paper as I could find, often referring to the CCA *Library of Champions.* Even if the photographs were poor (and many are), I gained insight. Gradually pictures and articles disclosed who was related to whom, and some of the mysteries of breeding decisions were unveiled. It was like exploring a treasure map!

Obviously, this little exercise doesn't reveal many of the things I still want to know about health, temperament, and conformation. What I also long for when I look at those names is the *story,* the details that form the big picture—the individual's personality, the struggles to overcome setbacks, the joys of accomplishments. Sometimes you can get those in the casual surrounding of a dinner or visit with someone who remembers and is willing to share the history. It's entertaining, but it also informs us. Now the map means something.

The author is the Collie breed columnist for the *AKC Gazette.*

The Magnificent Seven

AKC announces 2014 Breeder of the Year group honorees

Seven AKC Breeder of the Year Award group recipients, recognizing breeding programs from the Sporting, Hound, Working, Terrier, Toy, Non-Sporting and Herding groups that are dedicated to excellence and the advancement of the purebred dog, have been selected for 2014.

"Breeders are the heartbeat of the American Kennel Club and we're proud to recognize deserving breeding programs each year with the AKC Breeder of the Year award," AKC President and CEO Dennis Sprung says. "The 2014 honorees represent hundreds of combined years of canine and breeding knowledge and their work has done much to enhance the sport of purebred dogs."

The 2014 AKC Breeder of the Year will be announced Sunday, December 14, 2014, at the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship in Orlando, Florida.

A canine portraitist will be commissioned to commemorate a prominent dog from the Breeder of the Year's kennel, and their name will be added to the perpetual trophy and plaque on permanent display at the AKC headquarters in New York City.

All group recipients will receive a medallion in recognition of their achievements.

Honorees

Sporting Group Valerie Nunes-Atkinson and Yvonne Hassler-Deterding, VJK-MYST German Shorthaired Pointers

VJK-MYST dogs have earned everything from number one in the breed, Bests in Show and group wins, to national specialty wins, Best in Specialties, and national sweepstakes and futurity wins in both the United States and countries around the world.

Valerie and Yvonne are proud that each generation of VJK-MYST German Shorthaired Pointers improves the breed and produces happy, healthy, well-adjusted family companions that can succeed in the show ring and still go out and do what they were originally intended to do.

Hound Jeanine Sudinski and Mechelle Sudinski-Stall, Lucene Dachshunds

Many of today's top-winning Dachshunds have the Lucene kennel name somewhere in their pedigree. Together, the mother-daughter pair has produced 300 champions that have won major awards at many of the most important events in dogdom, including the Dachshund Club of America National Specialty and the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

Working Gwen DeMilta and Carissa DeMilta Shimpeno, Alisaton Doberman Pinschers

To date, 166 champions carry the Alisaton name. Alisaton Dobermans has bred numerous generations of Register of Merit (ROM) dogs that have launched many breeding programs and are behind some of today's top producers.

Alisaton dogs have won all-breed and specialty Bests in Show, Doberman Pinscher Club of America National Specialties, Top 20 in Conformation and Obedience, numerous DPCA Winners Dog and Winners Bitch awards, Grand Prize futurities and a Westminster Kennel Club Group First.

Terrier Matt Stander and Eugene Zaphiris, Cragsmoor Skye Terriers

Matt and Eugene's enchantment with the Skye Terrier rose out of a longstanding friendship with the late Walter F. Goodman. In 1972 the pair purchased their first Skye Ch. Glamoor Too Good to Be True from Walter and his mother, Adele Goodman.

Since then, dogs in the Cragsmoor Skye Terrier breeding program have included the top-winning Skye Terrier in the history of the breed, the 2011 Purina Show Dog of the Year, the first terrier of any breed to win the Terrier Group at both the World Dog Show and the Westminster Kennel Club, and top-producing sires and dams.

Cragsmoor dogs have won 85 all-breed Bests in Show to date and over 400 Terrier Group firsts.

Toy Kathleen Kolbert, Turyanne Yorkshire Terriers

Kathleen was born and raised in a family dedicated to the dog fancy. Her father bred Smooth Fox and Norwich terriers, so no one was surprised when her love affair with the Yorkshire Terrier began in 1963.

Over the years, her Turyanne line has produced more than 225 champions, including two World Champions and several International Champions. Register of Merit sires and numerous obedience and agility titlists have also come from the ranks of the Turyanne Yorkshire Terriers.

Non-Sporting Rod and Patti Strand, Merry Go Round Dalmatians

Merry-Go-Round Dalmatians is known for producing long-lived dogs with excellent temperaments, good movement, and spectacular beauty.

The Strands have bred, owned, and shown numerous top-producing sires as well as dams, more than 150 champions, many top-10 winners, and Best in Show dogs, including the top-winning Dalmatian in breed history.

After 45 years in the breed, one of their greatest rewards is working with people who have dogs from their line, some for as long as 40 years and four generations.

Herding Jim Buzzard, Buzzard Australian Cattle Dogs

Jim Buzzard's passion for the Australian Cattle Dog (ACD) began as a young ranch hand on a cattle farm in the early 1960s. He learned quickly that the better the quality of the dog, the more work it could do and the longer it would be around to do it!

The very first Herding Excellent (HX) title ever awarded went to a Buzzard ACD named Ch. Buzzards Red Tubs. That dog also sired 90 champions, a record for Australian Cattle Dogs that has yet to be matched.

The breeding program has produced close to 400 AKC champions.

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ROYAL CANIN®

45 YEARS of HEALTH NUTRITION

Overcoming Canine Breeding Challenges:

THE BENEFITS OF APPROPRIATE NUTRITION

By Emmanuel Fontaine DVM, MSc, PhD, Diplomat of the European College of Animal Reproduction
Technical Support Veterinarian | Royal Canin Canada

IS BREEDING DOGS SOMETHING EASY?

One might think so, but canine breeders will tell you – not really! Don't get me wrong, overall fertility in canines is usually excellent; that's certainly why we hear a lot more about canine overpopulation issues. However, breeders know that in their case, the context is somehow different. Challenges such as infertility, dystocias (difficulty to give birth) and neonatal mortality are all part of their daily activity. Fortunately there are ways to overcome and somehow prevent these difficult situations from happening. For instance, timing of ovulation using progesterone assays was developed to help improve fertility and prolificity (number of puppies per litter). There are now ways to detect, prior to giving birth, breeding females that are more prone to encounter difficulties during parturition, and if needed, schedule a C-section. And when it comes to the reproductive health of breeding animals, nutrition, as well, can bring its fair amount of benefits.

Nutrition and reproduction is a topic that has been deeply studied in humans and mammals. If you ever visit an online scientific database like PubMed, use "nutrition" and "reproduction" as keywords: I am always blown away when I see how many results show up in the search engine! Some of these studies focus on the impact of macronutrients (protein, fat, carbohydrates). Others highlight the role of vitamins and minerals. They all make the link between nutrition and different aspects of the reproductive function. How do these findings apply to canine breeding in the field, practically speaking? In many different ways in fact! How we feed our dogs can indeed possibly impact their fertility, their ability to give birth and also the health of the newborn puppies. As I previously wrote, appropriate nutrition does bring its fair amount of benefits and should be seen as a great complement in order to optimize canine reproduction.

UNDERSTAND HOW THE TWO SYSTEMS ARE INTERCONNECTED

I often hear that "such or such" level of macronutrients, vitamins or minerals have deleterious effects on the reproductive function. The fact is that there is no scientific proof of that today in the canine species (and be aware that even in humans, most of these studies are inconclusive). There is however one thing that is clearly established: the importance of body condition. Indeed, here lies an important connection between nutrition and reproduction.

Let's take a look at Figure I. As you can see the reproductive function in dogs is based on well-regulated

hormonal secretions, controlled by a highly organized anatomical structure. For everything to function in a proper manner, it is of the utmost importance that nothing disrupts the existing system. However, there are other parts of the body that can secrete some of these hormones – fat tissue being one of them. This one can produce estrogens, progesterone, testosterone and leptin (this one is of particular interest, we'll come back to it later). The more fat, the more of these hormones are found in the animal's bloodstream.

In "normal" or "optimal" body condition, a balance will be established. However, when dealing with overweight (or underweight) dogs, because of the modifications of the amount of fat tissue, the balance is lost and that can lead to a disturbance in the "well-organized" structure we mentioned before. For instance, the more fat tissue, the more leptin is secreted. Leptin directly acts on the hypothalamus which is believed to be the pacemaker of the reproductive function. Modified blood leptin concentration can therefore disrupt the entire hormonal secretion of the reproductive function and it is suspected that this could lead to issues like anovulation, ovarian cysts and early embryonic death. For breeders this only means a simple thing: prior to breeding, females must be in optimal body condition (see Figure II).

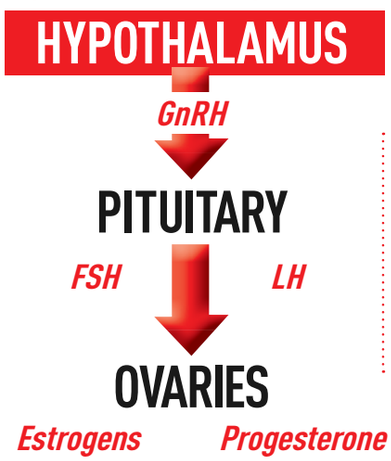
FIGHT THE OLD MYTHS

I must admit that, generally speaking, breeders pay great attention to this and now you understand why it is definitely important to keep the focus here. Unfortunately, there is another way to reach an inappropriate body condition in breeding females. This occurs during pregnancy and is mainly due to a very old myth that persists throughout the years.

"Breeding females should be free-fed with a puppy diet as soon as they are bred." If you have been around for a while, I am pretty sure you have already heard this. This is a deeply anchored myth in canine breeding! The reasoning behind that: if a female is pregnant, she must have higher energetic requirements to support the embryonic (from 0-35 days of gestation) and fetal (from 35 days to the end) growth. This sounds like basic math, but unfortunately it does not exactly work this way. The fact here is that puppies will gain 70% of their final weight in the last 20 days of gestation (see Figure III). The increase in energy requirement generally does not occur before the 42nd day of gestation, and before that, energy needs are equivalent to maintenance. Practically speaking, breeding females need to be transitioned to an energy-enriched diet (generally puppy food)

Figure I:

Organization of the Reproductive Function



The hypothalamus and the pituitary are located in the brain and their secretions control the functioning of the ovaries. GnRH: Gonadotrophin Releasing Hormone/FSH: Follicle Stimulating Hormone/LH: Luteinizing Hormone

not before the 42nd day landmark (see Figure III for comments on how to feed a pregnant breeding female).

If a breeding female receives more energy than what she needs since the beginning of pregnancy, this extra-amount will turn into fat. The problem here is that fat tissue has an unfortunate tendency to infiltrate muscles including the uterine one, the myometrium. This has been well demonstrated in humans: overweight condition leads to weaker uterine contractions (and therefore more difficulties to give birth). In dogs as well, study shows that maternal weight is a risk factor that leads to a higher rate of dystocias and C-sections. Keep in mind that when dystocia happens, the newborns' neonatal mortality rate increases as well (30-40% vs. 10-15% during normal parturition). Unfortunately, it also works the other way around: if a breeding female does not receive enough energy during the last third of gestation (typical case: she is not switched to a higher energy diet and remains on her usual maintenance diet), this will typically drain her energy reserves. At the time of parturition, she might appear very skinny, which can also have an impact on the pattern of uterine contractions. Moreover, puppies rely on their mother's food intake during pregnancy to build their first energy reserves that they will use during their first moments after birth. If the breeding female did not receive enough energy, these reserves might be depleted at birth and puppies will be weaker, with a low prognostic survival. Receiving optimal energy levels throughout pregnancy is therefore a mandatory point.

IDENTIFIED BENEFITS OF CERTAIN NUTRIENTS

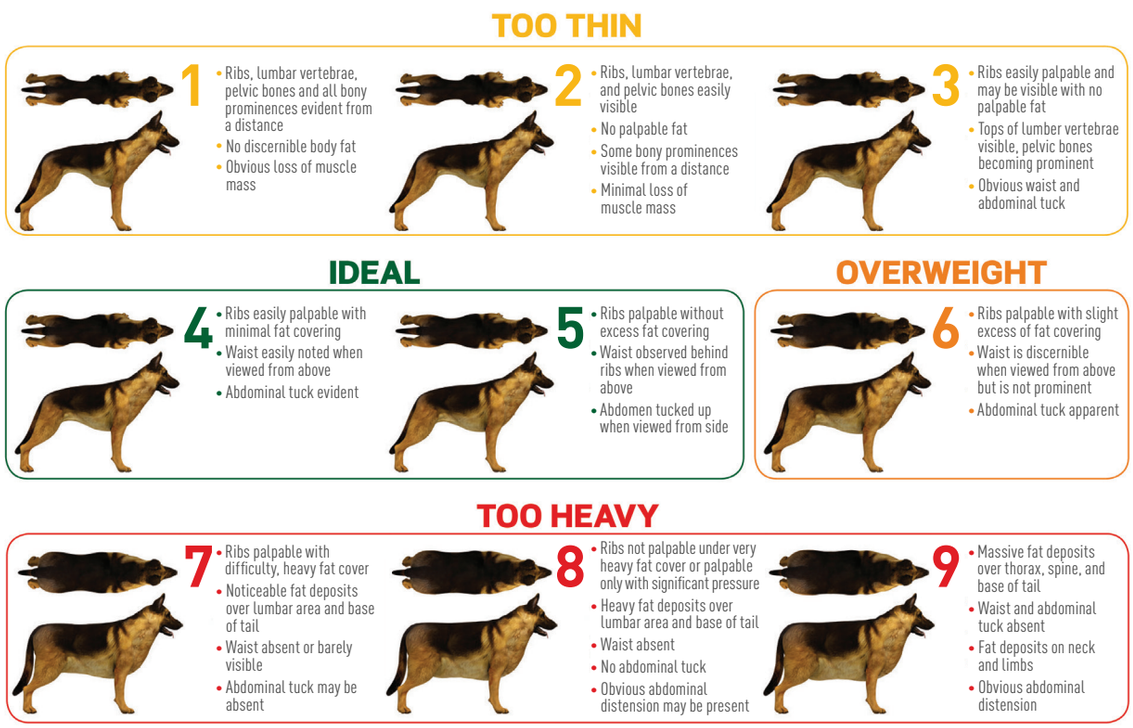
Appropriate feeding management during gestation is a key element that I always tell breeders to focus on in order to optimize the reproductive outcome of their breeding animals. Moreover, several studies identified the benefits that certain nutrients can bring for both the breeding female and the puppies to come.

The one which has been mostly discussed is certainly folic acid (vitamin B9) because of its role in the prevention of cleft palates. It supports rapid cell division and growth, and studies have shown that when breeding females receive the appropriate amount of folic acid during gestation, the incidence of cleft palate in puppies dramatically decreases. There are three key things to remember when it comes to folic acid:

1. It is recommended in breeding females: a recent study shows that 10% of breeding females are folic acid deficient at the beginning of their heat cycles.
2. Folic acid should be introduced during heat until the 35th-40th day of pregnancy, after this time period it will not be as effective.
3. The appropriate level of folic acid can be achieved by feeding a complete and balanced diet.

The role of the omega-3 fatty acids EPA & DHA has also been well studied in dogs. Adult dogs have limited capacities to synthetize these nutrients, while DHA is essential for puppies' neurological and visual development. When breeding females are fed diets enriched with EPA & DHA throughout pregnancy, studies show that these puppies at birth have better cognitive and visual development. Obviously, puppies' development does not end at the time of parturition: these nutrients are still beneficial during their growth period. Studies show that when lactating females are fed with diets enriched in EPA & DHA, these nutrients accumulate in their milk and the benefits they provide are therefore transferred this way to the puppies.

Figure II:
Body Condition Score Chart



Example shown above is a large breed dog weighing 56-99 pounds

There is another category of nutrients that I find of great interest when it comes to reproduction and nutrition: antioxidants (betacarotene, vitamin E, vitamin C, lutein and taurine). Antioxidants help the body fight oxidative stress, a process that leads to the production of compounds called free radicals that can basically alter the tissues. Oxidative stress is something our organisms (and our dogs') constantly deal with, but in normal conditions our body produces enough antioxidants to counteract its side effects. In certain conditions (disease, aging and gestation) this internal production might not be sufficient. There is scientific evidence that the oxidative stress is increased at the uterine level during gestation in the female. The optimal level of antioxidants during this period can therefore help in optimizing the uterine medium, which plays a great role in the fertility process and the embryonic and fetal development. Let's be clear, antioxidants are not the magic bullets that will solve all fertility issues. However, by their action on optimizing the uterine medium, they can definitely be integrated in the battle plan, if needed.

As you can see, proper and well-managed nutrition throughout the life of the animal can definitely help to overcome some of the challenges breeders face routinely. Feeding management, especially during critical stages like gestation, is essential. Monitoring the body condition of the animal (with the help of your veterinarian) is certainly the best indicator that nutrition is adapted to the animal's physiology. Nutrition does provide benefits. However, keep in mind that it is not the sole thing you should rely on if you want to make your breeding female fertile. If the date of breeding was mistimed or if the male's semen was of poor quality, there is nothing even the best nutrition could do here...

Figure III:
Energy Needs During Gestation

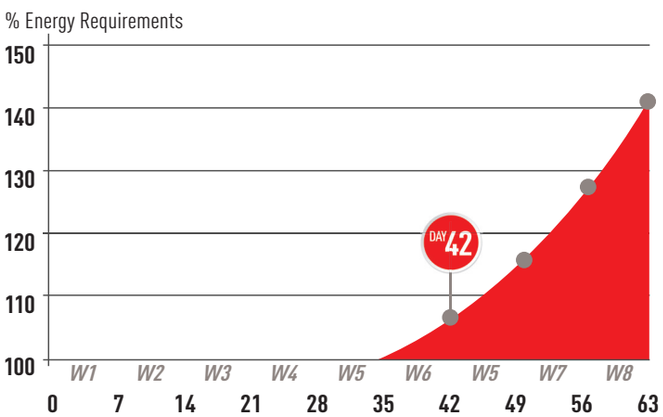


Figure III: After 42 days, energy requirements will be increased by +10%/week until parturition. Because of the reduction of the volume of the stomach (compressed by the growing uterus) and behavioral modifications (certain breeding females tend to become picky) that occurs during pregnancy, it is recommended to switch the breeding female to a diet with a higher energy content (typically a puppy diet) which is highly palatable.

One exception in case of singleton litters: in this case, energy requirements will only be increased by +10% until the end of pregnancy.

THIS ARTICLE WAS PROVIDED BY ROYAL CANIN TECHNICAL SUPPORT VETERINARIAN

Emmanuel Fontaine, DVM, MSc, PhD,
Diplomat of the European College of Animal Reproduction

Emmanual Fontaine graduated from the Toulouse Veterinary School in 2004. Dr. Fontaine continued his studies at the Alfort Veterinary School (Paris) as a trainee Veterinarian in the domestic carnivore unit of the Reproduction Department. From 2005 to 2011, he worked at the Centre d'Etude en Reproduction des Carnivores (CERCA) [Research Centre for Reproduction in Carnivores], a unit specializing in pet breeding assistance. Dr. Fontaine is also qualified at the European College for Animal Reproduction (ECAR) and recently completed his PhD. Dr. Fontaine joined Royal Canin Canada's Professional team as a Technical Support Veterinarian in September 2011.

AKC Weekly Winners Gallery launches new site

The AKC introduces *akcwinners.com,* a new companion website for the more than 100,000 fanciers who receive the AKC Weekly Winners Gallery newsletter. The new website will provide more timely show results, new advertising avenues for show-dog owners, and an online form to promote your dog's achievements.

The "Live Results" section at *akcwinners.com* provides fanciers with faster access to show results with same-day posting by AKC Executive Field Representatives from shows around the country. The new search function allows visitors to search by state and by dog to view individual results. The site also houses a calendar that lists upcoming show closing dates.

In addition, AKC Weekly Winners Gallery advertisers can now take advantage of additional scrolling ads on the new site's homepage. The newly added online form will make it easier than ever for owners to share their dog's wins with thousands of site visitors.

To learn more, visit *akcwinners.com.*

Updates from the AKC Canine Health Foundation

Breeders will want to check out the two new informational podcasts: "Infertility in the Bitch," with reproductive specialist Dr. Cheryl Lopate of Wilsonville Veterinary Clinic in Wilsonville, Oregon, and "Ovulation Timing," with Dr. Scarlette Gotwals, of Country Companion Animal Hospital in Morgantown, Pennsylvania. Download these and many other podcasts at *akcchf.org*. The Health-E Barks podcast series is provided free of charge by the AKC Canine Health Foundation and Zoetis.

The CHF has recently published a webinar on canine genetics, recorded at their National Parent Club Canine Health Conference. In the webinar, Dr. Danika Bannasch, DVM, Ph.D., of the University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine, discusses major advances made in our understanding of the molecular basis for inherited diseases in dogs.

The webinar is available at *akcchf.org.*

Buyer and Seller Beware!

The questions both parties should be asking

By Helen Gleason

As dedicated fanciers, we must help spread the word to the public about responsible dog ownership. That message includes educating people about the homework that should be done before they get a new puppy or dog. As breeders, we also must educate ourselves about properly screening prospective owners, to help ensure that our pups go to good, permanent homes.

Following are things that we should educate prospective owners about.

1. Buy from an AKC Breeder of Merit. This title is given only to those breeders who comply with the specific health screening for their breed, register entire litters with the AKC (ensuring that each buyer receives a registration for their puppy), and abide by the rules and regulations of the AKC for maintaining accurate records and breeding healthy animals.

2. Buy from a breeder who belongs to and supports the programs of the national organization for the breed. In my breed, it's the German Shepherd Dog Club of America (*gsdca.org*).

3. Ask if the breeder is a signer of the national club's Breeders Code of Ethics.

4. Ask if the seller provides a sales contract. This contract should include:

• The right to take the new puppy to the veterinarian of your choice for a thorough examination, with a full right to return the puppy for a full cash refund should the veterinarian find anything that is not right with the puppy within 48 hours.

• The names and registration numbers of both the sire and dam of the puppy.

• Full contact information for the breeder/seller of the puppy.

These are just a few of the things that will be included in a good sales contract.

Next are considerations of what we need to be sure to do as breeders.

Before having a conversation with prospective buyers out of our local area, we should send and have them complete a puppy application form. The form should include a list of things that you as a breeder would like to know about the prospective home.

I am sure you will think of many more to include, but here are six points to begin with:

1. Is the size of your yard large enough to accommodate this breed?
2. Have you ever owned a dog of this breed?
3. How many animals do you currently own?
4. Please provide the name and contact information of your current vet as a reference, if possible.
5. Do you plan to take your new dog to puppy classes for socialization?
6. What future do you plan for this new addition to the family? (Please indicate all that apply.)

— To be a companion

— To compete in AKC events (please circle all that apply: conformation, agility, obedience, herding, rally, tracking)

— Other activities: _____

Knowing the above will help you determine if the person will be a good home, as well as which puppy from the litter might be the best "fit."

The author is the German Shepherd Dog breed columnist for the *AKC Gazette.*

"Our Stolen Future" *continued from page 1*

Dr. Yuefu Liu, an early pioneer in the field for the Canadian Centre for Swine Improvement, reported that his work generally ruled out any simple Mendelian mode of inheritance, thus concluding monorchidism must be polygenic.

In January 1956, when the AKC defined conditions that make dogs ineligible for bench- show conformation competition, the list included blind, deaf, altered, and "a male that is a monorchid or cryptorchid" among those who were not welcome. The day came when a lady exhibitor, upon being told by a stately judge that she could no longer compete because her dog was incomplete, reached into the pocket of her enormous skirt and whipped out a jar containing a pickled part, along with a note from her veterinarian stating the dog *was* normal until an unfortunate encounter with a picket fence forced emergency surgery resulting in the contents of the jar! What to do? The AKC rose to the challenge by changing the description and making the language more specific. The revised rules, which went into effect in March 1957 and still apply today, state that a male dog "which does not have two normal testicles normally located in the scrotum" is ineligible to compete.

When judges find a male who does not comply with the rule, it is their duty to disqualify the exhibit. Yet young male dogs themselves can confuse the issue by pulling up their testicles, especially on cold mornings or when they are stressed. Basenjis are noted for this trait, and fanciers know to exercise dogs with this tendency before bringing them into the show ring. A 6–9 months Bedlington puppy shown under me appeared to have only one testicle until the exhibitor trotted the dog around the ring several times before re-tabling the then-intact dog.

Given that the AKC once allowed monorchids in the show ring, many of our breeds probably have genes for the condition in their backgrounds. In fact, the Kennel Club (England) still allows monorchids to compete in dog shows, possibly ending up in various breeds' gene pools today. Therefore, when the condition expresses itself, breeders are faced with the question of whether they should use that sire again.

But what about the dam who produces the incomplete son? Did *she* transmit the genes for monorchidism? Or was she exposed to chemical damage that caused her endocrine system to send out improper hormone signals during fetal development?

While geneticists and other experts struggle to provide answers for laymen such as ourselves, we hope that environmentalists can also provide information that will help guide us in our decision-making. It will be of great personal interest to me to see if reducing the exposure of my own family of dogs to various synthetic chemicals will cause a cessation of the monorchid condition.

Patricia Trotter was the 2003 AKC Hound Group Breeder of the Year and is approved to judge more than 80 breeds. This column originally appeared in the *AKC Gazette*.

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