



AKC Breeder

Spring 2016

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THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR BREEDERS



Breed for the Total Dog

The Pitfalls of Overcorrecting

By Lynn Looper, *AKC Gazette*

It seems to me we serious dog breeders are all in the same boat: continuing the effort to produce the canine specimen who best represents the standard of our breed. We study our written standards word for word, coming up with an interpretation of what it all means. Taking this knowledge and understanding to the whelping box, we critique our litters accordingly, deciding on which pups stay, destined for the show ring, and remain in our breeding programs.

What brings colorful mixtures to the plate are the interpretations themselves. When learning, we all comprehend things differently. When reading, we tend to focus on certain points, making assumptions about which ones are critical and which ones are only slightly signifi-

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Healthy Dogs, Sick Dogs: Does Breed Type Make a Difference?

By Dr. Jerry Klein, AKC Chief Veterinary Officer

For more than 30 years, I have served as a veterinarian at one of the largest veterinary emergency hospitals in the country. Each year, our hospital treats more than 11,000 cats and dogs in our emergency room. Thousands more see our veterinary specialists.

As you might guess, I've taken care of a lot of dogs and have likely seen just about every type of canine illness you can imagine. I am also a longtime owner and breeder of Afghan Hounds. One thing I've learned through my experience is that when it comes to illness, pretty much any dog can get sick. Despite articles claiming that mixed-breed dogs are healthier than purebred dogs,

my extensive first-hand experience, and an important study conducted by the University of California-Davis, tells us otherwise.

The study, titled "Prevalence of inherited disorders among mixed-breed and purebred dogs: 27,254 cases (1995–2010)," was reported in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* on June 1, 2013. Research utilized more than 27,000 patient cases to determine the likelihood of occurrence of 24 of the most common hereditary diseases in dogs. Despite articles that claim that there is a higher concentration of hereditary disease in purebred dogs, this extensive study

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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.

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“Healthy Dogs, Sick Dogs: Does Breed Type Make a Difference?”

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proves otherwise.

What researchers found was, “Of the 24 disorders assessed, 13 had no significant difference in the mean proportion of purebred and mixed-breed dogs with the disorder when matched for age, sex and body weight.” One disorder was more frequent in mixed-breed dogs and the other 10 were more prevalent in purebred dogs, although no one breed was dominant in suffering from any particular illness. Many of those disorders that are often attributed to a specific breed are just as likely to be found in mixed-breed dogs, including common health problems such as lymphoma, mast cell tumor, specific cardiac issues, hip dysplasia, and lens luxation.

This makes sense since most domesticated dogs are believed to be the descendants of just a handful of lines of wolves. As a result, all dogs share strong genetic tendencies, some of them health-related.

In purebred dogs, national breed clubs such as the Golden Retriever Club of America and the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation have worked together to identify breeds with an increased risk of specific health issues and to take steps to minimize the risk. In fact, the Canine Health Foundation has funded more than \$35 million in research to improve the health and wellbeing of dogs.

Minimize Risk

So, perhaps the most important question is, “How can potential dog owners increase their chances of getting a healthy dog?”

The good news is that thanks to the work of the American Kennel Club, the Canine Health Foundation, and breed clubs, responsible breeders are able to reduce the risk of some of the more prevalent diseases in dogs. Breed groups recommend specific testing for disease before breeding a dog. Responsible breeders utilize those tests before mating dogs, thus reducing the risk of a specific disease in the puppies they produce.

For example, in my beloved Afghan Hounds, responsible breeders generally test potential breeding pairs for hip dysplasia and juvenile cataracts. In breeding nine generations of Afghan Hounds, I have never had a dog with either of these health problems. I have always bred dogs with personality and health as my priorities. As a result, I have no doubt that my Afghan Hounds today are better dogs than my first



Dr. Jerry Klein

generation.

People select dogs for a variety of reasons. Sometimes appearance plays a role, but certainly is not, and should not be, the only factor. Whether you choose a dog from a breeder or from a shelter, it's important to remember that any dog, like any person, can become ill in its life.

All dog owners need to be prepared for that possibility because the fact is that dogs, like people, suffer from a number of hereditary diseases. That is true of all dogs—both purebred and mixed-breed.

The best way to minimize that risk of serious illness is to do your homework. If you decide on a purebred dog, be aware of what the breed club recommends in terms of health testing. Work with a responsible breeder who utilizes testing and breeds ethically.

If you select a dog from a shelter, learn about the animal and its possible breed mix. Then pick the animal that best suits you and your lifestyle and work with your veterinarian to keep your dog as healthy as possible.

Most importantly, select a dog that you love and that you are willing to care for, in sickness and in health, for the rest of its life.

Dr. Jerry Klein is an emergency and critical care veterinarian who has been a valued member of the Chicago veterinary community for more than 35 years.

In addition to his work as a vet, Klein is an AKC-licensed judge and has judged shows both nationally and internationally.

AKC Marketplace Brings Responsible Breeders, Potential Dog Owners Together



© iStockPhoto.com

By Krista Tonnesen

Searching for a new purebred puppy isn't necessarily as easy as it seems. Sure, anyone can post an advertisement for healthy, purebred, AKC-registered puppies on sites like Facebook and Craigslist, but that doesn't make them true.

It is important for dog owners to know where exactly their new furry friend came from to ensure their puppy's health and wellbeing. That's why the American Kennel Club created AKC Marketplace, an online resource designed to bring reputable and responsible breeders and potential dog owners together.

"When people are searching for a purebred puppy, we want to make sure AKC is their go-to resource," AKC Marketing Manager Katie Peralta says.

The newly launched program puts an emphasis on Breeders of Merit, Bred with H.E.A.R.T. breeders, and AKC club members, but all AKC breeders can sign up and showcase their pups to anyone in the market for a purebred dog. Potential owners can search for puppies by breed, sex, and distance.

Once potential owners find a breeder they like, they can "meet" the sires and dams of each litter to learn about DNA

information, health tests, and titles they have earned. Owners can be confident that each parent is a verified AKC-registered dog.

Breeders can sign up for Marketplace for \$10 a month, plus a \$20 sign-up fee, or for a \$99 flat rate for the entire year (the sign-up fee is waived), which comes out to \$8.25 a month, making it the more economical option.

Once registered, breeders can create a searchable Marketplace name and custom URL. They can also add a description of their services, including history, philosophy, and more. From there, they can add their location, contact information, and photographs and videos of their kennel and dogs.

"From breed information to educational material and connecting with a responsible breeder," AKC Digital Product Manager Steve Pessah says, "at AKC it's important we accommodate the buyer's journey."

Marketplace is currently mainly for breeders, but the AKC hopes to expand the site for veterinarians, trainers, dog walkers, and boarders to promote their services in the future.

AKC Marketplace: What Breeders Are Saying

"The release of AKC Marketplace has been nothing short of terrific! In the short time that Marketplace has been up and running, I've gotten more puppy inquiries than any other website. I was able to find great homes for all of the puppies in my past litter. I even got so many inquiries after I sold all my puppies that I've been able to build a waiting list of 15 people for my next litter!

"I was very pleased with the response to my ad. I had previously used AKC Online Breeder Classifieds but only received one response—I had about 30 e-mails and several phone calls from my Marketplace listing!

"I am very pleased with the new puppy owners and will definitely use AKC Marketplace again."—Linda S.

"The AKC Marketplace site makes selling puppies easy. My puppies generate more contacts and deposits through

AKC Marketplace than other puppy sites. The contacts I gain through the Marketplace nearly always end in a purchase. I've never had such an easy time finding great homes for my puppies. I'll be using Marketplace for all of my future litters."—Michelle M.

"I couldn't be more satisfied with the AKC and know that Marketplace will be the first place I'll list all my next litters. Thanks so much!"—Julia H.

Picking the “Keeper” Puppy



Photos courtesy Michael Jennings and Elisabeth Heis

By Michael Jennings, from the April 2016 *AKC Gazette*.

I'm often asked how I choose my “keeper” puppies, and my standard wiseguy answer is “the same way I choose my winners in the ring, but because they're much smaller, it's more complicated and takes longer.”

Of course, the process really begins with choosing the breeding pair who will be the parents. There's a certain kind of body proportion and type that I want that includes both athleticism and aesthetic appeal: approxi-

mately equal-length scapula, humerus, pelvis, and femur, with radius/ulna about 20 percent longer and tibia/fibula about 30 percent longer, in an animal about 9–10 percent longer than tall and about 20–25 percent longer in leg than in depth of chest, along with good, strong feet; and then lovely type and temperament. And I choose the parents accordingly.

When it comes to the pups: Prior to about 6 weeks, I pay attention only to type and temperament, along with noticing who gets out of the whelping box first or just seems generally quicker and nimbler (and asking myself if it is only because that one is the smallest or lightest).

From about 6 weeks on, I am watching movement and overall coordination, muscle tone, proportions, and, above all, or including all, which puppy simply makes the most of itself, has that poise, whether moving or standing, the appearance of whole-body ego that says, “I'm here and I'm ready, the world

is my oyster.”

I have never much believed in the old saw you hear at judges' dinners, that “Ch. Sir Prance a Lot was ‘simply asking for it’”—meaning a ribbon—but if it has any truth it is in the above description, the dog who says, “Look at me.”

Of course there are certain faults (a straight shoulder or large chest) that can say, “Look at me,” but a Siberian should be an animal without excess whose essence is movement and the ability to stay warm in a very cold climate: thus soundness and type in a hand-in-glove relationship.

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Parvo Breakthrough! New Treatment for Parvo Pups May Save Lives

By Liz Donovan

Two new drugs can mean the difference between life and death for puppies affected with parvovirus and whose owners can't afford in-clinic veterinary care.

Colorado State University Veterinary School has announced a new protocol for treating puppies with the deadly virus if their owners can't afford in-clinic care. It includes the at-home use of two drugs recently released by Pfizer Animal Health that are designed to treat nausea and dehydration caused by parvo.

Standard veterinary care can cost upwards of \$3,000 and includes hospitalization, IV fluids, antibiotics, and close monitoring. The new Pfizer drugs cost owners only about \$200 to \$300, CSU reports.

“We still recommend inpatient care as the best practice, but in some cases that simply isn't financially possible,” says Dr. Lauren Sullivan of CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital's criti-

cal-care unit. Sullivan reported that a recent study conducted by CSU and funded by Pfizer showed that the parvo-infected dogs treated with the drugs have an 85 percent survival rate, while 90 percent of dogs treated as inpatients survive. Without any care, the virus is almost always fatal.

Parvo is spread through feces of infected dogs and typically affects the gastrointestinal tract and circulatory system, suppressing the immune system. A vaccine is available, but puppies are not fully protected against the virus until 7 to 10 days after they've had all three injections (initial vaccine and two booster shots).

Until then, veterinarians recommend owners keep puppies from areas with large amounts of dogs congregate, like doggie day cares and dog parks. During this time, socialization can be completed in small groups with healthy, vaccinated dogs.

Sullivan expects to present the findings of the study at a conference early next year.

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ACCOUNTABILITY

Comply with the AKC Care and Conditions Policy, including inspections by the AKC, and promise to share with AKC health testing and continuing education documentation.

RESPONSIBILITY

Accept responsibility for the health and well-being of the puppies and comply with all laws regarding the ownership and maintenance of dogs.

TRADITION

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45
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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.

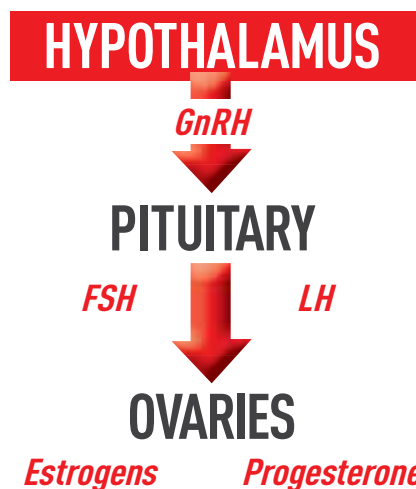
In “normal” or “optimal” body condition, a balance will be established. However, when dealing with overweight (or underweight) dogs, because of the modifications of the amount of fat tissue, the balance is lost and that can lead to a disturbance in the “well-organized” structure we mentioned before. 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

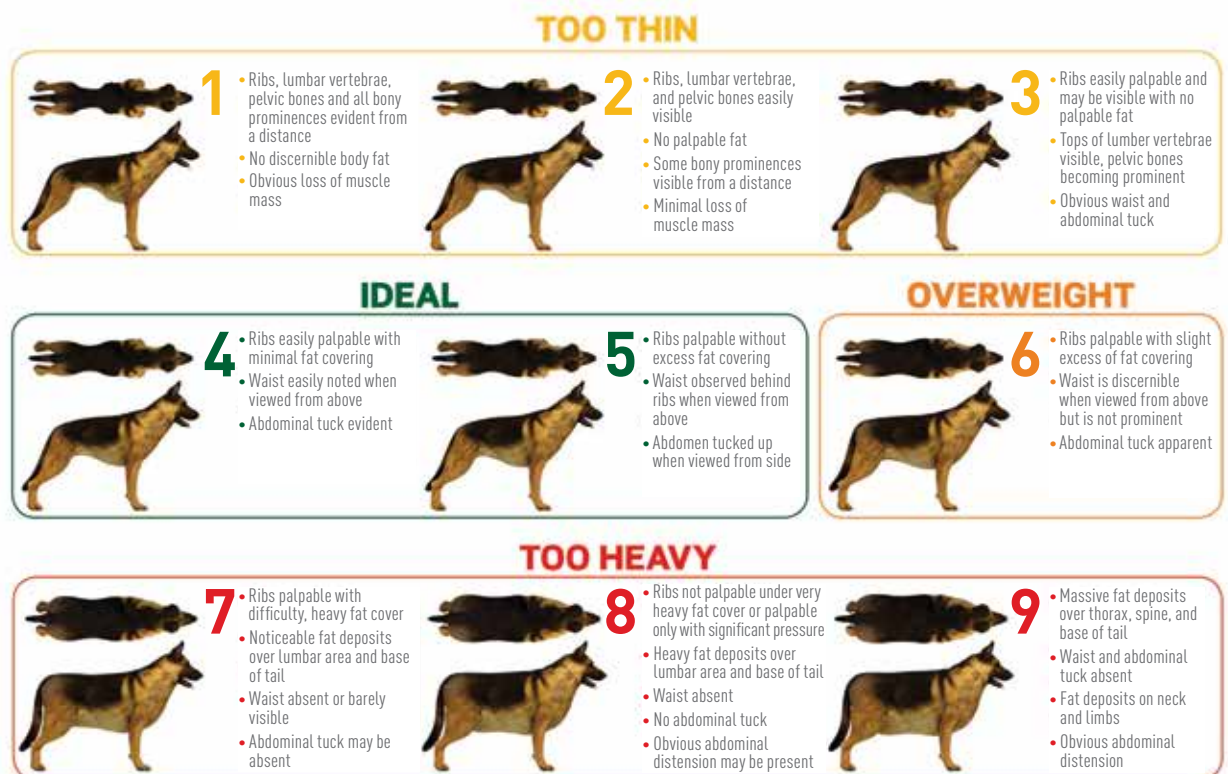
not before the 42nd day landmark (see Figure III for comments on how to feed a pregnant breeding female).

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.

Figure II:
Body Condition Score Chart



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

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 synthesize 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.

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...

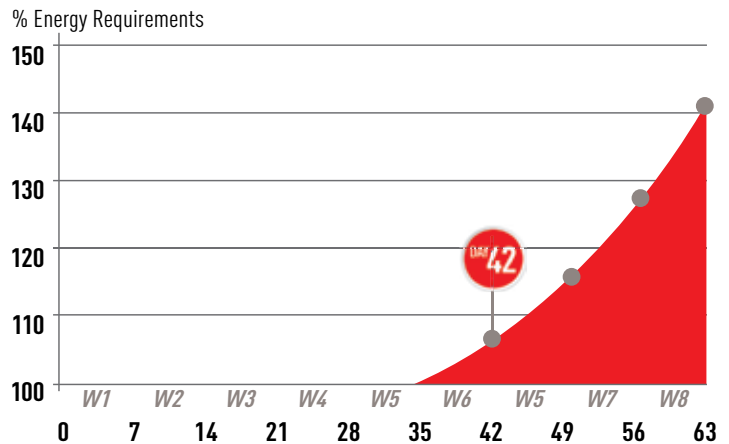
Figure III: After 42 days, energy requirements will be increased by +10%/week until parturition. Because of the reduction of the volume of the stomach (compressed by the growing uterus) and behavioral modifications (certain breeding females tend to become picky) that occurs during pregnancy, it is recommended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



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Figure III:
Energy Needs During Gestation



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

Emmanuel 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.

“Breed for the Total Dog”

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cant. The result is that show rings are full of nice representations of each breed, however different. Thus our judges have the opportunity to apply their own interpretations as they line up their winners. This in turn (unfortunately or not) can influence breeders to change their breeding goals.

Many breeders believe it's all well and good to criticize a standard, an individual dog, or a winner, but that there is a bottom line we all agree on. This bottom line exists because each breed was developed with a certain intention. Whether it was to be the perfect lapdog or guard dog, every breed was created for a particular reason.

When we get too wrapped up in the dog-show world—a fun place to be, assuredly—we sometimes lose our way, forgetting what the original breeders had intended.

How many of you have taken notice when a breed suddenly appears to have lost its length of leg, or the loin

becomes too long? Heavy bone becomes fine bone, massive heads become overly refined ... I could go on. This is due to overcorrecting.

Although breeders are to be commended for recognizing problem areas, often they will overcorrect, breeding too far to the extreme opposite, rather than remaining within the confines of the standard. Judges should refrain from overcorrecting in the ring, which reinforces the inappropriate direction.

At one point years ago breeders all realized they needed to “fix” Border Terrier rears, so they all went home and did just that. Several national specialties later, while proudly admiring the nicely corrected rears, they all gasped and said, “Now look what's happened to our fronts!”

Lesson learned: Breed for the total dog, not just its parts.

Lynn D. Looper is the AKC Gazette columnist from the Border Terrier Club of America.

“Picking the ‘Keeper’ Puppy”

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And there are a few other things I look for from an early age:

Is the rib cage truly oval and tapering? Is the sternum bone about level with the point of shoulder, and fairly prominent? Is the neck strong to the feel, and reasonably long (usually indicating good shoulders)? Is the loin fairly short, and the back strong? Is there a noticeable slope to croup and upper arm? I like to see those almost parallel lines—one in the lower aspect of the front assembly, the

other at the top of the rear assembly. And, of course, throughout I am noting the subtler features of head type: ear-set, eye shape and set, and the dimensions and taper of skull.

Beyond that, I believe it's useful to watch the pups for long periods of time, puzzling out the nuances of structure and temperament—and to know what you want from a given litter, the reason for doing the breeding in the first place.

It is also probably good to remember, as Peggy Koehler



once said, “You’re looking for the best puppy in the litter, not the best puppy in the world.”

For the AKC’s best master-level breeding articles, see the blog at akcwinners.com and visit the AKC Gazette on Facebook.

Michael Jennings is an AKC conformation judge, a longtime breeder and exhibitor, and the author of three books on the Siberian Husky.

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