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Best top care with dogs

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LEGAL NOTICE

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Because finding your perfect vet is not easy, this guide will guide you through the points to absolutely consider when choosing your vet. Bear in mind that there is nothing wrong at changing vet if you find better or yours got worse.

ACCREDITATIONS

Check online if there is any accreditation or label, within your area or country, that would vouch veterinary practices as qualityorientated business (ie. **RCVS-accredited practices** in the United Kingdom.)

LOCATION

You then need to understand that you will need a practice near your location as in case of emergency, you do not want to travel for hours even if it is to arrive to the best practice in the country.

REPUTATION

Speak to other breeders and pet owners in the region and ask them who is their vet and why are they staying with him. Ponder their answers with your very own requirements as your situations will most likely differ.

SERVICES & FACILITIES

Visit the practice and ask for a show around; it may sound a bit odd at first but you do want to see what is going on behind their doors. While visiting, ask for the services and facilities the practice offer (and take notes or you will forget.)

What are the equipments directly available on site? Surgical, ultrasound and x-ray equipment on-site will make you save a lot of time and effort by immediately doing all required tests in order to get a diagnosis.

A laboratory very close or on the practice's premises will also speed up the process as results of several

tests will be
available quasiimmediately.

Do they have
overnight nurses
and staff to look
after the

FIND YOUR VETERINARY

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pets who are spending days and nights in the veterinary practice? If not, what happens if the pets require urgent care or someone's attention? Will I be updated regularly or do I need to call myself every time I need to be updated on my pet's situation?

COMMUNICATION

How much notice do they usually need for an appointment?
What are their opening times and how do they handle the communication with their clients (phone, email, texts?)

EMERGENCIES

Maybe the most important point is everything that revolves around emergencies and out-of-hours services as it is when things do not go as planned that you will need the best service, responsiveness and flexibility from your vet.

Find out whether they handle emergencies themselves or they direct you to another practice, if the latter, how far is it? What services are offered in this other practice?

When calling the 24/7 number, are you connected to the vet directly or do you need to leave a message and wait long minutes to receive a call back?

Some practices have a vet who can come himself to your place to handle emergencies, it is an important service for non-lifethreatening conditions as otherwise, it is better to directly bring your animal to the practice to save valuable time.

VISITS

Another important point is how visits are handled. Indeed, you will require the vet to visit your farm regularly to either have a review of your installations or to examine one of your dogs. Get your head around the hours they can come for visits and ask

if they are flexible with those visits.

COSTS

The price comes last and it really should in your mind, too. By getting into breeding, you are getting into a business where you are looking after living creatures, often considered as humans. This means you have to get the best service and only then, see how much it costs and do

FIND YOUR VETERINARY

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PARENTS' INFLUENCE ON A LITTER

An empirical truth amongst canine breeders states that a Dam has a lot more influence on the pups than the Sire. So you want to get two healthy and champion dogs to start with but you want to focus as much as possible on the female(s) rather than the male(s). However, science tends to say that genes are inherited very closely to 50-50 and then some genes are more dominant than others in defining traits.

After a few litters with the same Sire or Dame, with different partners, you will see what are the similarities and you will then be able to spot which ones of your adults tend to offer more of themselves to their descendants. You will then need to find complementary partners to your prepotent specimen to enhance and improve your litters. It is easier to test with a Sire since Dams should have at least a year and a half between its litters.

The other important influence parents will have on their puppies is how they will be raised. To avoid unstable puppies you want to raise mentally stable parents (especially the mother) and look out for signals that would suggest they do not feel great. You want mentally healthy parents to show your puppies the way life

is live in the human world during the first weeks. Aggressive parents will tend to raise angry and unstable puppies, so look out for any behavioural issue and address them immediately with a specialist trainer.

That being said, you will have a huge importance in how your dogs and puppies will evolve and grow so even if parents are extremely important, you do not want to defer all responsibilities to the Sire and Dam.

What you eventually want to do is to have such a prepotent and influent dog (or several) to then start your very own line and become a renowned breeder.

ESTABLISHING YOUR OWN BLOODLINE

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While evaluating your breeding program, keep in mind that most traits you are looking for cannot be altered, fixed or created in a single generation. It takes a few generations to arrive at your ideal specimen but you should be able to see improvements at every litter.

Tens of thousands of genes come to play within a single dog, each gene comes as a pair.

Each offset inherits one copy of the gene from the mother and another copy from the father to form a new pair (genotype). There are three states for a genotype: normal (BB), carrier (Bb) or affected (bb).

If the pair inherited from both parents is the same, this pair is called **homozygous (BB or bb)**. Conversely, if the inherited pair is different, the pair is called **heterozygous (Bb)**.

To reproduce at 100% one trait, you will need a Sire with the corresponding homozygous gene (BB) and a Dam with the very same homozygous gene (BB). Every single descendant (= offset) will be affected and become BB itself.

Sometimes (often), one parent may be the way you want (BB) but the other is not at all (bb) or is only a carrier (Ba). This reduces the probabilities of passing on the BB to the offset but chances are still substantial, especially that unlike humans, dogs have several puppies per litter so your chances to get at least

one puppy being the way you want rise.
A purebred dog (also called *true breeding*), such as Boxer, only produces puppies with Boxer characteristics because their ancestors were inbred until they were homozygous for all of the genes that produce the physical characteristics and temperament associated with the Boxer breed.

It may sound complicated but it is just fancy words wrapped around common sense (ie. two dogs both having genes defining their black robe should have black coated puppies.)

ESTABLISHING YOUR OWN BLOODLINE

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BUT WE CAN'T JUST SEE A DOG'S GENOME...

Now we know how things work on a microscopic level, we need to translate it into a macroscopic and human-friendly level. We obviously cannot just see a dog and ask for its genes and find a matching partner. Some DNA tests exist to spot hereditary diseases but for most traits and characteristics you will be after, no test or laboratory will be of any help. On top of that, most traits are decided by sometimes dozens of genes!

The solution is to train your expert eye as explained few paragraphs ago and not just study the parents of a potential puppy you are interested in but also its great parents and even great great parents. The more you see the wanted traits and characteristics in a dog's family, the more likely they will be present in the upcoming litter's puppies.

This is where the pedigree of a dog comes to play...

THE PEDIGREE

In essence, a dog's pedigree is its family tree so every dog has a pedigree. What people tend to mean by pedigree is a family tree where each family member was registered on a pedigree dog registration schemes -- Kennel Club, International Sheep Dog Society and some others.

For newcomers in the business, the pedigree is not clearly understood and a common mistake is to get a registered Dam and Sire and think it is a great start. Well, not really. Not at all quite frankly. Being registered does not mean, in any way, that the dogs are of high quality: it is just a record in a database.

The simple rule is that all exceptional dogs are registered but not all registered dogs are exceptional. What makes the difference is who is composing the pedigree of a particular dog or litter.

WHAT TO DO WITH A PEDIGREE THEN?

In short, you need to dissect it and research its family members to then study them individually. It is called the pedigree analysis.

If they fit the characteristics are looking for, you then want to have a deeper look at them and see how well they performed in championships and shows.

For example, if you are breeding herding Border Collies, you want to find a dog that has a line which demonstrated amazing herding abilities, either by reputation or by actually winning herding contests and championships.

Obviously, the more champions there are in a bloodline or a pedigree, the more expensive the puppies produced will be. This is exactly why you really need to figure how much you are ready to invest.

ESTABLISHING YOUR OWN BLOODLINE

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INBREEDING

Inbreeding is the breed of closely related dogs, especially over many generations, for example father to daughter, brother to sister, half-brother to half-sister, mother to son, etc. Inbreeding is a process that intensifies the animal's traits and characteristics, both good and bad, at each and every generation. The ultimate goal of inbreeding is to fix and preserve the traits that the breeder is looking for by increasing homozygosity in the dog's genetic pool.

In some situations, inbreeding is required for example, to create a new breed or to re-create a nearly extinct breed. Indeed, in both cases the very few specimens available at start will need to mate together several times to grow the number of specimens within the breed. Because dog breeding is mainly assortative breeding, without the sorting of individuals by trait, a breed could not be established,

nor could poor genetic material be removed.

The more sound the bloodline the more successful inbreeding will be, this is why the parents and their ancestors must be as void of structural faults and health problems as possible to avoid (randomly) fixing the wrong genes and fixing and preserving hereditary diseases. Before starting an inbreeding plan, you will need to study as many generations as possible before mating the dogs to make sure the bloodline is genetically sound. It will take time to research so many generations but you will have to go through this process to avoid accidents.

The BBC produced two documentary's on dog inbreeding titled *Pedigree Dogs Exposed* and *Pedigree Dogs Exposed - Three Years*

On that document the negative health consequences of excessive inbreeding. They give the example of a Cavalier King Charles part of a breed where the direction is to reinforce the small size of the dog but as a result of such an intensive assortative breeding, the skull's size of some dogs became too small for their brain, resulting in severe neurological conditions.

This type of breeding is not recommended to novice breeders and newcomers in a breed. Before starting such an enterprise, you will need to seek advices from your Kennel Club, other breeders and breed's specialists such as show judges. You will end up having the worse bloodline if you start with a poor brood stock and inbreed them. Most issues will appear years after birth of the puppies and your reputation will be broken, so are the lives of the puppies you produced.

STYLES OF BREEDING

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OUTCROSSING

Outcrossing is the mating of two unrelated purebred dogs that are from distinct bloodlines, with no common ancestor in the last generations. It is a long-term strategy used to bring traits that you are lacking, from another bloodline into your own. It usually takes several generations and is recommended to be used

with linebreeding or inbreeding to intensify and fix those traits as soon as they appear in your bloodline.

Outcross breeding brings together genes from two unrelated specimens and therefore generates new genetic combinations. It is not totally random as the breeder picks the Dam and the Sire with a vision of the result it wants in the produced litter.

Outcrossing can also be used to dissolve unwanted characteristics that are present in your dogs because of homozygous genes, and breeders use it as soon as they notice the first signs of inbreeding depression in their stock.

Bottom line is that outcrossing carefully with blood from another great bloodline will bring new qualities that were lacking in your line. It is a great way to start establishing your first generations and then use other styles of breeding to fix the quality you are seeing in your dogs.

The illustration on the next page shows an outcrossing between two dogs of a same breed but coming from two different bloodlines or families.

NICK OR HYBRID VIGOUR

Some breeders want use outcross breeding within their own kennel or farm. They breed two separate bloodlines in their kennel and at the ideal point, pick one dog from each line and mate them. In breeding lingo, this is called a nick or an hybrid vigour in a more scientific language. The result is a litter with better puppies than both the original lines.

Some experienced breeders work with two (or more) distinct bloodlines and fix a different trait in each to then create a nick that should then have both traits that will need to be fixed until it becomes a clearly identifiable characteristic of the bloodline.

STYLES OF BREEDING

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TACKLE INHERITED DOG DISEASES?

There are no other way to solve this growing issue than simply perform DNA tests and medical checks of each dogs you

are planning to breed with. A reputable and responsible dog breeder knows when to say no and pass on what at first seemed like a promising breeding.

Once the results are known, you need to decide if this precise dog is genetically sound enough to be bred. It should not be based on your gut feelings or your love for this dog but rather on the results you receive and what they mean and represent for the breed.

There are three outcomes possible once the results are known and none of them is a disaster for your dog nor it should be for you and your dog breeding business.

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HOW TO DNA TEST A DOG?

DNA checks are composed of two main steps:

1. DNA sampling or collection: whether using a DNA kit at home or collected by a specialist, a swab or blood has to be taken from the dog you want to test and then be sent to the laboratory to be studied
2. DNA profiling and results: upon reception of the DNA samples, the laboratory will profile your dog's DNA and send you or your vet the results

Call your veterinary practice to check if they are themselves able to collect the DNA sample and deal with their laboratory. If so, it is the best option as it is handled by professionals and assures you of accurate data and results. Discuss the results with your vet to come to one of the three conclusions mentioned above. Always ask for official DNA results/reports so you can show them to your future puppy buyers and to anyone doubting or questioning your dog's genetic soundness.

If your vet is unable to perform those DNA checks, find another vet able to do it in your neighbourhood, or use a DNA kit. The kit is not a good idea as you are not a specialist and if you get it wrong, the results will be inaccurate.

KINGDOM

The Animal Health Trust was one of the first laboratories in the world to offer DNA testing to dog breeders. Their first test, the *RCD1 progressive retinal atrophy* in Irish Setters, was introduced in 1995. Their scientists working in the Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust work hard to understand the mutation of genes responsible of hereditary diseases and develop the DNA screenings for most of them.

HEREDITARY CONDITIONS

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SHOULD I INVEST IN CHAMPIONS?

The original title was “Cheap or Quality?” but I changed it to a less-tabloid heading. It depends on the breed, their plan, their ambition and the clientele they are breeding for. If you are targeting families looking for “a dog”, you can invest in a regular “dog” and breed them properly. If you want to sell your dogs at a high price tag and generate juicy profits, you will have to invest in champions and make sure to keep your line reputable by participating to contests.

Cheaper specimens will sell for cheap unless you market them intensively. Keep in mind that a lot of pet owners have a litter occasionally and will sell the puppies at a low price, add to those the puppy mills and the low quality breeders, you will face a huge competition that will drag your prices down since your price tag will be in function of your competition. You usually have low visibility in the dog’s pedigree and it makes it hard to study other progenies from the same bloodline. The results given by cheaper dogs will be unpredictable, their quality too. A dog bred from a bloodline with a lot of champions is usually accompanied with a well-documented pedigree and you can see

how good are the other progenies from the same ancestors, giving you a hint at what to expect for future generations and what to work on in terms of genetics, health and temperament. A champion or progeny of champions also vouches the quality of the line to future clients and pet owners, it is an amazing selling point especially if there are many in its ancestors.

Do expensive dogs mean quality dogs? Not really, but most cheap dogs will not be of great quality.

You are not looking for a home pet to cherish, you are looking at starting your own breeding program and your requirements are much more difficult to satisfy. You want a dog who has great ancestors including champions with a healthy condition and are genetically sound and cleared of hereditary diseases. You also want a dog coming from a reputable breeder whose clients are happy with their dog's temperament and abilities.

BREEDING STOCK

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TIPS FOR STUD-ONLY BREEDERS

Breeding males only means you won't have to go through all the care and attention a gestating Dam needs. However, your revenue will come from various breeders looking for amazing Studs and paying you for the delivery of your dog's semen. You rarely see the money generated from the litter itself. Prices go from a hundred to thousands depending on your male's pedigree and ranking in championships and shows. Raising males only forces you to invest in the best available dogs and participate in a lot of competitions to build your reputation.

These advices will help you work yourself up to the top.

READ, LEARN & APPLY.

Breeding, and mating specifically, is much more than just put both dogs in the same room and let it happen. You do have to learn about the copulation stages, the bitch's heat cycle and if

you are sending the semen to the female's owner, you need to read how is it done, how much does it cost, how long does it take, etc.

You have to read, process, understand and then apply all of this precious information. Being prepared is the best a pet owner can be for his pet's well-being.

HAVE YOUR STUD DOGS CLEARED OF ANY MEDICAL CONDITION

All dog breeds have their shares of hereditary and common medical conditions, one of the most famous is the hip dysplasia found in most breeds. What matters for your dog, breeding or not, is to be healthy and in fit shape. Breeding means (should mean) improving the breed so if your dog is victim of an hereditary condition, it is recommended to neuter him. If your stud is healthy, demand proofs from the bitch's owner than the Dam is also healthy and cleared of hereditary and common diseases. Remember that you Sir's reputation is on the line.

BREEDING STOCK

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HEAT CYCLE

A normal heat cycle approximately lasts three weeks, within which the bitch will go through four different stages.

Proestrus

Lasting around 9 days, this first stage is marked by the eggs in the ovaries beginning to mature and the oestrogen levels start rising. At that time, males are attracted to the nonreceptive female. Physically, the female's vulva lips typically swell up and become pliable. There will be a whole bunch of other signs showing that your bitch is in season.

Estrus

Estrus is the next stage, also lasting around 9 days, where eggs are released from ovaries and the oestrogen levels declining while progesterone levels rise. Here, male and

female are both attracted to each other and it is only during this window that pregnancy will result from copulation. The bitch typically 'flags' her tail, as if allowing access to the vulva.

As per Dr. B. Eilts from Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine: during proestrus and estrus, females may have a clear to bloody discharge. This stage is also known as "heat." The length of these cycles varies greatly between individuals. Proestrus and estrus can last anywhere from 5 days to 21 days.

Diestrus

This third stage is the period following mating, it commonly lasts 56 to 58 days in a pregnant female, and 60 to 100 days in a non-pregnant female. Progesterone is dominating and the female will refuse a male's advances during this stage.

Anestrus

The last stage is the quiescence stage for the bitch and it will last until the next cycle starts, generally four to five months. After pregnancy, fertility is very low if the bitch has not attained 90 days anestrus, indeed, a female needs enough time to repair her own uterus or she will not be able to keep up with a new pregnancy.

MATING

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VETERINARY METHODS

Two or three weeks after the mating happened, you should bring your bitch to the veterinary practice for a check up and receive valuable advices on what to expect for the next weeks.

Your vet will inform you on the diet your dog should follow from now on and she will be cleared and treated for any parasites.

Even for a vet, it will be difficult to tell if your

bitch is pregnant on the third week but you will be given details on the different pregnancy testing methods available.

Ultrasound

The best technique to detect the pregnancy from around three weeks in, the ultrasound is safe and uses sound waves to create pictures of your bitch's womb. Ultrasound won't tell you how many puppies are in her womb as it is extremely difficult to count them with what is resulting from that type of scanning imagery.

Hormone Testing (and Kits)

Once your vet knows the pregnancy is here, there usually is a blood test used to check the hormone levels and reconfirm the bitch is definitely having puppies within her. Relaxin is the hormone that rises in your dog's blood during pregnancy, and there are now canine pregnancy test kits that you can buy and use yourself but they require a blood sample from the bitch, so you may just let the vet do this for you.

Palpation

Between the 28th and 35th days only, your vet can feel your pregnant Dam's belly and also confirm that lovely puppies are on their way. It is very risky to do this yourself as you do not want to injure, perhaps lethally, the puppies while feeling the belly. Leave this for someone confident and experienced, ideally your vet, to avoid a miscarriage.

X-Ray

From the third tiers of the pregnancy, from day 40, you are recommended to visit your vet for an X-Ray examination serving two purposes: knowing how many puppies are in your bitch's womb, and check their bone structure.

During the last 10-15 days, your vet may want to see her one last time to perform the last checks and give you important recommendations on what to expect when she will give birth (called whelping.)

MATING

The first week starts with the ovulation when the eggs are released. The eggs are not ready for fertilisation until 3 days after ovulation.

Once the mating happens, the sperm will stay in the female's Fallopian tubes for up to 10-11 days until the spermatozoa reaches the eggs.

The gestation itself starts as soon as the female's ova are fertilised by the male's spermatozoa. Each new egg will receive half its genetic heritage from the father's chromosomes and the other half from the mother's chromosomes.

The egg is now a new living being called an embryo.

SECOND WEEK

The embryos start moving around the uterus within the uterine liquid making their way to the uterus for implantation.

The second week may be the start of a behavioural change from your dog. You might start noticing mood changes and an affectionate attitude or, the opposite, a moody or more aggressive behaviour.

You need to let her be, make sure you keep on grooming her and in a few weeks, it will be much more delicate to have her groomed.

THIRD WEEK

The embryos are now embedded in the uterus lining where they will start their development.

The embryos are progressively enveloped in their own protective membrane and carry on developing

themselves thanks to the supply of necessary nutrients provided through capillarity.

Mood swings may start and the appetite could vary already from the third week.

GESTATION & WHELPING

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PASSAGE OF THE PLACENTA

This last stage also requires all your attention for your bitch's health's sake. Normally, after a puppy is delivered, the placenta is passed right after. You need to check how many placentas have been passed and compared the count to the number of puppies, if there is a discrepancy, you will need to call your vet. Stay attentive throughout the delivery as bitches sometimes eat the placenta and if she does, let her do it but remember that this one was not left in her uterus.

RIGHT AFTER THE DELIVERY

Once all the puppies have been delivered, you need to make sure each puppy is breathing and sound, you do not need to necessarily touch them, just look at them and make sure you offer a bowl of water and food to your bitch once she finished licking and cleaning her puppies. Have everything she needs close to the whelping box so she can feel comfortable to quickly go and come back, without feeling like it is such an effort. As soon as they are cleaner and whenever you feel it is the right moment, change the whole bedding with completely clean towels and lining. It is important to keep her whelping box hygienic, dry, warm and clean as much as possible so regularly check without being too intrusive.

The new family needs peace and a lot of rest, you have successfully made sure that her labour and delivery go smoothly, it is now time to leave them alone and simply check on them routinely. Inform everybody in the household that everything went smoothly, let them go to have a look and eventually operate a minimal traffic in the room.

EMERGENCIES

In some rare cases, it is highly recommended to call your vet to

seek real medical advice because things seem to not go smoothly.

- dark and greenish discharges before delivery
- contractions for over an hour without delivery
- placentas passed do not match the count of puppies
- puppy left in her womb or taking too long to come out
 - depressed puppy, unwilling to feed or move
 - lack of interest in her puppies
- symptoms of sickness hour or days after the delivery such as foul smelling, fever, vomiting, shaking, nervousness, restlessness, listlessness or loss of appetite

Common sense is sufficient to know when to call your vet so simply stay attentive, not intrusive, and do not hesitate to call your vet if you have any doubt.

GESTATION & WHELPING

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SANITATION

Puppies are unable to defecate and urinate by themselves before roughly 3 weeks: they need to be stimulated by the mother to urinate and defecate. This is what she does when she licks and grooms each puppy's anal and genital areas.

The muscles controlling these functions are not developed enough yet: they should be able to do it all by themselves by 3 weeks.

HOW TO DO IT?

Orphaned puppies will need the breeder to replicate these conditions so they stay healthy. Start by using a soft towel or sheet moisten with warm water and rub delicately the puppy's genital and anal areas.

After a couple of minutes, the puppy will defecate and urinate. Some puppies are longer than others: you have to get to know how is your puppy reacting to the stimulation.

Obviously, you have to use clean tissues and towels to rub your puppy otherwise you expose it to various infections. Remember that for now, it is still an extremely fragile being and should be handled with care and precautions.

WHEN TO DO IT?

At first, do it before and after each feeding as these are the most suitable times for young pups to urinate and defecate. Once you get to know what is your puppy's preference, simply adapt.

Log each time the puppy defecates and urinates, in case you need to visit the vet and provide him with further details to help.

WHAT'S GOOD AND WHAT'S NOT?

Every time the pup defecates and urinates, inspect the texture and colour of the stool and urine.

GOOD

A pale yellow or clear urine and a pale to dark brown and partially formed stool indicate a healthy pup.

BAD

Dark yellow to orange urine or a too firm stool mean the pup is not fed enough and needs more formula.

Green-ish faeces indicate an infection, call your vet and detail him the puppy's diet.

Do not increase quantities, instead, feed the puppy more frequently the same quantity.

REARING THE PUPPIES

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HOW TO TRANSITION TOWARDS A RAW DOG FOOD DIET?

The change to a raw diet seems more complicated than it actually is. Many people are worried about feeding the right amount of meat, bone, offal and vegetable. But the reality is a lot easier than most people think. There are simple guidelines to creating a food plan and once put together it's very easy to follow (there are many forums and pages online about this).

Every dog is different. The amount of exercise, the size of the dog, and the level of activity all vary and so the menu plan needs to be tailored for each dog.

There are many positive attributes to the plan:

- You know EXACTLY what your dog eats as you put it together freshly every day
- A lot of products we already have in the fridge can be used

even if they have recently passed their sell by date or have gone “off”

- Many butchers would discard the stuff we can feed our dogs which also makes feeding our dogs cheap, often cheaper than the dry food (if vet bills are included then it’s definitely a lot cheaper!)

It is our responsibility as dog owners to care for our animals.

This is why feeding has to involve more than going to the supermarket to buy a bag of food without reading the ingredients. How can a simple “guideline” on a dry food bag tell you the amount your dog needs? Your dog may be the exact same breed and age as the dog next door who never gets exercised. You, a responsible owner, may take your dog out 3 times a day and let it fetch a ball until it’s tired while the neighbour’s dog is only let out in the garden now and again. How can these dogs need the same amount of food? Simple questions like this switch the light on and make you realise that this is just another way of marketing...

Make a change and your dog’s health will prove to you that you made the right decision.

FEED YOUR DOGS

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SINGLE DOG VS LITTER

When a dog breeder’s bitch just had a litter and the breeder is looking at selling the puppies, there is always the choice between taking pictures of individual puppies versus pictures of the whole litter.

The answer is both. Take several pictures of both and use the nicest ones. The buyer wants to get to know its future puppy and it starts by knowing its family. Take pictures of the parents too!

CREATE A SMART FILE NAMING SYSTEM

For your own organisation and time management, you should from day one use a file naming system that makes sense. You will take pictures perhaps daily and you do not want to waste long minutes browsing, opening, checking, closing dozens of pictures just to find the one you were looking for.

An example using a folder per litter and puppy.

Litter XYZ (Valia x Mike)

Shining Star

shining-star-1.jpg

shining-star-2.jpg

shining-star-2edited.jpg

shining-star-3.jpg

Elody

elody-portrait-1.jpg

elody-portrait-2.jpg

elody-field-1.jpg

elody-field-2.jpg

Petrus

petrus-day1-1.jpg

petrus-day1-2.jpg

petrus-day1-3.jpg

petrus-day2-1.jpg

PICTURES & VIDEOS

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ARE THERE ANY OTHER REGISTRIES?

Kennel Clubs are usually the most basic registration a dog needs to easily sell itself. Very rare are the people who, usually ideologically, will refuse to register their dogs with the Kennel Club. It is the case with people against the idea that some breeds must be judged by their appearance, instead, they prefer their purebred dogs to be judged on their aptitudes. For example, in the United Kingdom, the **International Sheep Dog Society** is an organisation registering over 6,000 Border Collie pups every year on behalf of its members. The ISDS Number and Dog Certificate are a guarantee of pedigree that, for most dogs, can be traced back over 100 years. In the United States, the **American Canine Association** also registers purebred dogs and offer an alternative registry with

the International Canine Association, like the American Kennel Club with the Purebred Alternative Listing, for dogs who want to be registered but do not have the required paperwork.

With hybrid dogs (or designer dogs) insanely trending over the last few years, some registries are fighting to become the one and only, these include the **International Designer Canine Registry**, the **K9 Pedigree Club**, and the **American Canine Hybrid Club**.

Before succumbing to the charms of registering your dogs to these alternate registries, you have to do your researches as some of them are just a money trap and have literally no value or reputation and do not ensure any health or genetic soundness. A lot of new breeders want to collect as many certificates as possible from several organisation and companies to show the world how great their dogs are but they often join the wrong ones and end up pocketing out loads of money with a very little, if not inexistent, return on investment.

Hybrid dogs registries are the ones I would be particularly suspicious about: they are very new, not established in any way and jump on the bandwagon so that they also profit of the design dog boom. Speak to other breeders and find out why they are only using Kennel Club or any other one(s.)

REGISTERING DOGS

186

LEVELS OF DOG SHOWS

The way to enter a show will vary according to the level of your dog and how much of a champion your dog is. If it is your first time(s), you will need to climb the ladder.

LIMITED SHOWS

This is how every single champion starts: limited shows. They are restricted by membership to a club or geographically.

OPEN SHOWS

Open shows are accessible to all levels of pedigree dog exhibitors. Once familiar with how show operate, what are scores based on, etc., open shows are the ideal step up to sharpen your skills as the atmosphere is more relaxed than Championship Shows but more serious than Limited Shows.

PREMIER SHOWS OR SATELLITES

Same as the previous one, Premier Shows are perhaps bigger events than Open Shows but they are also open to all levels of pedigree dogs. Noticeable different, winners can qualify for bigger events, otherwise inaccessible, such as Crufts in the UK or the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in the US.

CHAMPIONSHIPS

These are the toughest dog shows and the competition is hard, the entry is complicated and the hope of even doing good impression is low.

Championships Dog Shows can also be open to all exhibitors with a purebred dog but the entry fee might cost few thousands, hence it is better, for the poorest amongst us, to shine in a Satellite Show and win an entry to a Championship.

Winners of Championships receive a Challenge Certificate and after winning three or more (depending on your country's rules), your dog will become a Show Champion which is perhaps the highest accolade in the dog world.

SPECIALS & GRAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Annual shows with sometimes live coverage on TV, Special shows can be Championships or even more restricted with an invite-only policy. Most participants in Special Shows do not even own their dog, but simply exhibit the dog and share the prize pool (monetary earnings) with the dog owner and breeder.

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