

SHOULD YOU BREED YOUR DOG?

▣ General Practice & Preventative Medicine - Theriogenology

SHOULD YOUR DOG REPRODUCE?

You love your dog dearly and think, wouldn't the world be a better place if there were more dogs just like her or him? However, before you breed your dog, take some time to consider whether or not it is the best thing to do and whether you are doing it for the right reasons. Make this decision carefully and only after a lot of research and talking with experienced breeders.

Breeding dogs is not as simple as it sounds. To safeguard the health of your dog and his or her offspring, you need to be able to handle any situation you encounter. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have the time to dedicate to breeding? The time you will need to spend with your new pups will increase dramatically.
- Will you be able to afford the costs involved in vaccinating and deworming the pups?
- If you can't find new homes for the new babies, are you willing to keep them? This means more feeding and more cleaning. Remember you started with one dog; you may end up with a total of six to eight or even more.

THE WRONG REASONS

One of the worst things you could do would be to breed your dog for the wrong reasons. Each year about 17 million dogs and cats are turned over to animal shelters. Out of every 10 that were taken in, only one finds a home. Of the rest, some 13.5 million must be destroyed.

The suffering and sorrow associated with pet overpopulation is overwhelming. And yet, much of it could be eliminated by breeding only for the right reasons.

Some of the wrong reasons:

- You want to breed because puppies are soooooo cute. Keep in mind they will grow up quickly and may be not be so cute anymore. What will you do then?
- You want to let your kids experience the miracle of birth. Unfortunately, the whelping process has usually been completed by the time you realize it and everyone has missed "the miracle."
- You want to breed so that you can sell the puppies. Unless you are serious about promoting a

particular breed, it is unlikely that buyers will knock at your door to buy. Even if you choose to breed a particular breed, you will likely not make a significant profit.

- You just want to see what you'll get by breeding an English bulldog with a golden retriever. This is not a good reason to breed. Animals are not experiments; they are not created to satisfy one's curiosity.

THE RIGHT REASONS

To be a responsible breeder, consider every aspect before proceeding. For the best experience, remember that every dog has physical and emotional needs. Also realize that if you are going to breed, it should only be done for the right reasons.

The best reason to breed your dog is to promote a particular breed. There are plenty of mixed breed dogs in the world, and breeding should only be done after careful consideration and discussion with experienced breeders. Only top quality members of a breed should be used. You should also make sure you have homes for all the potential puppies, even before breeding.

If, after plenty of soul searching, you have decided to breed your dog, remember that giving away those puppies can be difficult. Not everyone will provide a suitable home. You will need to interview prospective buyers and ask them about the purpose of having the dog, the set-up for the dog, their lifestyle (for instance, if they travel a lot, who will be the caretaker) and whether they have the time, patience and tools to care for their new family member properly.

If the answers tell you that this person is a suitable mama/papa, a new home is found. If not, you will have to turn down the sale regardless how much money is involved.

Remember no one can decide whether or not to breed your dog but you. After much consideration, you should make the best decision for your family and for your dog.