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CONSIDERING BREEDING

To Spay or not to Spay?

Many owners find the companionship of their dog so rewarding that they feel they would like to breed, continue the line and retain an offspring. This can occur with both male and female dogs. Others, especially first time dog owners, will acquire a female dog with the intent to breed her when she is old enough. Whatever the reason, there are certain important considerations you should consider before embarking upon any breeding program.

I obtained my dog from a rescue organization but he is so lovely I would like a puppy from him. How do I go about it?

Remember that just like people, dogs are individuals and although we say "Like father, like son" this does not necessarily always apply. However, if you really are intent on mating your mixed breed dog you should remember that female dogs, unlike people, usually have more than one offspring at a time, anywhere from 1 to 13 pups depending on the breed. You have to consider how you are going to find homes for the other pups.

First you have to find a female dog to mate with your male. She is almost a "surrogate mother" for your purpose. The owner of the female will be the person with the responsibility for finding homes for the puppies that you do not want. Unfortunately, this is not easy due to the number of unwanted dogs in animal shelters.

Owners of male mixed breed dogs will frequently make arrangements with neighbors or with other members of local dog clubs. If you obtained your dog from a shelter, pet shop, or a neighbor's litter, think about what will happen to the puppies your pet will produce. Will you be comfortable if some, if not all, of the rest of the litter end up in an animal shelter?

If I do decide to go ahead, is it likely that the offspring will have the same gorgeous traits?

It is difficult to say as what the offspring will be like as training, environment, and genetics all play an important role in personality.

I want to breed my dog to reduce his sexual activities.

Mating your dog once or twice may actually make these behaviors worse! If your intent is to control or curtail your dogs sexual behaviors, breeding him will not solve that problem.

What is the alternative?

Neutering/Spaying. Remember all service dogs – Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Dogs for the Disabled – are neutered. The advantages of neutering far outweigh the disadvantages. Neutering your pet reduces his chances of developing prostate disease and eliminates a leading cause of death in male dogs – testicular cancer. In females, if done within the first two heat cycles you reduce chance of breast cancer by 99-75%. You eliminate chance of ovarian and uterine cancer. You also eliminate uterine infections which are common in unspayed bitches. Weight gain is a possibility in some dogs as estrogen/testosterone plays a role in metabolism. Most dogs are unaffected though. Simply weigh your pet one month post procedure to assess if he/she is gaining weight. If this is the case simply decrease the food by about 10%.

If I don't breed my dog, how I obtain another dog with similar characteristics?

Start by contacting the person or organization where you obtained your dog. There is a good possibility that they may have similar pets that would make an excellent addition to your family. Alternatively, visit a local animal shelter and rescue a homeless pet. You may pleasantly surprised by what you find. Finally, talk with your veterinarian. They will be able to direct your search and provide you with assistance in finding the "perfect pet partner".

I obtained my female dog from an animal shelter and they suggested she should be neutered at six months but she has turned out to be such a lovely pet I would like a litter from her.

Spaying is the right choice for mixed breed dogs. Five to ten *million* pets are euthanized in shelters nationwide each year. Since each female dog is capable of having up to twelve or more puppies with each mating, this problem can only be resolved through spaying and neutering programs. Don't worry; with the abundance of homeless pets needing good homes, you'll have no difficulty adopting a pet with the same wonderful qualities when you decide to add to your family.

I realize that, but she has turned out to be so special that I would really like a puppy from her.

Dogs, like people, vary. No matter how careful you are in selection of mate, which with a mixed breed dog can be difficult enough, there is still no guarantee that you will achieve the puppy of your dreams. Is it really worth risking up to eleven other lives?

Is it possible to get my mixed breed female dog mated, short of letting her run with any dog in the local park?

Owners of pedigree studs will sometimes allow mating with a non-purebred dog. This is particularly useful if you want to concentrate on a particular character or conformation.

For example, if you have a mixed Boxer female, it may be possible to mate her with a pure-breed Boxer stud. Inquire at your local dog club or breed society or contact the secretary of the appropriate breed club whose details are available from the American and Canadian Kennel Clubs.

I have considered this and I am a member of a local training club and there are lots of people who would like a puppy.

That is fine. Unfortunately, there is a great difference between initial enthusiasm and final acceptance of the puppy. Many people change their mind in the period between birth and weaning and this is the primary reason there are so many puppies in animal shelters everywhere.

Whatever you decide to do, please feel free to discuss your decision with our staff. If you do decide to breed, we have literature to prepare you for the process. It is best to be prepared to avoid emergency procedures and unnecessary c-sections.