

## KENNEL MANAGEMENT: continued



### *Breeding*

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*No breeding should be undertaken without the correct motive, adequate knowledge and facilities to care for the bitch in whelp and later her puppies - and most importantly - suitable stock.*

*So what constitutes "suitable stock"? Not every Bullmastiff used in breeding programmes may be suitable for some or other reason.*

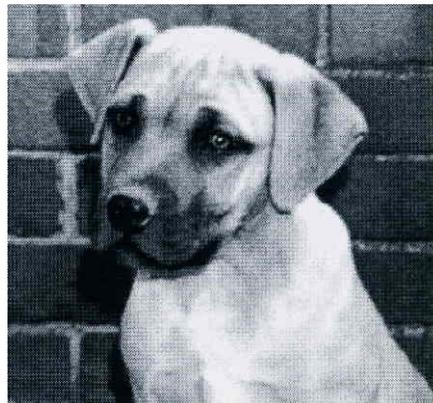
*Here are some guidelines as to what constitutes suitable stock:*

*First and foremost the breeding stock should be true to type. In other words both the sire and the dam should look like a Bullmastiff should - and be purebred. That is the phenotype of the dog. This may seem rather stupid to some people but take a good look at the two dogs pictured below. Both were sold as "Bullmastiffs" to unsuspecting owners. The one is even registered with KUSA, but not even by the greatest stretch of one's imagination can they be called true phenotype Bullmastiffs.*



*KUSA Registered Bullmastiff*

*#BJ009012*



*SA Dog Breeders Association*

*The genotype or pedigree is the next important issue. The Kennel Union of Southern Africa is our registering body, but they have no way of knowing if a breeder is unethical or uninformed as may have been the case with # BJ009012. Even the recently instituted KUSA Accredited Breeders Scheme is not monitored and open to unscrupulous breeders.*

*Here is where the integrity and knowledge of the breeder is of cardinal importance.*

*The only reason for breeding a litter should be the desire to improve the breed. Unfortunately this is not always the case and here in South Africa we have our share of 'breeders' who pay off their debt in pure Bullmastiff blood - which is very sad.*



*A natural mating without any human interference*

*Apart from the above mentioned requirements there should also be good health (condition) intelligence (temperament) and a working ability (soundness)*

*How many of our Bullmastiffs today can truly do what they were originally bred for. There are some beautiful dogs gracing the portals of many homes and being shown in the Breed show ring, but in some cases it is very clear that they would have difficulty functioning in the field because of faults such as poor muscle tone from a sedentary way of life, bad bites and temperaments, splayed feet, long nails and such. Breeders should be more aware of these things and adjust their breeding and management programmes accordingly. Just because a dog is a big winner it is not necessarily suitable for breeding.*

*A point to remember here is that any mediocre brood bitch or stud dog- that is any dog that does not fulfil all five of the required characteristics mentioned above - is highly likely to pass on his or her mediocrity to the offspring, and a*

*kennel based on this type of breeding will not survive for long. The old adage “the proof of the pudding is in the eating” is applicable here in every way.*

*Prior to mating both the dog and bitch should have radiographs done to determine the state of the hips and elbows. The Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria (Onderstepoort) are available to grade and certify these x-rays as are some seven affiliated scrutineers that are registered with the SAVA.*

*An eye clearance certificate for hereditary eye disease is also recommended, as is a valid immunization card.*

*Veterinary health checks can be done at the request of the owners of both sire and dam should there be a cause for concern e.g. transmitted viral tumour or herpes.*

*The actual mating should be witnessed, and in fact KUSA has this as a requisite on the formal application for the puppies’ registration. The mating should also be controlled and always done on an empty stomach.*



*A controlled mating which prevents any injury to sire or dam*

*A period of rest for both dogs after mating will do them no harm and a check of the stud dog after mating is essential.*

*All breeders have their own timings with regard to mating and this can be anything from a once off to two, three or four consecutive matings. Obviously no other male should have access to the bitch once she has been mated to the selected stud.*

*Some breeders mate their bitches every time they are in season using the rationale that they would have mated ‘in the wilds in any case’. This is not, in my opinion, a healthy breeding practice as we have progressed way beyond ‘the wilds’. There is no scientific evidence that it is harmful though.*

*Eighteen months of age or the third oestrus is a good time to begin breeding a suitable bitch and thereafter if desired a litter annually. Bitches over seven years of age should first get a veterinary clearance before mating.*

*Artificial Insemination in its multiple forms which has become very popular with breeders is another option and will be dealt with at a later stage.*

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***A quality pup of one year with a good head, ear set, crown line & masking***