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Know the Facts BEFORE Breeding Your Dog

We think it is extremely important to learn the facts and possible consequences in advance if you are contemplating breeding your dog. In today's overcrowded world, we, the wardens of our domestic pets, must make responsible decisions for them and for ourselves. The following points should be reviewed carefully.

QUALITY: AKC registration is not an indication of quality. Most dogs, even purebred with papers, should not be bred. Many dogs, though wonderful pets, have defects of structure, personality, or health that should not be perpetuated. Animals used for breeding should be proven free of these defects BEFORE starting on a reproductive career. Breeding should only be done with a goal of IMPROVEMENT -- an honest attempt to create puppies better than their parents. Ignorance is no excuse - once you have created a life, you can't take it back, even if blind, crippled, epileptic, or a canine psychopath!

COST: Dog breeding is NOT a money-making proposition, if done correctly. Health care and shots, diagnosis of problems and proof of quality, extra food, adequate facilities, stud fees, advertising, ect., are all costly and must be paid BEFORE the pups can be sold. An unexpected cesarean or emergency intensive care for a sick pup will make a break even litter become a big liability. And this is IF you can sell the pups.

SALES: First time breeders have no reputation and no referrals to help them find buyers. Previous promises of "I want a dog just like yours" evaporate. Consider the time and expense of caring for pups that may not sell until four months, eight months, or more! What would you do if your pups DID NOT SELL? Send them to the pound? Dump them in the country? Sell them cheap to a dog broker who may resell them to labs or other unsavory buyers? Veteran breeders with good reputations often don't consider a breeding unless they have cash deposits in advance for an average-sized litter.

JOY OF BIRTH: If your doing it for the children's education, remember the whelping may be at 3 a.m. or at the veterinarians office on the surgery table. Even if the kiddies are present, they may get a chance to see the birth of a monster or a mummy, or watch the bitch scream and bite you as you attempt to deliver a pup that is half out and too large. Some bitches are not natural mothers and either ignore or savage their whelps. Bitches can have severe delivery problems or even die in whelp. Pups can be born dead or with gross deformities that require euthanasia. Of course there can be joy, but if you can't deal with the possibility of tragedy, don't start!

TIME: Veteran breeders of quality dogs state that they spend well over 130 hours of labor in raising an average litter. That is OVER TWO HOURS PER DAY, every day! The bitch CANNOT be left alone while whelping and only for short periods for the first few days after. Be prepared for days off work and sleepless nights. Even after delivery, mom needs extra care and feeding, and puppies need daily checking, weighing, and socialization. Later, grooming and training, and the whelping box needs lots of constant cleaning. More hours are spent doing paper work, pedigrees, and interviewing buyers. If you have any abnormal conditions, such as sick puppies, or a bitch who can't or won't care for her babes, count on double the time. If you can't provide the time, you will have either dead pups or poor ones that are bad tempered, antisocial, dirty, and/or sickly... hardly a buyers delight.

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITIES: It's midnight -- do you know where your puppies are? There are THREE AND A HALF MILLION unwanted dogs put to death in pounds in this country EVERY YEAR, with millions more dying homeless and unwanted through starvation, disease, automobiles, abuse, ect. Nearly a quarter of the

victims of this unspeakable tragedy are purebred dogs "with papers." Any breeder who creates a life is responsible for that life. Will you carefully screen potential buyers? Or will you just take the money and not worry if the puppy is chained in a junkyard all of it's life or runs in the street to be killed? Will you turn down sales to irresponsible owners? Or will you say "yes" and not think about the puppy that you held and loved now having a litter of mongrels every time she comes in heat, which fills the pounds with more statistics... your "grandpups"? Would you be prepared to take back a grown puppy if the owners can no longer care for it? Or can you live with the thought that the baby you helped bring into the world will be destroyed at the pound?