



Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2008

THE TAR HEEL BOXER CLUB OF GREATER RALEIGH

For the Betterment of our Breed

OFFICERS &
DIRECTORS
2007-2008

President
TONI GRENTHER
2565 Dobbersville Rd.
Mt. Olive, NC 28365
boxergal@wildblue.net

Vice President
HARRY SANDERFORD
6465 Applewhite Rd.
Wendell, NC 27591
919-366-0996
brindlefawnmamma@bellsouth.net

Treasurer
RICHARD PERSCHEL
408 Sandlwood Dr.
Durham, NC 27712
919-477-4381
ejrap@juno.com

Corres. Secretary
MALENA SMITHER
1512 Arthur Minnis Rd.
Hillsborough, NC 27278
919-929-4171
c-919-880-7142
dancerdog@aol.com

Reporting Secretary
JULIE INGLE
99 Gillespie Drive
Leicester, NC 28748
828-683-5910
kenlieboxers@charter.net

BETTER BREEDING

Pregnancy Diagnosis

by Jeff Grognet, DVM, published in the AKC Gazette, January 2008, Vol. 125, No. 1

You've committed considerable resources, both in time and money, to a breeding. You've selected the best female from your line, she's passed all the genetic tests, you've given her a superior diet, and you've bred her to a stud with impeccable traits. Was it all worth it? *Is she pregnant?*

Veterinarians use palpation, x-rays, ultrasound, and blood tests to detect pregnancy. The stage of pregnancy—determined by when the bitch was bred—determines which technique is the most appropriate. The choice also depends on how much you are willing to spend to get the answer.

Palpation of Puppies

The cheapest and most convenient way to diagnose a pregnancy is with palpation. After an egg is fertilized, its cells repeatedly divide, forming an embryo that ultimately becomes a fetus. Though a fetus develops slowly the membranes that surround and nourish it initially grow at an exponential rate—the fetus is quickly dwarfed by massive, fluid-filled sacs.

When a bitch is about three weeks pregnant, each fetus and its accompanying membranes is about the size of a table-tennis ball (in a 45 pound dog). After a month, they've grown to two inches in diameter. The fetuses line up in the uterus one behind the other like Ping-Pong balls enclosed in a narrow stocking. The best time to feel fetuses is when they are between three and four weeks old. After that time, the definitive ball shape disappears. The fetuses and their membranes are larger, but they no longer feel like discrete masses; the entire uterus becomes a floppy, indistinct lump. At this stage, pregnancy can be mistaken for fat, and a uterus containing pus (pyometra) can feel like a pregnant uterus.

DIRECTORS

CORINNA BOWERS (2YRS)

BETTY PERSCHEL (2YRS)

GASPAR OTERO (1YR)

SHERRYL SHULTZ (1 YR)

NEXT MEETING

FEBRUARY 10,2008

Board Meeting 1pm

General Meeting 1:30

ANNUAL AUCTION

Bring your stuff and

Chairs to sit on!!!

MEMBER NEWS

Toni Grenther is in her new house out in the country. She has retired from the Vet. School after a long stint in Animal Research, but still keeps in close touch with her friends.

Gaspar and Donna Otero are doing well—saw them at the Winston-Salem shows in December—although Gaspar's mother is still having some problems.

I sat with Sue Tolbert and her husband Doug at the Winston-Salem shows and Sue was facing surgery the following Monday. We all hope and pray she made it through ok.

Lois Buchanan just had a litter of beautiful babies. Haven't heard from her, so suspect she is up to her ears with taking care of new babies. Just heard- Lois lost her wonderful boy Stryker—he had not been doing well and the time came—so very sorry—he was indeed a wonderful boy.

cont. on page 5

If you want to try palpating puppies yourself, **BE GENTLE!** Repeated or harsh palpations during early pregnancy can cause fetal death. Though this effect is hard to measure, increased death rates were confirmed in a kennel of Shetland Sheepdogs in which the owners repeatedly palpated their bitches during early pregnancy.

The more relaxed a bitch is, the easier it is to feel her uterus. If her abdominal muscles are too tight, the practitioner's fingers won't be able to penetrate deep enough to feel the fetuses. It is also hard to palpate a bitch who is too fat. And if a bitch is carrying only one or two fetuses in the front of her abdomen, tucked high under her ribs, they can be missed completely during an abdominal palpation.

Once a bitch reaches the one month mark in her pregnancy, her uterus has enlarged to the point where other pregnancy detection tools are needed.

Radiographic Diagnosis

Up to 21 days post-fertilization, there are no signs on a radiograph (x-ray) that can suggest whether or not a bitch is pregnant. After this time, the uterus shows up as a fluid-filled organ, but the fetuses aren't visible because their bones are not yet calcified. It isn't until much later—43 to 46 days into the pregnancy—that the fetal skull and spine become visible. Many breeders wait 50 days or longer to take x-rays to ensure that if fetuses are present, they are detectable.

By doing a radiograph late in pregnancy, veterinarians not only can confirm pregnancy, they also can do an accurate puppy count. Most breeders want to know how many puppies a bitch is carrying so they'll be sure when whelping is over. To determine the number of puppies, it's best to count the heads and then do another count of the spines and see if the numbers match. If they aren't the same, you need to count again—or take another radiograph.

Does exposure to x-rays pose a threat to puppies? In a study of Beagles that were irradiated daily during pregnancy, the risk of cancer in the puppies did increase but no ill effects were noted in the bitches. Of course, the bitches and their pups were exposed to a very high dose of radiation compared to that associated with a single x-ray. Still, it is obviously wise to minimize the number of radiographs taken of a pregnant bitch.

Ultrasound Imaging

Ultrasound is a valuable tool because it allows diagnosis of pregnancy at a much earlier stage than any other method. It can detect a fetus as young as 17 days old. Ultrasound is also useful for assessing fetal viability—determining if fetuses are alive, and whether they are correctly formed. And ultrasound can differentiate between enlargement of the uterus from pregnancy and swelling from infection (pyometra).

Some veterinarians use ultrasound to count the number of fetuses in the uterus, but because the probe scans only one area of the abdomen at a time, it is easy for the operator to miss puppies or count them more than once. Only if the fetal number is low can ultrasound be used to accurately count fetuses.

Hormone Tests

The hormone progesterone is useful for determining the optimal time to breed a bitch and has been used to time an elective cesarean, but it has no value for diagnosing pregnancy in dogs. Progesterone levels are high during diestrus (false pregnancy) and only marginally higher in pregnancy. It is not possible to differentiate the two states because the ranges overlap too much. But there is another hormone, called relaxin, that is released from placental tissue and is present only during pregnancy. A blood test for relaxin level can be used to confirm pregnancy, but the bitch must be more than 21 days pregnant. If a relaxin test is done too early, it can produce a false negative result.

Invalid results occur more commonly with small litters. In one study, 30 percent of tests were wrong when bitches with litters of four or fewer were tested at 25 days of pregnancy. Testing at 30 days boosted accuracy to 75 percent. Because of this constraint, it may be worthwhile to retest “negative” bitches at 35 days to confirm earlier negative results.

Estrogen levels are reportedly higher in pregnant bitches 21 days after mating compared to non-pregnant dogs. Though this test is not currently available, a urine estrogen test may be developed in the future.

While hormone tests can diagnose pregnancy, they can't determine the number of pups. Yet the number of pups may help determine the length of the pregnancy. The average pregnancy in bitches is 64 days, but it can range from as little as 57 days to as long as 68 days. Whelping is initiated by steroid hormones that are released by puppies in the uterus. A large litter of pups will produce and release more steroids than a small number, so a bitch who is carrying a large litter is stimulated to whelp earlier than one with a small litter. That's another reason to favor a technique that will help you determine the number of puppies to come

Jeff Grognet is a veterinarian in British Columbia, Canada, and the nutrition columnist for “AKC Family Dog” magazine...reprinted with permission from AKC...ed.

■■■■■■■■■■

OPPORTUNITY TO HELP WITH RESEARCH

I received in the mail a letter from Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. They are doing a study to understand growth control in purebred dogs. This particular laboratory hunts for genes that make dogs big or little and those that make dogs susceptible to cancer. Because dogs vary enormously in size and cancer susceptibility, they believe dogs can ultimately contribute to both human and canine medicine. They asked if we would be willing to donate blood samples from our purebred dogs to assist in their work. If so, they will send a consent form, instructions and empty vials in a convenient mailer. Most people ask their veterinarian to collect the blood during a routine visit. They also ask for a set of body measurements of each dog and will send a measuring tape, illustrated instructions, and brief health survey. If any members are interested in participating in this study, contact: Nathen Sutter, PhD., Assist. Professor, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, e-mail: sutterlab@cornell.edu - M. Smither, Ed.

■■■■■■■■

MEMBER NEWS (CONT.)

News from Jean Marie Burkhamer---she has a new baby girl cutie pie almost 6 mos old—out of her lovely boy “Bunker”—this girl is Westhaven ‘N Nivek’s Grateful Heart, “Izzie”—we will be seeing her soon around the showring!!!

■■■■■■■■

TRIBUTE TO A BOXER

from a friend of my sister in Texas who had a remarkable Boxer girl whom she recently lost at 5 ½ years to cancer - Editor

CHIQUITA

Chiquita was born July 4th, 2002, and WOW what a firecracker that little girl turned out to be! (I use to tell her that all the firecrackers and celebrations on her birthday were ALL for her!)

She sparkled her way into many people hearts with her quirky personality of wiggles and nubby tail wags. She bought smiles to the young and old where ever we went with her.

She was a celebrity of sorts, or so you would think, for when we took her to First Monday Trades Day when she was a pup we would be stopped constantly by passerby's wanting to pet her and a few even took her picture. I believe that Chiquite got more pets and pics from strangers than most movie star dogs. And it wasn't a one time thing, for this was a constant thing wherever we went with her. Once we were followed and were stopped by some people who just HAD to take her picture, who saw her from a garage sale we just left.

Whenever we went to Lowe's she would start wiggling for she knew that she would be greeted by many workers there along with shoppers. She rode in the shopping basket and as I'm pushing her around she would be wiggling as people passed by, so, of course, they had to stop and pet her!

She always had plenty of licks and wiggles of her nubby tail for everyone! But, her favorite place was Copeland Vet. When I stopped there she would look up from her slumbering nap, look around and start wiggling frantically and couldn't wait to get out of the truck to go inside and greet her "other family"! She loved ALL all of the workers there. Of course she loved the cookies. She would wait until we got home to eat them. And what was so cute about that is that I would give her a cookie while in the truck. She would drop it on the seat next to her and when we got home she would pick it up and take it inside the house and eat it then! Cracked me up every time! OF COURSE, there were times she "lost" her cookie in the jumble of my stuff on her side and she would look frantically for her cookie and wouldn't leave the truck until she found it.

At home she was just as comical and fun to be around. Every morning she woke up happy with wags. If she could break out in a song she would be singing "Oh what a beautiful morning (from the musical Oklahoma!) There were mornings that I would be grumpy and she would come into the computer room and be wagging saying.."Good Morning" with a smile and wiggling that nubby tail of hers and that would make me smile and be in a better mood. (Of course, there were mornings that I would be up and would go into the bedroom to find her still in bed! She was such a Princess!) She would look at me with one eye and I guess she got embarrassed that I caught her still in bed for she would start snorting and doodlebugging across the bed and then leap off, shake herself, and trot out the door wagging with not a care in the world!

She was such a clown around here. But, a moment that I'll never forget was when I had company over to watch a movie with me. I made her get in "her chair" in the living room and while we were sitting on the couch, I looked over at her for I heard her snorting and rutting about and I started cracking up with laughter...for here she was upside down doing a headstand against the back of the chair with her big flapping jaws of grin on her face with her butt in the air wiggling trying her BEST to get us to look at her! She reminded me so much of a class clown when the teacher wanted everybody quiet but that one person stood out doing silly things to make the class laugh....and that was her!

She was also a good referee when the cats would try to start a fight with each other. She would run over and get between them and nudge them away from each other. She NEVER bit, but she got the point across. She prevented numerous fights from happening.

She did have her moments though, when she did get in trouble and I made her go to her chair she would sit there and "huff"...LOUDLY! and give me this distressed look of "how dare I get on to her!" She also had this way of "pouting" by laying down and putting her nose between her front paws. The "huff's" and "pouts" would only last a short time for I would give in way too easily and too fast for she did have me and Jerrett wrapped around her paw!

Although I could go on and on with zany stories of her, but I don't think there would be enough paper in this world for me to get it all written down. Chiquita was an angel sent from above. She helped me through a very sad depression. After my mom died from cancer, we got Chiquita 6 months later. She got me to laugh and live life again. She was like a "gift box" sent from heaven.

Although Chiquita had a short life cut off by cancer, she packed such a POWERFUL PUNCH to my heart and to many others, maybe that is why they are called, Boxers. And up to the very end, that nubby tail of hers was still wagging.

In loving memory of our little girl whom we'll cherish her memory forever...

CHIQUITA SWEETP POSEY
July 4, 2002-December 28, 2007

■■■■■■■

NEXT MEETING

FEBRUARY 10, 2008

**BOARD MEETING & GENERAL MEETING & AUCTION!!!!
BOARD MEETING 1 PM**

BRING YOUR CHAIRS TO SIT UPON AND YOUR STUFF TO AUCTION OFF!!!

■■■■■■■

MEMBERS!!!

*PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO E-MAIL DANCERDOG@AOL WITH ANY NEWS YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP---
THANKS, EDITOR*