

Spring is in the Air

... your Toller will be 2 soon and you're considering the idea of producing a litter.



Well, here is some information you should know ... about breeding.

- ✗ it is time consuming, expensive and occasionally heartbreaking.
- ✗ you should breed to improve the breed, produce a better dog - not to make money; to show kids the marvels of reproduction and birth; or to get another Toller just like the one you have.
- ✗ you should breed to preserve and enhance those characteristics that make the Toller unique.
- ✗ you should take a step back and honestly evaluate the good and bad points of your Toller before going further with the idea of breeding.

What to consider with a female:

1. Why do you want to breed your female?
2. Do you have the financial resources to give the bitch good medical care before, during and after pregnancy (*especially if problems occur*)?
3. Do you have the financial resources to give the puppies good medical attention while they are developing?
4. Do you have an out-of-the way place where she can have the litter? - a place where growing pups can live?
5. Do you have the time needed to take care of the mother and growing pups?
6. Do you have a list of potential buyers?
7. Can you take care of puppies that are not sold at 8 weeks; 10 weeks; or longer?
8. Are you able to take back an older dog from your litter if there are problems (medical, a change in the owners life, or from an owner that can't handle the dog) a year or more down the road?
9. Will you be able to answer all those questions (temperament, training or health) that new puppy owners ask?

What to consider with a male:

1. Why do you want to put your male at stud?
2. Do you know what health tests you should have done on your male prior to breeding?
3. Do you have a Stud Contract?
4. Do you have knowledge of what is required for breeding 2 dogs?
5. Do you know what problems can arise before, during or after a breeding?
6. Do you have space, time and finances available to house and take care of the female during the breeding period (sometimes several weeks)?
7. Is an airport close to you? - if not, can you take time off of work to drive to the airport to pick up an arriving female?
8. Do you know about any possible health concerns that might be in your males line?
9. Have you considered frozen or fresh chilled shipping of semen? Does your vet do this?
10. Do you understand the changes that will occur in your male during and after breeding?

Once you have taken all the above under consideration and are able to answer the questions in a positive nature and understand what is involved and commitment of breeding a litter, you can go to the next step: **learning about the Toller breed and "your" dog.**

- * Study the NSDTR Club (USA)'s official breed standard AND understand what it says. If you don't, ask questions.
- * Get a copy of the breed video and view it several times.

Both of these actions should be the starting place for any breeder and will give you a better understanding of the "perfect" Toller specimen.

- Attend dog shows & Toller events (especially Annual Meetings & National Specialties).
- Watch the dogs in action and learn the pedigrees of those Tollers you like.
- Ask questions of exhibitors and breeders of Tollers.
- **Talk with the breeder of "your" Toller.** Learn the history of your Toller's parents / siblings - for health, structure and temperament. Get suggestions / recommendations from your breeder.
- Examine your dog carefully. Recognize its flaws. If you decide to continue, look for a mate that will eliminate or balance those flaws.
- When selecting breeding partners - choose ones that "compliment" one another. Choose a Stud Dog whose lines will strengthen her weaknesses and emphasize her good qualities. Breeding "big to small" to get medium most times does not work.

The best way to get an objective opinion of your dog is to test it against other Tollers. Enter Toller supported entries or regional events to determine how your dog measures up in the judges mind and/or against other Tollers.

The next step for both males and females entering the breeding pool is the condition of the dog ~ both physically and mentally.

Good puppies start long before breeding ever takes place. Both parents need long-term care (conditioning) to produce the best offspring. This involves regular veterinary care, screening for genetic problems, pre-breeding tests, regular exercise and good nutrition. Bitches should not be overweight and have good muscle tone before breeding. Both Stud and Bitch owners need to find out as much about the other dog and it's line regarding health issues before the final selection is made. **"Ask questions!"** Stud owners, remember your kennel name will be on the puppies registration papers therefore responsibility for a sound litter also falls on your shoulders.

✘ Clear up paperwork that would keep the litter from being registered (i.e. Limited Registration or contract stipulations between yourself and the breeder).

✘ Do pre-breeding tests:

1. Hips OFA'd (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals);
2. Eyes examined by a Veterinary Ophthalmologist for signs of eye diseases and then CERF (results registered with Perdue University);
3. OptiGen's PRA Pattern Test;
4. Heart (by a Cardiologist) and Thyroid (full blood panel and sent to Michigan University) testing to certify dog(s) clear of problems.

Copies of the certification that these test have been done and recorded should be exchanged between all parties involved prior to the breeding and passed on with the pups when sold.

✘ Contact the National Club's Breeder Directory service to learn their Rules and Regulations to become a member and list the litter or stud services prior to breeding.

✘ Brucellosis (an infectious bacterial disease that can cause sterility or spontaneous abortion in affected dogs) test should be done on both female and male partners.

✘ General health check up of the female prior to shipping or breeding is greatly recommended to make sure no vaginal infections are present and if it is a first time breeding for her that there are no obstructions to hinder actual breeding.

The final element that owners of both Brood Bitch and Stud Dog must take into consideration is **"Temperament"**. This is a hereditary trait in dogs. The inheritance factors of temperament are complex. You should never consider breeding a dog with a questionable temperament such as extraordinary shyness, strong dominance or aggressive behavior to others (dogs & humans) whether due to food or fear. You will impose a major disservice on both humans and future generations of Tollers if you produce another generation of skittish or bad-tempered Tollers.

Finally ~ you have performed all the necessary health checks and genetic screening. NOW, take the time to research different males **"well before she goes into season!"** Last minute selections of the perfect mate for your bitch can back fire if the male you selected is not available due to prior commitments OR in training for an event. Once an agreement has been made between owners - it's time to work out the details of the mating ... a written contract with the owner of the Stud Dog before the breeding takes place is a must. Handshakes and "understandings" can lead to misunderstandings - do NOT assume. Disputes between individuals in regard to breeding arrangements can be lengthy without a written, signed contract. This agreement should clearly state all obligations and circumstances of the breeding; deal with stud fees, who gets what pick of a puppy is involved and where and when the breeding will take place. **The contract must be signed by both parties before the breeding takes place.**

The Results: