

BREEDING GREAT DANES

Breeding Great Danes is not something one should undertake lightly. Below is an article that will, hopefully, cause you to give a lot of thought to this decision. Should you then decide that you wish to go ahead and breed, I've further included information and links on how to go about it.

SHOULD YOU BREED YOUR DOG OR BITCH?

by Jill Swedlow

THESE ARE NOT GOOD REASONS TO BREED

1. So the kids can see the miracle of birth. Children can learn about birth from books and videos. This does not justify causing a litter of perhaps 10 puppies to come into the world in need of loving homes. Take a trip to the local animal shelter and see the sad results of many litters born for just this misguided reason.

2. She should have one litter before she is spayed/he is altered. **WRONG!** There is absolutely NO medical, physical or emotional reason that a dog or bitch needs to reproduce itself except to continue the species. In the case of a pet quality dog (or even some show dogs) this does not apply.

3. You want to recoup your investment. Ha! Especially in the case of breeding Great Danes, this reason makes those of us who breed them laugh! I doubt there are many breeds more expensive to breed than Great Danes. Even if you don't count the expense of showing your bitch and just start with the medical health screenings, it's expensive. All Danes that are even being considered for breeding should, at the very least, have their hips x-rayed to rule out hip dysplasia. More and more breeders are now screening for cataracts, Von Willibrands Disease (VWD), normal thyroid and even elbow dysplasia. These will probably cost somewhere around \$350.00. Routine check for any uterine or

vaginal infections will help ensure a live litter. Add \$100.00. Stud fee to a good quality stud who is right for your bitch and has, himself, passed all the health screenings will run about \$700.00. Now we're at \$1150.00. If a C-section becomes necessary, add at least \$350.00 and probably more. Assuming there's no need for a section (there rarely is in Danes), you now have a nice healthy litter of, oh, say 8 puppies. At the age of 6-7 weeks you're likely going through at least 50 lbs. of dog food a week. Add in the first vaccines (likely \$20 each at your vets, less if you give your own), that's about another \$160.00. Next it's time to crop! Oh joy! Add \$250.00 per puppy! AND, if you've bred a bitch and have no market for her pups, chances are you may end up supporting several of these pups until they're 4 or 5 months old or older! Do you have any idea how expensive this is getting? And if you have no ready market for your pups, you cannot get the \$1200.00 that is about average for a show potential puppy from top show stock. You'll be lucky to get 2 or 3 hundred dollars a puppy. Still think you're going to recoup your investment? Better stick with an altered pet!

4. She's just so nice all my friends want one of her babies and I want one just like her. I refer you to number 3 above. Those friends who just have to have one of her pups have a strange way of back peddling when the time comes to actually purchase the puppy. And there's no guarantee that you'll have a puppy even remotely like your dog or bitCh. So is it worth all the expense to take the chance? It's a lot cheaper to just go to a reputable breeder and buy another dog!

5. She's a champion! She deserves to be bred! Bull Feathers! True, a championship is likely a good indication that she is of top quality breeding stock and many champions are of breeding quality. However I know of some really lovely champions that should NEVER be bred because of health problems or temperament problems or many of those problems in their pedigrees. If a dog isn't sound in mind and health, it should not be bred. Conversely I know of dogs who couldn't finish their championships due to conformation faults but who are among the best

producers! I even owned one! The point here is this, the whole dog along with it's pedigree and health screenings must be considered before making the decision to breed or not to breed.

GOOD REASONS TO BREED YOUR DANE BITCH

- 1.** Your bitch has a good pedigree with many champions who are also sound of mind, body, health and longevity. She has tested clear of all indigenous inherited problems and is herself sound of mind, body and health. She has correct conformation with no major or disqualifying faults and is outstanding in at least a couple of conformation traits.
- 2.** You wish to improve the breed and select a stud that is her equal or better in all of the above listed traits and who does not share any common faults with your bitch.
- 3.** You have a better than good chance to place each pup in the home that is right for it.
- 4.** You have the funds to properly care for and raise the litter and to handle any unforeseen emergencies that may arise.
- 5.** You have the facilities and finances to properly house and care for a bitch and a large litter even if the puppies are still residents at 6 months of age.
- 6.** You have the knowledge and integrity to properly evaluate your litter and will stand behind every sale with some type of health and temperament guarantee.
- 7.** You are not only willing, but insist in writing in the contract, that if, for any reason the pup cannot be kept (at whatever age) you will take it back or assist in finding the right home.

If you can honestly say that all the above is true,
then read on. We need breeders like you.

BREEDING A MALE

It takes two to tango and males are as responsible for litters as are the bitches. Pet male Danes should be neutered. Period! This is an issue that more commonly is a problem for a male human owner than us ladies! Many men have this **thing** which causes them to think that their dog will be somehow **less macho** if he's been neutered. For some reason that I do not understand (probably because I'm a woman) this is a real problem for them. I'm here to tell you, gentlemen, that truly this IS YOUR PROBLEM, not your dog's!

First, as for a pet bitch, a pet male should not be bred and for all the same reasons. If he is not to be bred, he should be altered. He should be altered to reduce the chance for testicular or prostate cancer. He should be altered to prevent him from being upset and stressed if a neighborhood bitch is in season. A male will smell this from far away! He should be altered so that he will never be responsible for a litter when someone is careless, leaves the door open and he's off to mate with that in season bitch! HE won't care that he's been altered, he'll be much happier and more content without the stress of overactive hormones that should never be satisfied.

WHEN SHOULD A MALE BE BRED?

1. When he is superior in conformation, temperament and health to most of the males in his breed. Whether this fact is established by showing him to his championship or by having him evaluated by others knowledgeable in the breed is of no consequence.

2. When he has passed all the health screenings for the bitch mentioned above.
3. When you've decided if you can live with a male who, once he's been used at stud, may suddenly forget his housebreaking lessons and start marking the sofa with urine.
4. When you are knowledgeable enough about pedigrees, conformation, health and temperament to know if the bitch being presented to him is a good match, or have a knowledgeable mentor who does.
5. When you have the fortitude and tact to turn down a bitch if you don't feel it would be a good breeding or if you don't feel she's of breeding quality.
6. When you could sincerely suggest a stud whom you feel would be a better match for a bitch who is brought to your dog.