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Stud Dog Guidance

Introduction: Owning a stud dog is a very responsible position to be in and you should be wholly committed to the health of your dog and the Boxer Breed. Being aware of the bigger picture including the **breed standard, their pedigree breeding, temperament and the health status** of any bitches that may be used with your dog and how well matched with regards to the above they are.

*Breeding from KC unregistered animals and white boxers is not supported by breed Council.
(In brief this is to ensure quality and health in the breed)*

Always accepting of the FACT that whatever the outcome of the litter it is the Dog AND the Bitch that are responsible (we currently have few health tests that are evidenced well and insufficient DNA information to be any clearer) and it is the bitch owner's responsibility to look after the puppies and ensure they are homed responsibly. The use of a stud dog contract and puppy sales contracts are strongly recommended and are designed to protect YOU and the new puppy owners.

The aim of this document is to help support you in the above and provide you and new owners with strong information (agreed best practice) and to help ensure that everyone involved in the process is very aware of their role in it.

STUD DOG OWNERS

Before you pronounce your dog a "Stud Dog" you should be sure he is a good example of the breed standard and that you have tested him using the recommended and available tests for the breed...in Boxers, we do not have any imposed tests by either breed clubs or the Kennel Club as some other breeds do, but this does not mean that available tests should or can be ignored. Currently we have a heart testing scheme for our breed which has been tried and tested over the last 25/30 years and has reduced the number of boxers born and dying from Aortic Stenosis (AS). This scheme does not test for Cardiomyopathy and at present there is no scheme supported for this disease in the UK, beware of overseas schemes which may not be fully evidenced, there are a number of companies advertising tests which are not supported here in the UK and there will be a reason for that, money spent on schemes with which results have no bearing or support in the UK dog world

(Kennel Club or Breed Clubs) only serve for owners to feel/use if they have animals with symptoms and are under veterinary treatment – otherwise the value is very limited.

AGE: Dogs should be at least 1 year of age (The older the dog is the more opportunity you will have had to assess his health status and any signs of heart disease and JKD are likely to be seen before 3 years old) and should have been heart tested by a recognised cardiologist (this means their name should appear on the Cardiologist list of practitioners who have qualified and have gained suitable experience to be on that list) and the dogs heart score should be 0, 1, animals with scores 2 or above should NOT normally be considered for breeding. Heart tests should be completed after 1 year of age.

The combination score of the dog and bitch to be used should not exceed 2.

A full explanation of the heart scoring scheme and grading is explained on the Boxer Breed Council website, where you can also find confirmation of tested dogs scores. If the animal your searching for is not on the list then either it has not been tested or the score is above 2. This should be followed up and questions asked of the dog owner.

Always check the pedigree (ensure it is not too close to your own dogs (COI) and health status of all bitches proposed for mating. Discuss and assess owners' reasons for breeding, never feel pressured by anyone or rushed into making decisions, the choice is yours and if something does not feel right, it is possibly not. Sufficient time must be allowed in the planning for health tests results etc. Consult with local breed clubs (all contact details available on the Breed Councils website) and other breeders known to you to be sure that the proposal being put to you is genuine. Always check details for yourself on KC website checking ownership, COI, age and if there are any endorsements that may affect you or new puppy owners.

Link to Health Section of Boxer Breed Council Website :

<http://www.boxerbreedcouncil.co.uk/health.html>

THE BITCH OWNER

Equally as with the stud dog, you should not consider using any bitch to breed from if you have not considered the **breed standard, pedigree breeding, temperament and the health status** of your bitch. Bitches should also be heart tested at a year old, but ideally not bred from until more mature which can vary from animal to animal but nearer to 24 months old. However, it is advisable to wait until 3 years old in order to reduce the risk of JKD as if no symptoms of JKD have been observed before that age the risk is lower - then you as an owner have taken as much of the risk away as is possible at this stage. Be prepared to share your registration and health testing information with the stud dog owner. A bitch should not be bred from after 7 years of age and it is generally accepted that breeding on consecutive seasons should be avoided taking care that bitches can fully recover between litters.

A USG test is also highly recommended and any abnormal readings to be further investigated – again full details are available on the Breed Council website. Link to Boxer JKD section of the Boxer Breed Council Website : <http://www.boxerbreedcouncil.co.uk/jkd.html>

As the owner of the bitch, producer of a litter, please share some responsibility for the puppies for at least the few years of their life and wherever possible support owners for the duration of their puppy's lives, not financially unless there are any major issues but with guidance and support where needed. All puppies should have a health check by your vet before they leave you.

Responsible breeders really should keep track of the health status of all puppies produced by staying in touch with new owners and keeping health data. This will also help you with breeding decisions in the future.

BOTH parties need to be part of a contractual agreement usually produced by the stud dog owner, an example of which will follow. This needs to be fully understood, discussed and agreed by both parties to ensure that the financial cost, timing of payment and any breeding terms are very clear. The document needs to be signed by both parties and a physical copy kept by both parties – to ensure that you can produce a signed copy if needed.

There are many schools of thought around this process and the legality of it. It is our belief that a contract signed by both parties is always better than no contract at all should any issues arise. Do not be fooled into thinking that owners do not/will not take you to court and will not expect money back etc. etc. THEY DO.

The breeder you bought your dog/bitch from should be a helpful place to start the process of which and where to look for a suitable partner for the mating - your vet should also be consulted to be sure they believe that your animal is healthy enough to be part of a breeding program – *but just because your vet thinks you have a lovely dog this is not sufficient reason to use it!*

In Summary

Animals to be used for breeding are not machines to make money from they are important parts of a cycle of events to keep our beloved breed as healthy and happy as possible. They need lots of looking after before, during and after the event and bitch owners need to have considered all possibilities such as caesarean section, whelping facilities and the facilities available for the rearing of puppies inside and outside for at least 8 weeks and be sure that they have the TIME and RESOURCE to do this.

It is also important to give some thought to vetting potential owners, we all want to sell puppies to responsible people who will love and provide for them as we would, this is not as simple as it sounds. Always try and assess the reasons they are looking for a puppy, be aware that not all potential buyers have the facilities and time required - you should meet

them several times, call them at home, checking the information they have given, discuss their experience and their training plans for the puppy – first time owners need some additional support, but this does not make them unsuitable. Potential owners should come to you with information about themselves and the facilities they can offer a puppy, their working hours and how they see the puppy fitting into that routine, veterinary details local to them and with some experience or researched knowledge of dogs and the breed. They should also be prepared for you to visit their location if you so wish – their reaction to this suggestion is always very telling of their reality.

And finally.....should you have any real concerns and would like to discuss any of the above please contact Breed Council via information on the website and or the Health Committee and we will do our best to communicate and support you.

Boxer Breed Council Healthline: boxerhealth@yahoo.com