

## BREEDING AND WHELPING

BEFORE CONSIDERING BREEDING FROM YOUR DOG, PLEASE ENSURE THAT SHE IS FULLY VACCINATED AND WORMED; YOU WILL ALSO NEED TO PLAN TO WORM HER REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE PREGNANCY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE BREEDING FOR THE RIGHT REASONS, DO NOT BELIEVE THE OLD WIVES TALE THAT DOGS WILL “MISS OUT” ON SOMETHING IF THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED A LITTER. ONLY BREED IF YOU ARE SURE YOU WANT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LOOKING AFTER A PREGNANT DOG AND EVENTUALLY A LITTER OF UP TO TEN PUPS WHICH WILL ALL NEED GOOD HOMES.

BEFORE BREEDING A PEDIGREE DOG CHECK WITH YOUR VET ABOUT ANY BREEDING SCHEMES IN PLACE TO REDUCE THE RISKS OF HEREDITARY PROBLEMS IN THE PUPPIES. THERE ARE SCHEMES TO REDUCE THE CHANCES OF HIP AND ELBOW DYSPLASIA AND CONGENITAL EYE PROBLEMS. WHEN CHOOSING A FATHER CHECK HE HAS BEEN SCREENED FOR HEREDITARY DISEASES AND HAS A GOOD TEMPERAMENT.

BLOOD TESTS CAN BE USED TO HELP PREDICT THE OPTIMAL TIME FOR MATING, WHICH IS VERY USEFUL IF YOU HAVE TO TRAVEL TO THE STUD DOG. BLOOD TESTS ARE TYPICALLY STARTED 8 DAYS AFTER THE ONSET OF THE PRE-OESTRUS VULVAL BLEEDING AND MAY NEED TO BE REPEATED EVERY 48 HOURS.

YOU WILL NEED TO ARRANGE A QUIET AREA FOR THE DOG TO WHELP IN. PROVIDE BLANKETS AND A WHELPING BOX AND MAKE SURE SHE IS USED TO GOING INTO THE BOX AT LEAST A WEEK BEFORE HER DUE DATE.

### GESTATION

THIS LASTS 63 DAYS (+/- 7 DAYS) IN THE DOG IF CALCULATED FROM THE FIRST BREEDING TO BIRTH. WHELPING CAN BE PREDICTED FROM THE BREEDING DATE, BUT ALSO BY MONITORING THE DOG'S RECTAL TEMPERATURE. IN THE LAST 2 WEEKS OF PREGNANCY YOU CAN MONITOR HER TEMPERATURE 2-3 TIMES A DAY. WHEN RECTAL TEMPERATURE DROPS BY A DEGREE, WHELPING IS 6-18 HOURS AWAY.

### STAGES OF WHELPING

- 1. CERVICAL DILATION** THIS IS CHARACTERISED BY RESTLESSNESS, PANTING AND NESTING BEHAVIOUR AND USUALLY LASTS 6-12 HOURS.
- 2. DELIVERY OF PUPPIES** THERE MAY BE INTERMITTENT ACTIVE STRAINING FOR SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE THE FIRST PUP; HOWEVER, CONSTANT UNRELENTING STRAINING IS ABNORMAL. AFTER THE FIRST PUP MUM MAY REST FOR UP TO AN HOUR BETWEEN PUPS WITHOUT STRAINING.
- 3. DELIVERY OF PLACENTAS** EACH PUP HAS IT'S OWN PLACENTA WHICH IS USUALLY PASSED 5-15 MINUTES AFTER BIRTH WHICH THE MOTHER WILL OFTEN EAT. SHE WILL ALSO USUALLY REMOVE THE BIRTH MEMBRANES FROM THE PUPPIES, CLEAN THEM AND SEVER THE UMBILICAL CORDS. IF SHE DOESN'T REMOVE THE BIRTH MEMBRANES YOU MAY NEED TO HELP. THE MOTHER SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO CLEAN THE PUPPIES AND BOND WITH THEM.

### SIGNS OF BIRTHING PROBLEMS (WHEN TO CALL THE VET)

- ANY SIGNS OF ILLNESS IN FULL-TERM DOG. (NB CATS OFTEN GO OFF FOOD IN THE LAST 24 HOURS)
- KNOWN PREDISPOSITION E.G. PREVIOUS PELVIS FRACTURE, OR UNUSUAL BREED E.G. BULLDOG.
- MORE THAN 24 HOURS SINCE TEMPERATURE DROPPED.
- CONSANT, UNRELENTING, UNPRODUCTIVE STRAINING FOR 45-60 MINUTES.
- MORE THAN 3 HOURS STAGE 2 LABOUR BEFORE FIRST PUP BORN.
- MORE THAN 1 HOUR ACTIVE LABOUR BETWEEN PUPS.
- ANY UNUSUAL BLEEDING OR DIRTY VULVAL DISCHARGES FROM THE MOTHER.