

“I WANNA STUD MY DOG”

By Linda Hazen Lewin

“Hello, I got your name from (insert one: my vet, the Humane Society, a breeder referral service, the wall of the men’s room at Guido’s Bar-A-Go-Go) and (he, she, they, it) said you have Manchesters.”

“Yes, how may I help you?”

“I have a Manchester and I want to stud him.”

(Heavy sigh). “I get so many calls like this. I must forewarn you that studding a dog is very bloody and painful. Stud your jeans, if you must, or stud the dog’s collar but please don’t stud your dog.”

(Confused silence). “No, I mean I want to mate him....with a female....for puppies.” (Caller is now convinced he has somehow reached the state funny farm).

“O-h-h-h,” (as if in dawning realization), “you want to use your dog at stud.”

“Um, yeah.”

“Well, that’s a relief; I thought you were going to stud him!”

Semantics aside (and “studding” one’s dog is right up there with having one’s bitch “spaded”), most of us have received calls of this ilk from people who use the word “stud” as a verb and who have no more idea what is involved in the process than they do the proper usage of the word. These same kinds of people are the ones with bitches which they want to breed because having puppies will be “fun”. Calls from these people do not require anger or sarcasm but are cries in the wilderness for education. I’ve never actually handled one as in the sample above, but here we go with how you really would approach this problem:

The first thing to do is ask from where the dog was purchased. If from a recognized kennel, refer them to that breeder for help, or proceed to the next paragraph of this article if contact with that breeder is impossible. If from a pet store or a breeder unknown to you (as in the “backyard” variety), ask the person if they have ever had a breeder who actively shows their dogs evaluate the male in question. Also, has the caller ever been to a dog show or shown the dog? Invariably, the answer to these two questions will be “no”. From this point, the real education starts.

Most people with a male they want bred do not understand the protocol of breeding, i.e., that it is the bitch owner’s choice which male they wish to use on their bitch. I explain that it is the bitch’s owner who pays a stud fee and who subsequently has the work and anxiety of whelping and raising the litter. Therefore, people with nice bitches are going to carefully evaluate the available males and will only spend their money (and risk their bitch’s health in pregnancy) on the best male they can find. Logically, the best males are those who have proven their merit in competition. From this point, we get into the same kind of discussion as with people who want their bitch bred, i.e., what constitutes show/breeding quality and why a dog that is to reproduce should be of show quality.

After that, I get into the specific questions of mating dogs:

* Does this person realize that he or she is expected to house the bitch until she is bred, and that while she is in their house, their male will be a raving lunatic?

* Do they understand that all males do not automatically “know” how to breed, and do they, under such

circumstances, know how to assist?

* Do they even realize that they must be on hand, and not to just throw the two dogs out into the yard together and hope for the best?

* Do they understand that bitches do not necessarily stand quietly to be bred and that they may struggle, twist, bite their dog or bite them?

After they have answered “no” to all of the above (the usual situation), I put the fear of God into them by telling them my own personal horror story: A bitch came to me to be bred and permitted my male to penetrate and tie her. She then tore herself suddenly out of my husband’s hands and nearly ripped the dog’s penis off in the process. We had a midnight trip to the emergency clinic, pints of blood all over my house and my car, and a champion male who may well have never been usable again. The vet bill well exceeded the stud fee, and we owed the bitch’s owner a second breeding to boot because the bitch didn’t take! (We sent the check back instead). The trauma and pain to the dog and the mental anguish and expense to us taught us a hard lesson about breeding difficult bitches.....and we are experienced breeders!

The above discussion usually has the person at the other end of the phone babbling incoherently and most will say “I had no idea”, and will forget the whole thing. Those who are still not put off have the remaining problem of finding someone who wants to breed to their dog, which isn’t easy. I usually go on to say that using their dog at stud can cause the dog to adopt obnoxious behaviors including leg-lifting in the house and aggression towards other male dogs. Dogs don’t miss what they’ve never experienced; it can be much more trying on everyone to use a dog once than to just never use him at all. I then go into the issue of overpopulation, and strongly recommend that the person have their dog neutered.

If they continue to insist on “studding” their dog, I recommend a Ronco Studder and a mop.