

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ON BREEDING

Following are some quips and observations, from great folks and small, which apply to breeding animals of any kind. Many of the principles are the same, although the species may differ. Others of them are broader philosophies, which apply to many endeavors in life. I hope you enjoy them, think about them, and incorporate them into your thinking about your own breeding program.

A breeder is one who leaves the breed with more depth of quality than when he started. All others are but multipliers of the species. – Sir Robert Baker

You can get by with a lot if you're satisfied with mediocrity. – Glenn French, horse logger

Quality is never an accident...it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution. It represents the wise choice of many alternatives. – Will Foster

Form follows function. You can breed the fastest alligator in the world, but it still won't win the Kentucky Derby.

Success is the result of good judgment; good judgment is the result of experience; experience is the result of bad judgment.

Anybody can jump a motorcycle. The trouble begins when you try to land it. – Evel Kneivel

Keep a stocked toolbox. If your only tool is a hammer, everything soon starts to look like a nail.

Opinion is the lowest form of knowledge. – Plato

We need to learn to set our course by the stars, not by the lights of every passing ship. – General Omar Bradley

And, even if you are lucky enough to own "the breed Standard in the flesh", don't overdo it regarding breeding. As stated in the Bible, "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." – Proverbs 12:10

Excerpted from "THE ARABIANS OF THE CMK HERITAGE"
by Michael Bowling
as published in "Arabian Horse World" magazine

Note to the reader: where this article says "horse" or "horses", insert "dog" or "dogs". Mr. Bowling's thoughts apply equally appropriately to the breeding and improvement of both species.

"Some breeders have the 'eye' for combining horses and some don't, but even if two people are equally good at that, each will develop a personal preference – or, they did in the days when we had breeding programs (cf Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard*, "we had faces then"). The nature of biology is variation – there never was a time (nor will be) when all horses of any set were/are identical and beyond criticism (and note that those ideas are not the same anyway). We all prefer the better individuals of any line to the worse, but common sense should tell us we can never reduce any aspect of a breed to one individual, and still maintain that distinctive kind of horse. Preservation means recognizing that you either have a particular genetic entity, or you don't. It means breeding good individuals within a coherent biological reality."

TWENTY BASIC BREEDING PRINCIPLES

By Raymond H. Oppenheimer

There are a vast number of different breeding methods, some good, some bad. I should never presume to try to tell fanciers what is the right method because there is no such thing. Outstanding success can be achieved and has been achieved in a variety of different ways, so all I am going to do is to make some suggestions which I think helpful and to warn against certain pitfalls which trap too many of the unwary.

1. Don't make use of indiscriminate outcrosses. A judicious outcross can be of great value; an injudicious one can produce an aggregation of every imaginable fault in the breed.
2. Don't line breed just for the sake of line breeding. Line breeding with complementary types can bring great rewards; with unsuitable ones it will lead to immediate disaster.
3. Don't take advice from people who have always been unsuccessful breeders. If their opinions were worth having, they would have proved it by their success.
4. Don't believe the popular cliché about the brother or sister of the great champion being just as good to breed from. For every one that is, hundreds are not. It depends on the animal concerned.
5. Don't credit your own dogs with virtues they don't possess. Self-deceit is a stepping-stone to failure.
6. Don't breed from mediocrities; the absence of a fault does not in any way signify the presence of its corresponding virtue.
7. Don't try to line breed to two dogs at the same time; you will end by line breeding to neither.
8. Don't assess the worth of a stud dog by his inferior progeny. All stud dogs sire rubbish at times; what matters are how good their best efforts are.
9. Don't allow personal feelings to influence your choice of a stud dog. The right dog for your bitch is the right dog, whoever owns it.
10. Don't allow admiration of a stud dog to blind you to his faults. If you do, you will soon be the victim of auto-intoxication.
11. Don't mate together animals which share the same faults. You are asking for trouble if you do.
12. Don't forget that it is the whole dog that counts. If you forget one virtue while searching for another, you will pay for it.
13. Don't search for the perfect dog as a mate for your bitch. The perfect dog (or bitch) doesn't exist, never has and never will!
14. Don't be frightened of breeding from animals that have obvious faults, so long as they have compensating virtues. A lack of virtue is far the greatest fault of all.
15. Don't mate together non-complementary types. An ability to recognize type at a glance is a breeder's greatest gift; ask the successful breeders to explain this subject – there is no other way of learning. (I would define non-complementary types as ones which have the same faults and lack the same virtues).
16. Don't forget the necessity to preserve head quality. It will vanish like a dream if you do.
17. Don't forget that substance plus quality should be one of your aims. Any fool can breed one without the other!

18. Don't forget that a great head plus soundness should be one of your aims. Many people can never breed either!
19. Don't ever try to decry a great Bull Terrier. A thing of beauty is not only a joy forever but also a great pride and pleasure to all true lovers of the breed.
20. Don't be satisfied with anything but the best. The second best is never good enough.

Excerpted from "ON ART AND THE BREEDER"
By Judi, of Ansata Egyptian Arabians
as published in "Arabian Horse World" magazine

"Art consists of three specific elements – substance, form, and technique. These elements also apply to horses. A fine [purebred animal] is also composed of ideal *type* (e.g., breed identification – one knows what kind of breed it is by looking at it), *conformation* (e.g., overall harmony and correctness of parts when standing and moving), *substance* (e.g., proper physical mass in relation to adequate bone structure), and *quality* (e.g., the difference between 24-carat gold and 10-carat gold, or between a Vermeer and a modern painting of a toreador on velvet, even though it may be technically well executed)."

A FAIRY TALE

Once upon a time, four St. Bernard exhibitors were coming home from a big show. They were driving over a mountain pass in the middle of a violent snowstorm, when suddenly their car went into a skid, hit a guard rail, overturned, and went careening down a slope about a mile long.

No one had seen the accident, and while none of the exhibitors or their dogs were hurt, the exhibitors were trapped in the car. The temperature was well below zero and they would likely freeze to death before anyone found them so far from the road. Their only hope was their dogs, who could get out through the broken rear window.

Breeder #1, whose dogs were known for their exquisite type, got to his dog first and let him out. "Get help, Dieter!", the breeder commanded, and the dog waded out into the ever-deepening snow. He made it about a quarter of a mile up the slope before he was gasping for air as his nasal passages began to freeze because of his short muzzle. Another 200 yards and he was blind and hopelessly lost because of the snow piling up in his haws.

"He's not going to make it," remarked Breeder #2, who did very well in the show ring with his Saints, known for massive size, deep color, and perfect markings. He wiggled back to his dog and got him out of the car window, bidding him, "Get help, Johann!" Johann was a marvelous sight to behold, plowing through the belly-deep snow until, unfortunately, he collapsed about 300 yards out from hereditary hip dysplasia.

"Oh dear," snorted Breeder #3 smugly, who bred the very soundest-moving St. Bernards of the day. "Let me send Hans. At least he'll get up to the road!" Hans was squished through the window and sent on his way. Sure enough, the leggy, long-bodied, narrow-chested dog set off through the snow at a smart, ground-skimming trot. He made it halfway up the slope before he collapsed from exhaustion. His gait, as admired as it was in the show ring, was not suitable for negotiating deep snowdrifts. His long back weakened under the pressure from his driving hindquarters, and his incorrect coat had collected enough ice balls to further impede the dog's progress by collecting weight.

The last dog in the car belonged to Breeder #4. This breeder had bred for type, being careful not to shorten the muzzle so far as to obstruct the breathing or ruin the bite. He was proud of his dog's tight eyes. His dog had storybook markings, a richly-colored coat of proper texture, and was a very powerful, tall and muscular figure. He had an OFA number, of course, but also large bone, a strong high-set neck, well laid back shoulders, straight and strong forelegs and tight "cat" feet. He had good rib spring with ample room for the huge heart and lungs he possessed, perfect rear angulation, and strong hocks.

What a sight it was! With great pride and tears in his eyes, Breeder #4 watched his big, powerful, **perfect** dog drive through the snow like the Hospice dogs of old! Sure enough, the dog made it all the way up to the road with the greatest of ease. A passing state trooper saw the dog and stopped. As he got out of the car to see what the trouble was.....

....the dog attacked and killed him.

Which appropriately leads us to.....

A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. ***Specialization is for insects.*** -Robert A. Heinlein