

The Stud Dog: *The owner and breeder considerations*

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Introduction

The stud dog is a very important part of the breeding process. He is not just the sire of a litter of puppies, but rather is the producer of a legacy for the breed. He adds 50% of the gene pool to the prospective litter. Much thought should go into choosing the right stud dog for a prospective breeding. The breed is preserved by collectively gathering the genes to promote correct type, conformation, coat, temperament and health. Bataglia (1986) suggests stud dog criteria are (1) his look or *phenotype*, (2) the pedigree and (3) the progeny.

The stud dog represents a family of dogs in a breeding. Researching the families of the stud dog is an essential part of the breeding process. Look at his dam and sire and consider traits passed to the stud dog. Also, delve deeper into his pedigree to look at the grand-sire and grand-dam. What traits are being passed? Is the stud dog linebred, inbred or outcrossed. Each of these types of breedings produce different genetic results. Knowing and understanding dominant and recessive genes is a must. And remember, not all traits can be fixed in one generation. While the phenotype (the general appearance) of a stud dog is important, the genotype (genetic make-up of the dog) is what is passed on in a prospective breeding.

Pedigree Resource

The *Standard Schnauzer Club of America Source Books* provide a wealth of information regarding pedigrees. Hall of Fame and Leading Producers (stud dogs) are proven to be consistent in meeting the criteria of the breed standard. The Source Books offer many pedigrees that can be used to trace families of standard schnauzers. It is important as a Historical reference because many of the dogs listed are available to breed to. SSCA Source Books should be owned by every prospective stud dog owner/breeder. Source book I (Historical look at standard schnauzers), Source Book III – VII contain valuable information on pedigrees, *Hall of Fame* and *Leading producers*. Available at www.standardardschnauzer.org

Thinking About a Stud Dog

The big winner at any given time is not the best dog for every bitch. Remember to breed to a DOG (and what's behind him), not a show record or an ad campaign.

Over-use of one popular stud dog restricts genetic diversity of the breed's overall gene pool. Consider the many other good dogs out there that are not being used widely and bring some of their genetics forward another generation.

When you see a dog you admire, consider breeding to the sire of that dog (after all, that is what produced the good dog you like!), or even a brother of the dam. Look for multiple dogs you admire that have the traits needed for your breeding plans and see if those dogs share a common sire or are otherwise related. A dog or family consistently producing the traits you seek to add is more likely to give you what you are looking for than a single great dog that is different from the rest of his family.

Frozen semen does give the opportunity to go "back in time" and bring some traits forward to a new generation, an option not possible on the bitch side of the breeding equation. Some traits that may have been lost or compromised over several generations may be able to be retrieved with careful use of frozen semen from dogs that may be long gone.

Evaluate the Stud Dog

Can you objectively evaluate the stud dog and his pedigree? Compared to the official breed standard: what are his strengths and weaknesses? There is no perfect dog. Identify traits that need to be improved as well as the traits you want to preserve.

Stud Dog Health at the Top of the List.

- a. How far into the pedigree can you trace health/structural issues that concern you?
- b. Has all SSCA required testing been completed on the stud dog?
- c. What testing has been done on the siblings of the stud dog? (www.ofa.org provides health testing information and a vertical pedigree of testing results.)
- d. Health, temperament, size, structure, coat quality?
- e. Testing should be done before freezing semen on a stud dog.
-Testing can be done on frozen semen for Dilated Cardiomyopathy and DNA

SSCA REQUIRED Health Screening

- a. Hips clear of dysplasia
- b. Eyes certified against disease,
- c. Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM)
- d. Do you understand DCM Normal, DCM Carrier and DCM Affected?
DCM Normal: Has two normal copies of the gene and can only pass a normal copy to a prospective offspring.
DCM Carrier: Has one normal copy and one mutated copy of the gene. This dog will not have the disease but can pass either a normal copy or a mutated copy to prospective offspring. To avoid breeding an affected puppy this dog must be bred to a DCM Normal mate.
DCM Affected: has two mutated copies of the gene and is destined to develop clinical dilated cardiomyopathy disease.
- e. The breeder is issued a Certified Health Information Center Number (CHIC #) for required testing. “For potential puppy buyers, the CHIC certification is a good indicator the breeder responsibly factors good health into their selection criteria” (www.ofa.org).
For available health clinics go to www.ofa.org, click Health clinics in the header

SSCA/OFA recommended, but OPTIONAL Health Screening

- Autoimmune Thyroiditis
- Cardiac evaluation
 1. Congenital cardiac exam by cardiologist
 2. Advanced cardiac exam by cardiologist
 3. Basic cardiac exam by cardiologist
- DNA Bank for future testing and research

Pedigrees: Can you read the stud dog’s pedigree and determine if he is line-bred, in-bred or out-crossed?

- Can you define each breeding method and know the genetic implications? (Orlandi, 2004).
- Do you know the history of the grand-dam and grand-sire and what he/she has produced? Use the *SSCA Source Books* to follow the family.
- The stud dog is three dimensional: He represents a family of dogs: not just one dog.
- What is the health history, temperament, height, conformation qualities of “the family” he represents?

What can a stud dog offer to a breeding?

Ask yourself:

- What are the stud dog’s three best traits?

- What three traits need improvement?
- More body, better coat, layback of shoulder, more reach and drive, height, squareness, temperament, health, etc.?
- What genetically can a stud dog change in one generation? What traits may require more than one generation to change?
- What are dominant and recessive genes?
- Do you understand the term polygenetic?

The Stud Dog.

- Health cleared
- Information on his siblings
- Information on his dam and her siblings
- Information on his sire and his siblings
- Does the stud dog carry the traits that represent the Breed Standard?
- Are those traits dominant or recessive? (very important to know)
See (Orlandi, 2004; Battaglia, 1884; Seranne, 1980).
- Brucellosis and mycoplasma testing prior to breeding (discuss with veterinarian)

Closing Thoughts

After evaluating the traits of a stud dog and knowing if the traits represent the breed standard, plan how a particular dog can further the legacy of the standard schnauzer breed. Do all the homework, know the stud dog's traits (both good and not so good), be ready to answer questions about producing a litter. Use what you have learned to plan for the next generation/litter. A stud dog owner/breeder has the responsibility to evaluate the qualities of a bitch for a proposed breeding. If stud owner does not feel the proposed breeding is appropriate...it is ok to say NO to the breeding. A stud dog owner/breeder can make a positive contribution to the breed that we all love by *researching, careful planning, and honest evaluation.*

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