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BASIC BREEDING PRINCIPLES.... by Raymond H. Oppenheimer

Consistently breeding top show dogs is an art and the legendary British expert Raymond H. Oppenheimer succeeded in a difficult breed - the Bull Terrier. These basic breeding principals must be studied if you intend to breed your own show dog!

To breed for improvement, you must know the breed, and be able to recognize a good specimen when you see it. You must be able to visualise the perfect individual towards which you are striving and never give up on attaining that end.

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.

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.

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 successes.

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.

Don't credit your own dogs with virtues they don't possess. Self-deceit is a stepping stone to failure.

Don't breed from mediocrities; the absence of a fault does not in any way signify the presence of its corresponding virtue.

Don't try to line breed to two dogs at the same time; you will end by line breeding to neither.

Don't assess the worth of a stud dog by his inferior progeny. All stud dogs sire rubbish at times; what matters is how good their best efforts are.

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.

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.

Don't mate together animals which share the same fault. You are asking for trouble if you do.

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.

Don't search for the perfect dog as a mate for you bitch. The perfect dog or bitch) doesn't exist, never has and never will!

Don't be frightened of breeding from animals that have obvious faults so long as they have compensating virtues. A lack of virtues is far the greatest fault of all.

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-complimentary types as ones which have the same faults and lack the same virtues.)

Don't forget the necessity to preserve head quality. It will vanish like a dream if you do forget.

Don't forget that SUBSTANCE plus QUALITY should be one of your aims. Any fool can breed one without the other!

Don't forget that a great head plus soundness should be another of your aims. Many people can never breed either!

Ask yourself "Am I a breeder, or do I just produce puppies"....remember it's your reputation at stake and a bad one will haunt you for a very long time.

Keep the breed's best interests at heart. If you know your dog has a serious congenital defect, don't breed from it.

Learn to read a pedigree and do your best to breed the most complimentary dog to your bitch.

Don't let sentiment be your reason for breeding your dog, if it is not worthy of being shown, why would you breed it.

Don't believe it's healthier for a pet bitch to have a litter before she is spayed.....it's actually healthier for a pet bitch to be spayed without having a litter.

Never be satisfied with anything but the best. The second best is never good enough.

The foundation that you lay is what will determine the quality of the stock you will produce for a long time to come.

The strength of a bloodline can be greatly weakened by mating to an unreliable dog or bitch which is the opposite of inbreeding or line breeding and is termed 'out breeding'. However, while the bloodline may be weakened, the quality of the pups may still be good if the combination were a lucky one. It will be important to breed offspring of an outcross back into either the sire or the dam's line.

Inbreeding intensifies all qualities, whether GOOD or BAD...remember that.

If most of the characteristics are good, inbreeding is an excellent way to obtain uniform type, since each parent is dominant principally in the same qualities.

The stud must be dominant in the same characteristics as the bitch and should also be dominant in additional qualities which appear as faults in the bitch.

In evaluating pedigrees, don't let the number of titles be a determining factor unless you personally know every dog back for at least three generations.

The age of a stud dog has no bearing on the quality he can produce.

Don't breed a bitch too early. If she is immature, you will just be robbing her of time to develop.

Any animal, whether cow or dog, will yield much better if it is happy and contented with its lot in life.

REMEMBER....don't try to make huge profits in breeding dogs. Your reputation as a puppy farmer will grow faster than a forest fire and the breed will suffer as a whole.

It is not great numbers of dogs which makes a kennel great, but rather it is the excellence of the few. Even if you breed rarely, don't settle for second best.

Don't ever try to decry a great dog, a thing of beauty is not only a joy forever, but a great dog should be a source of aesthetic pride and pleasure to all true lovers of the breed.