

What Problems Have you Had in your Bloodlines?

This is a question commonly asked by prospective puppy buyers, as they interview me. Often, folks are concerned about a particular issue their past dog had problems with, (or ultimately, passed away from) such as cancer, DM, or pannus.

As it happens, none of my dogs thus far has had cancer, DM or pannus.

Before we talk about trends or problems in particular lines, we have to establish a definition for the same. If a health problem occurs once, is it an issue in the bloodline? Some common issues are congenital (developmental) as opposed to genetic. We need to differentiate between these things.

When you look at a particular family/ bloodline over time and over many individuals, you sometimes see a pattern in regards to a fault, health problem, or a genetically inherited trait. To me, this pattern constitutes a trend in a bloodline, whereas one occurrence does not.

That said, here is what I would report:

Most breeders of Kirschtenthal bloodlines will tell you that weak ears have historically appeared from time to time. Interestingly, my double Kirschtenthal bred litters, sired by Sherry, all have had erect ears... but a couple individuals in two of my litters from two different females not Kirschtenthal bred, but sired by Sherry, have given me weak ears.

I have frequently had male puppies with only one descended testicle. I have seen this at least once from every one of my older breeding animals, across different combinations of sires and dams. I do not see it in every litter, and sometimes it is in one male from a litter, while his littermates have both testicles descended.

From one breeding cross that was bred more than once, producing many puppies, I have had two puppies (from separate litters) with hip dysplasia (One borderline/mild the other, though not OFA rated, was called moderate by the radiologist who evaluated the xrays.). In both cases, of the siblings who were xrayed, the rest had passing (OFA prelim, OFA certified, or "a"

certified) hips and elbows. (To date, we have never had one dog with elbow dysplasia.)

I had one puppy - a dog I own and do not use for breeding - from another female and an outside male, who has unilateral (one sided) hip dysplasia. The dog's mother has had several litters, with several puppies from each litter xrayed and certified OFA good, "a" normal. She has produced very well for hips over several litters, and has a low ZW score. SO, I do not consider hip dysplasia a problem in her line.

To date, we have had one puppy who might have had Panno (growing pains). We have had one puppy who might have a food allergy - though none of his siblings do.

And, we had two developmental anomalies - a puppy born with a short tail and a puppy born with long hairs, called dermoids, affecting her eyelids. Note that I do not consider those developmental problems to be "Problems in the line."

When you breed multiple litters annually, eventually, there will be a puppy with SOME health issue. I do not believe that there is a breeder in the world who has produced litters and never had ANY issue come up. (Unless it is a breeder who has had only one litter and got lucky!)

Overall, the foundation lines we selected are comprised of healthy individuals. Our breeding dogs are hip and elbow certified. While we can not claim we have never bred a puppy who developed any health issue, we can say that overall, we feel our dogs have a sound genetic background.