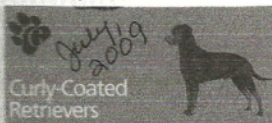


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Kathy Phillips has been involved in hunting with Curlies since the mid-'60s. All but one of her Curly-Coated Retrievers have been males. She shares with us some responsibilities of a stud-dog owner.

#### It's Not One-Sided!

Now that your male has all the necessary health clearances and alphabet soup bracketing his name, you may be thinking about offering him at stud. Here are some things to consider beyond what photo to use in the ad.

It's easy to assume that a stud-dog owner's responsibilities begin and end with a successful breeding. Legally that's true, unless you co-own every litter your dog sires, which isn't always practical. But defining your standards by a legal

measuring stick means you've opted to set the bar as low as possible to avoid specific consequences. From an ethical standpoint, a stud owner is no less responsible than the breeder of record for what a litter contributes to the breed.

Why do you want to breed your dog? If the answer is "stud fees," think again. It's no more ethical to use a stud for mercenary purposes than to breed a bitch every season of her life. Just because he *can* doesn't mean you should. Look around: If there are umpteen closely related dogs being bred, will yours add anything of value (or otherwise) to the gene pool that isn't already available? If those related dogs are producing mediocre quality or marginal soundness, what makes you think he will do better?

How many litters should he sire? An overused stud sucks the depth out of a gene pool. In a small breeding population, using a dog as few as five times can complicate future breeding decisions and limit choices. The idea is to create the best pups you can, not litter every pedigree with his genes. If he's truly exceptional, have him collected and store the stems so he can contribute beyond his life span.

Can you screen breeders and bitches, and mentor overenthusiastic newbies? Not every bitch he's offered will be a good match. Not every bitch owner is a responsible breeder. His reputation and yours depend upon your ability to analyze pedigrees beyond health clearances and titles and say no when necessary, and do so without offending. No stud, no matter how good, can fix everything, and he *will* be judged by what he produces. "Pity dates" do not do any favors. Ultimately, would you want to raise, train, and live with a pup from this breeder or breeding? If you don't, then you shouldn't do the breeding.

Is your home or kennel and your family prepared to accept a visiting bitch, provide a secure and comfortable environment for her, meet the owner's expectations of care, and return her pregnant by the correct dog? Can you explain to your children why Phydough—and *only* Phydough—can play with his "visiting friend"?

Last but certainly not least: Are you willing and able to rescue his pups? If you aren't willing to step up and save

their lives, you shouldn't create them in the first place.

Bottom line: If your stud dog is worth using, he's worth managing responsibly and with a strong sense of ethics. —K.P.

Thanks, Kathy. —Ann Shinkle, Grand Island, Fla.; [annshinkle@aol.com](mailto:annshinkle@aol.com) ✦