

Agility Expert Articles

Choice of a Dam by Keith Erlandson

Now the shooting season has ended, and daresay a good many shooters, pickers up and beaters are considering breeding a litter of pups, not to mention the field trial people who are always up to something to breed that world beater.

The first consideration should be whether your bitch is of sufficient standard. A retriever should be an adequate gamefinder, tender mouthed and quiet at a drive. A spaniel should possess these attributes and be bold when hunting cover. It also goes without saying that a water-shy animal should not be bred from.

If you really have the interests of your chosen breed at heart, and this applies more to retrievers than spaniels, your bitch should have her hips X-rayed and eyes tested. The late Jim Edgar, (a vet.), started in working cockers in 1948 and never knew a case of hip dysplasia. The odd case has occurred in working springers but the breed is not predisposed to HD. Progressive retinal atrophy, although listed in English springers, thankfully gives the working strains a miss. Testing for retinal dysplasia can only effect minimal control as several springers that are clear on test are carriers but fortunately RD is generally not too serious a condition and many with retinal folds are competent markers.

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