



Cheryl Lopate, MS, DVM

Diplomate, American College of Theriogenologists

Recommendations for the Stud Dog

In actively breeding males, it is recommended that semen be comprehensively evaluated every 2 months at a minimum. In this way, any change in the status of the ejaculate will be detected early on. In males that are not being used actively, it is recommended that semen be collected a few weeks prior to the onset of the bitch's season during which breeding will occur. In this way one can ensure that semen quality will be adequate for the upcoming breeding. It is also recommended that the male be collected again 2 – 4 days prior to the initial breeding to clean out all the dead sperm from the male's ejaculatory tract and provide a more satisfactory ejaculate. Any deterioration in semen quality should instigate further investigation as to the cause of the change.

Males should not be collected more often than every other day on a regular basis. If the dog has more than one bitch to breed in a week, the ejaculates should be split and a minimum breeding dose sent to each bitch to be bred. Utilizing advanced reproductive techniques such as transcervical or surgical insemination can reduce the breeding dose required for each bitch and will maximize use of the dog. If absolutely necessary the male can be collected daily for 3 – 5 days in a row (depending on the male's daily sperm output) without completely depleting sperm stores. As a general rule of thumb, males with increased scrotal width and normal semen characteristics will have more sperm reserves than those with smaller total scrotal width. This means that toy and small breed dogs will deplete with fewer daily collections (3 days in a row) than will males of the larger breeds (5 days in a row). If the male is not allowed a day of rest between regular collections, semen quality will decrease and pregnancy rates will suffer.

Collection and storage of frozen semen can alleviate the stress of overuse in popular males. Semen evaluation and test freezing is generally performed at the first attempt at collection to determine the best freezing extender to be used for each individual male. Number of breeding doses per ejaculate varies with the male and may range from 1 – 10 doses/ejaculate. Again, males with greater total scrotal width tend to have more breeding doses/ejaculate. Males with any type of prostatic disease are poor candidates for semen freezing and should have their prostatic disease treated prior to freezing.

Males should be tested for Brucellosis every 6 months if being used for natural breeding and once yearly if being used in strict AI programs. If they are being used less than every 6 months, they should have Brucellosis screening either yearly or prior to each planned breeding. They should have their prostate examined per rectum twice yearly and have a comprehensive physical examination including complete blood count, serum chemistry and thyroid screening yearly. Other vaccinations should be determined following discussion with your regular veterinarian. Dogs should be dewormed at least twice yearly and specific deworming programs should be tailored to the individual dog's needs and the kennel situation.