



# Useful information for breeders

## How do Breeders decide which stud to use?

1 – Approved HCNA breeders start the process by contacting the Breeding Director (BD) and inquire about a matching mate for their bitch. They let the BD know about any specific preference with regards to color, temperament, and distance they are willing to drive for the breeding to happen.

2 – The BD screens the approved stud database, going through their pedigrees and contrasting them against the bitch's pedigree. The BD looks for potential diseases, present on both sides of the ancestry and tries to avoid any major issue, especially when found in the ancestry for the two potential mating dogs. Once the screening on the database has been completed, the BD consults with the Breeding Committee the potential matches found.

3 – The BD will submit the approved list of stud dogs, a maximum of 3, to the HCNA Board. Once the stud dogs are approved, the BD communicates to the Breeder recommending these stud dogs. The Breeder now can decide which stud dog she likes best.

4 – After the Breeder has decided, she has to give notice to the BD which stud dog he has chosen. Very often breeders keep 2-3 studs on their list, just in case their first pick might not be available at the time of breeding, or if not interested on breeding with that bitch. The BD emails the breeding card to the breeder with the information on the three studs. The breeder signs the form which will be later forwarded to the stud dog owners to sign.

5 – The BD contacts then stud-dog owners and informs them that their dogs have been suggested to a breeder and explains the reasons why the stud dog has been considered a good match for the bitch. The stud owner's contact information is then provided to the Breeder. The breeder will get in touch with the stud owner and get to discuss all the details on the breeding. It is up to the two parties to discuss the specifics on the mating location, dates and stud fee payment. It is recommended that the breeder and stud owner develop a breeding contract with all these specifications and to find an agreement way in advance of the bitch's heat season gets started. The stud fee payment is completed by the time puppies are eight weeks old and ready to go to their final homes. At that point, the breeder would have funds to cover the stud fee. The HCNA is not involved in this process. The most common agreement is that a certain fee, often between 5 – 10% of the total sale price, is paid. Sometimes the stud owner has the right to pick a puppy out of this litter.

Ultimately, the stud owner decides whether she is interested in breeding their dog with this bitch. The breeding committee encourages the stud owner to ask all the necessary questions to the breeder

The stud owner should ask about:

- 1 – The bitch's ancestry
- 2 - How would the puppies be raised/socialized during the first eight weeks? Can they visit the breeder during this time?
- 3 – Does the breeder already have a waiting list? Can they be involved with the selection of puppy buyers?
- 4 – How much would be asked for the puppies? Do they plan to keep the puppies within a certain distance from their kennel?
- 5 – Are they planning on staying in touch with the puppy buyers?
- 6 – Are they prepared to take a puppy back in case something happens with the new family?
- 7 – The HCNA strongly encourages the stud owner to remain involved with the kennel raising the puppies and later as the puppies go to their new homes. As a stud owner, you could request the breeder for the puppy buyers contact information and get in touch with them. Our experience is, that puppy buyers are usually thrilled, if they hear from their puppy's father. They are usually very interested in the ancestry of their dog and of course would appreciate any pictures you will send them or even get to meet their puppy's father.

With every litter a breeder produces, the circle of puppy buyers grows. As a stud owner if you are involved, you would not only help the breeder, but you could share your knowledge of raising a hovawart with puppy owners.

Breeders collect a \$300 deposit from each puppy buyer. This money is forwarded to the HCNA's treasurer who deposits these funds into a special hip escrow bank account. Once the puppy turns 24 months of age, the puppy owner can complete the hip evaluation through the OFA and submit the results of the evaluation to the BD. At that point, the treasurer will refund the \$300 deposit to the puppy owner.

We encourage the involvement of the stud owner in the process of completing 100% of hip evaluations from each litter. Having hip results from the entire litter, or at least the majority of

the puppies is crucial for the breeding committee to plan future matings with this breeder.

The breeding committee will also assist by sending hip x-ray reminders when the litter is old enough (20 months).

### **Breeding process**

It is recommended to breed the dogs twice, within 24 to 48 hours apart from each other.

The male only has a light erection before the coitus. The penis needs to be inside the vagina to reach a complete erection. After the insemination occurs, this complete erection prevents the penis to pass through the female's cervix to be released from the female causing 'the tie.' The tie can last from 5 to 45 minutes. In most cases Hovawart's tie lasts for about 20 minutes. It is impossible to separate the dogs during this period. You would need to keep the dogs calm, during this time as they can become agitated.

### **Breeding day**

Usually, the bitch comes to the stud. The reason for this is that bitches tend to be territorial during their heat. It could happen, that a bitch would be rather "bitchy" and would defend her territory, which would make it impossible for the stud to mate her. The stud however will be totally happy to welcome a bitch in standing heat on his property.

- Do not feed the dogs that morning.
- Make sure that he had plenty of time to do his business without being exhausted. He will need all his energy later for the mating.
- When the breeder arrives at your house, welcome the breeder alone, without the bitch. Allow the breeder to meet your dog. The breeder would certainly carry the bitch's scent and the stud would notice it.
- Bring the dogs together into your backyard.
- They will start with the courtship first, which could take from 5 to 30 minutes. Each mating is different. They try to mount each other with the bitch standing still with her tail to the side, allowing the stud to mount her. The stud will pull her towards himself with his front legs.
- After the mating occurs and the tie starts, the stud would lift one of his hind legs over. The dogs will end up standing butt to butt. This is the moment where you could and should gently help your dog. Never try to separate the dogs, besides being extremely painful to the two

dogs, this is an important stage of the mating as the stud will release the last portion of his ejaculate. While the dogs are tied the breeder usually holds on to his bitch and the stud owner to the stud. It is important to keep them calm and prevent them from pulling apart too early. Talk to them in a gentle soothing voice.

- After the dogs have separated, they need to rest in separated locations for several hours.

### **Artificial Insemination**

If a natural breeding is not possible, due to distance or due to other reasons, Artificial Insemination (AI) is one option. If this is the case, you need to complete some research before the bitch comes into heat. You would need to find a Veterinarian facility that is capable to complete this procedure. Look for Theriogenologist vets (reproductive specialists) in your area. You can follow this link: <http://www.therio.org/search/custom.asp?id=1107> to search the Society for Theriogenology website for a reproductive specialist.

Depending on the distance between the stud and the bitch and the timing for the breeding, there are different ways to store the semen. It could be shipped “chilled,” which is the easiest way to complete the insemination. Or the semen could be obtained, frozen and then shipped. The type of insemination would vary depending on the condition of the shipped semen. AI opens the door to different studs to breed with a female, they do not have to be in the same area. We have successfully imported frozen semen from Germany to inseminate a bitch in California as well as transporting semen from Massachusetts to Oregon. But advance planning is necessary to obtain a successful breeding under these conditions. It is necessary that both the breeder and stud owner consult with the BD to make this AI a successful event.