

The Dog Days of Summer (and winter!)

As the days grow longer and we all enjoy the spring temperatures, it is a good time to reflect on weather related challenges that breeders face. The extreme cold, ice, broken tree limbs, lack of electricity and frozen pipes are all still vivid in memory. But summer time temperatures that soar to over 100 degrees can also be just as troublesome for breeders. Not only are these conditions stressful for breeders, they are also stressful and can negatively impact the health of breeding dogs and puppies.

Every good breeder is aware of the stepped up vigilance needed during extremes in temperature: Proper housing, abundant water, protection from the elements and optimal nutrition are the basics for keeping dogs healthy during these times.

Nutrition becomes even more important than usual during critical temperature changes, due to the nature of dog's digestive system under stress. A little prevention in facing weather related nutrition challenges can go a long way toward keeping breeders more profitable as well as controlling time-consuming and costly medical care for puppies that become sickly.

Things to bear in mind for winter extremes are feeding a nutritionally balanced diet to maintain coat and muscle mass, as well as provide energy for heat. Some research suggests that dogs may require up to 7.5% more food for each 10 degree temperature drop. Now is a good time to make certain that a digestive aide is incorporated into daily feeding, as increasing the food to needed levels can often lead to diarrhea and other digestive problems. Food should be increased gradually and the digestive system supported. Digestive aides will also ensure that the nutrients needed from the food is being adequately absorbed.

As we look forward, it is a good time to prepare for those inevitable scorching summer days. Providing plenty of shade and cool, clean water for animals is of course essential. An additional problem during summer months is the rampant growth of bacteria that can impact puppy and dog health. The immune system can suffer because of the stress of higher temperatures, leaving the door open for higher susceptibility to illness. Fortifying animal's immune systems with exceptional nutrition and digestive aides that keep beneficial bacterial levels higher can help keep the summer time blues from hitting your kennel.

And then there is the summer "odor booster" effect. It's no secret that odors, along with bacteria can really proliferate during sweltering, humid days. Along with extra care in housekeeping, digestive aides can have a significant impact in decreasing the amount of fecal matter as well as reducing the smell.

Whether winter, spring, summer or fall, breeders always face challenges. A little bit of preparation and preventative measures can help keep mother nature's effect tamed and the days more enjoyable, no matter what the weather!