

## Editorial

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Dear Readers,

For years, the association has been losing members. Many existing members are frustrated, and the causes for this are manifold. Satisfaction and motivation need to be increased. Of course, this is a job for office holders at all levels, but every single member can help, such as by asking, 'What can I do for the club?' instead of, 'What does the club do for me?' as our former Vice President so rightly put it. The breeding shows, in particular the LG breeding shows and the BSZ, must by no means become events of an elite circle or professional exhibitors. Small breeders with one to three litters per year form the broad foundation of our breeding base and should be promoted accordingly. Breeders who additionally breed under the regulations should not be stigmatised. The only decisive criterion here is that, in spite of the higher degree of work and time required, the pups should be individually cared for (shaped) and thus

optimally prepared for life. Regarding the many innovations, regulations and restrictions, all I can do is repeat myself: 'As little as possible, and as much as necessary.' The fun we have with our shared hobby has to be in the foreground.

For me, there is no question that the Association Head of Breeding must be the contact for all breeders, no matter what the objective. Contact and exchange need to be restored. The main association events offer the best opportunities for this. In the area of performance-bred dogs, information is missing, as we know from the BSZ progeny groups. I am already active in this regard with the help of a few members. Performance dogs that are close to the standard and anatomically excellent should also find their way back to the BSZ. Genetic variability is increasingly being lost, especially in the exhibition field. The result of this is the reduction in performance and a higher susceptibility to disease. We continue to breed working dogs; they have to remain able to be trained, and not only by professionals. However, I do not think that the definition of the working dog should refer exclusively to IGP sport. Dogs in the VA group must be seen as a special instrument of pedigree control and should be available to German breeding for a longer period of time. The immediate sale of males newly admitted to the VA group is incomprehensible and leads to legitimate criticism.

The unstable hindquarters – sometimes associated with a markedly sloping back line is still a negative representation in the public. In accordance with National Assembly's mandate, a working group with representatives of all interest groups has been set up by the SV Board, which is developing a concept for a simplified introduction to breeding. Stud book numbers continue to decline. The goal must be to regain or motivate members for breeding activities, without sacrificing the quality of the breed. It is now time to break new ground in this area, also because of social change. In pedigree control, in compliance with the specifications, we need to instead focus on how our dog is seen, and breed dogs that are accepted by the general public.

The BSZ in Nuremberg is just around the corner. I wish the officiating judges a lucky hand and the owners and exhibitors all the success they hope for. Finally, one last note on the presentation of our dogs: time and time again we find our dogs being presented in constant medium trot, mostly by athletic handlers at a younger age. This is not the purpose of the gait test and is criticised not only by spectators but also by many exhibitors. As such, I would like to remind you once again to present your dogs at a walking pace. Thank you for your understanding.

Yours truly,  
Bernd Weber, SV Association Head of Breeding