

Things used to be better...?



Perhaps you feel the same way: in times when things aren't too easy, you catch yourself, even if only in your mind, comparing them to how they 'used' to be and thinking about how great and lovely it was 'back then'. But memories like to play tricks on us. When you take a closer look, you can see that not everything was that great and lovely. And in the end, it was neither lovelier nor greater; it was just different. In this respect, club life differs little from our real lives with the everyday challenges we face. If you look at the history of the club, which has now lasted for over 120 years, there were events and periods of time in which people and thus also our members and the association as a whole faced existential threats, poor economic conditions and an uncertain future (the First World War, the Depression, the period of Nazi rule and centralisation beginning in 1933, the Second World

War, the post-war boom, the division of Germany and the Cold War, the Iran crisis etc.). We still have the generation among our members who experienced those things. Let's ask them: 'Did everything used to be better in the past?' Of course, we also have our present problems, primarily the coronavirus pandemic which has accompanied us for one and a half years with its well-known effects and restrictions in both real life and club life. In the same way, we regularly discuss the subjects of decline in membership, decline in pedigree book numbers, dog health, animal welfare training methods, test manipulation etc. That's one way of seeing things, but are problems really the only thing that place in our club? Do we always look at things from the right point of view? It's undisputed that we have fewer members than 25 years ago and we have fewer dogs in the club's pedigree book. On the other hand, the number of new members each year is often many times the total number of members of other VDH associations. That's something that we could be proud of...

I don't want to make anything sound better than it is. We have our problems. We also see them, and how we deal with them is crucial for the future of the club. Let us not make the mistake of staying resigned and getting lost in predictions about the end times. We have a broad and solid base, both in terms of membership and financially. Let us work together on solutions, united and active in the areas in question. Let us not expect the impossible, and let us give ourselves realistic time frames for countermeasures to tackle the undesirable developments that have arisen over years and decades. In the end, we will see improvements and initial success appear in many areas. The 2021 National Assembly has shown that the club and its members are ready to react flexibly to the changed conditions, to accept innovations and to make decisions for a positive future.

The French writer Victor Hugo once said of the future: 'The future has many names. For the weak, it is the unattainable. It is the unknown, for the fearful. For the brave, it is a chance.' So, let's be brave and use our chance. For what is important to us: German Shepherds and the people of their club!

Yours truly,

Hartmut Setecki,
Managing Director