

## Editorial

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Dear Readers,



Normally you would be able to read a summary of the National Champions' Breeding Show in this issue. It was cancelled, not only in Germany, but also in almost all other WUSV countries due to coronavirus. But I am very happy that after the lockdown we were able to reopen all of our events in accordance with the respective state regulations, and that they can be carried out without any problems.

Even before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, we had a significant decline in studbook numbers, which fell below the 10,000 mark. There are certainly many reasons for this decline. In addition to the pandemic, social change and thus the demands and expectations of buyers of a pedigree dog like the German Shepherd are certainly among the reasons. Recently, an active and successful breeder who runs his own business said to me that every morning when business starts, he asks himself what his customers want, and he organises his business accordingly. As a breeding club, we do not run a business; however, when making our decisions, we should still not forget what demands non-club buyers have of our dogs. There is no question that the requirements of our statutes, which certainly also need to be revised (the Vice President already mentioned this in his editorial in the last SV Magazine), and the breed standard cannot be disregarded. Yet we must be allowed to ask – perhaps a little provocatively – whether our requirements for first-time breeding are still up to date. Section 3 of our main statutes determines the purpose of the association as, among other things, the breeding of a working dog according to the specifications of the breed standard. This demands a balanced personality from the German Shepherd. They should be steady, self-confident, absolutely impartial and (unless provoked) good-natured. They should also be attentive and docile. They must have instinctual behaviour, resilience and self-confidence in order to be suitable as companions, watch dogs, *Schutzhunde*, service dogs and herding dogs. So far, the usability and thus the breeding suitability of our dogs has been largely equated with taking an IGP. With the introduction of the breeding predisposition test (ZAP) a first step was taken towards a cynologically modern approach to breeding. Here, the performance of a dog is described adjectivally without the award of points, which are certainly indispensable to establish a ranking in a competition, and at the end, suitability for breeding is assessed as either passed or failed.

Obviously, many members and breeders still have a certain degree ignorance regarding the breeding possibilities with a ZAP. The board will soon present members with the content and thus the breeding possibilities it offers. Our association has to face a changing society and must not shy away from reorientation. We need to define the working dog of today. It is particularly important to appreciate the active breeders in our club, but we also need to win over new breeders and offer them a modern start to breeding within the meaning of our breeding objective: without unnecessary hurdles, but without a loss of quality either. To this end, we need to hold open-ended discussions. I hope that then we will not lack the courage to make decisions about reorientation.

Yours truly,

Bernd Weber  
SV Association Breeding Inspector