ABSTRACTS

ISCFR 2012

July 26-29, Whistler, Canada

7th International Symposium on Canine and Feline Reproduction

In a joint meeting with

EVSSAR 2012

15th Congress of the European Veterinary Society for Small Animal Reproduction

Editors: Gary England, Michelle Kutzler, Pierre Comizzoli, Wojciech Nizanski, Tom Rijsselaere and Patrick Concannon

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Reproductive parameters of Dogo Argentino bitch

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OBJECTIVES AND METHODS: The Dogo Argentino (DA) is the first and only breed from Argentina recognized by the Fédération Cynologique Internationale. Even though it is known as a big-game hunter dog, currently also is used as companion, guard and guide dog. Although its morphologic features had been very well established, its normal reproductive parameters are not clearly known. This is essential to achieve a proper reproductive management. Domestic dogs are mono-estrous and typically non-seasonal breeders, with large individual and breed-specific variations (1). They reach puberty variably at 6 to 14 months old (2). Inter-estrous interval average is 6 months, ranges from 4 to 12 months depending on the breed, age and individual. The aim of this study was to determine some of the DA bitch reproductive parameters.

149 surveys were conducted to breeders from Córdoba province, Argentina; one for each intact DA bitch from 1 to 14 years old. The surveys were made personally and consisted of 17 questions about different physiological variables. A retrospective data collection was carried out and InfoStat 2011 software was used to make a descriptive data analysis.

RESULTS: The DA bitch reaches puberty at 8.93 months old average, which concurs with Concannon, 2010 (2), who mentions the existence of a positive correlation between the first estrous age and the size of the breed. The 83.89% of DA evaluated bitches cycled regularly each 6.01 months average. This inter-estrous interval is in agreement with the bibliography for the most breeds, except for German Shepherd dog which has short intervals from 4 to 4.5 and Basenji with 12 months.

The mean vulval bleeding found in this study was 11.11 days. The characteristics proestrous-estrous signs analyzed were: vulval edema (89.93%), bleeding during mating (32.21%), tail tilt (95.30%) and docility during mating (85.91%). Due to the high percentage of DA bitch (32.21%) which are receptive to mounting even when still bleeding, it is important to consider that this sign remains during estrous. Thus, it cannot be used as a reliable parameter to determine the optimal time of mating.

Although the pseudopregnancy exact prevalence is not known, it is estimated between 50 to 75%. In DA bitch, the value recorded was 30.2%. The evaluated signs of this stage were: nesting (64.44%), mammary enlargement (93.33%), milk secretion (84.44%) and weight gain (42.22%). Even when the occurrence of pseudopregnancy was not high, the frequent mammary enlargement and milk secretion in these bitches should be considered to prevent and treat the occasional happening of mastitis. 133 of the total bitches had at least one mating during their lifetime, and showed a whelping rate of 84%. This value agrees with the normal range of 80 to 95% shown in canines (3). However, is higher than the one described in a Drever kennel, where the whelping average recorded was 78.6% (4).

The gestation duration could be estimated from 55 to 72 days from the first mating. This information is in agreement with the data obtained in the present investigation, where the mean gestation duration was 61.12 days (SD=1.68) and the range was 57 to 65 days.

CONCLUSIONS: The reproductive parameters of the DA bitch are in agreement with those indentified for other large breeds, except for the prolonged vulval bleeding which, many times, is longer than proestrous. Its high whelping rate, its low incidence of dystocia, its good maternal ability and other conditions less prominent, defines the DA as an excellent reproductive breed.

REFERENCES:

Acknowledgements: CONICET - SeCyT UNRC – DA breeders and owners.