

By Laura Turner

So you want to breed your female. You know what to expect if everything goes right. Your little girl will present you with tiny bundles of joy. She will lovingly nurse them and care for them until they are old enough to be weaned.

You and your family will find great joy in watching and playing with these little dolls, and then when the time is right they will all (or maybe you keep just one) go off to special homes to live out their lives as cherished companions. But have you given consideration to what if something goes wrong?

I have listed here a few of the problems that I myself have personal knowledge of. Everything listed has happened either to me or someone I know. These are not isolated incidents. I'm sure other breeders could add miles to my list. Learn from our mistakes! Leave the breeding up to those who know what they are doing, have the experience, know what to expect.

What if during the breeding...

The stud dog you have chosen is carrying a venereal disease and gives it to your female. She not only doesn't conceive, but you have to pay the vet bills to get her infection cleared up and she is now sterile.

The stud dog you decided to breed your darling to is not experienced. Once the two dogs are joined tightly in a tie, he decides to chase the neighbor's cat out of his yard. He bolts for the cat ripping his penis loose and causing your bitch to hemorrhage from within.

Your modest girl decides she doesn't want the attention of this gigolo mutt chosen for her without her consent. She snaps at him catching her tooth on his loose cheek and rips it open sending blood everywhere. He retaliates by sinking his teeth into her left eye.

You leave your dog with the stud owner because the breeding is not going very swiftly. In fact, it's been three hours and nothing is happening. The stud owners leave the two dogs alone in the back yard. The dogs get out through a tiny hole in the fence and a truck hits your female.

You pay the \$250-\$1,000 stud fee upfront figuring you will make that and more back when the pups sell. The breeder guarantees the stud service to work or you can come back again. After 2 months you discover it didn't work and now must wait another 4 months to try again. Of course, it doesn't work again, so in another 4 months, you take your dog to another male and risk losing another stud fee.

You get her bred. Bring her home. She bothers you so you let her outside (she is still in heat and still receptive to males). You hear a commotion outside there is your girl tied up with the neighborhood mutt. When she whelps, there will need to be DNA tests done on the pups.

You get her bred. Bring her home. Let her out (she is still in heat and receptive to other males), but you do not see the neighborhood mutt breed her. The pups are born but look odd. You call the stud owner he suggests DNA testing (at your expense). You have a litter of mutts! What do you do about the ones you have already sold?

Or knowing she tied with the neighborhood mutt you decide to terminate the pregnancy and try again being more careful next time. But a few weeks later your female is very sick because you had her given a mismatch shot creating a hormonal imbalance causing a uterine infection and now she has Pyometra and needs a complete hysterectomy. All plans of a litter is gone and your female's life is now in danger if she does not have the operation.

What if during the birth...

The puppies are too large for the female's hips. She never goes into labor, the puppies die and she becomes infected by the decaying bodies.

The puppies are coming breach and they drown in their own sacks before they can be born.

The first puppy is large and breach. When it starts coming your female starts screaming, and before you can stop her she reaches around, grabs the puppy in her teeth and yanks it out killing it instantly.

A puppy gets stuck. Neither your female nor you can get it out. You have to race her to the vet. The vet can't get it out either. She has to have an emergency caesarian section, of course, it is 3:00 am Christmas day.

A puppy is coming out a breach and dry (the water sack that protects them has burst). It gets stuck. Mom tries to help it out by clamping her teeth over one of the back legs. The head and shoulders are firmly caught. Mom pulls on the leg, hard, peeling the flesh from the leg and leaving a wiggling stump of bone.

A dead puppy gets stuck in the birth canal, but your female is well into hard labor. She contracts so hard trying to give birth that her uterus ruptures and she bleeds to death on the way to the vet.

What if directly after birth...

The mother has no idea what to do with a puppy and she drops them out and walks away, leaving them in the sack to drown.

The mother takes one look at the puppies, decides they are disgusting droppings and tries to smother them in anything she can find to bury them in.

The mother gets too enthusiastic in her removal of the placenta and umbilical cord and rips the cord out leaving a gushing hole pulsing blood all over you as you try in vain to stop the bleeding.

Or, she pulls on the cords so hard she disembowels the puppies as they are born and you have a box full of tiny; kicking babies with a tangle of guts the size of a walnut hanging from their stomachs. Of course, all the babies must be put to sleep.

What if because of some hormone deficiency she turns vicious allowing no one near her or the babies, who she refuses to nurse, or you have to interfere with.

You notice something protruding from her vagina when you let her out to pee; you take her to the vet to discover a prolapsed uterus, which needs to be removed.

What if when you think you are in the clear...

One or more of the puppies inhaled fluid during birth, pneumonia develops and death occurs within 36 hours.

What if the mother's milk goes bad. You lose three of your four puppies before you discover what is wrong. You end up bottle feeding the remaining pup every two hours, day and night. After three days the puppy fades from infection and dies.

The puppies develop fading puppy syndrome you lose two. You bottle-feeding or tube feeding the last remaining baby. It begins to choke and despite your efforts to clear the airway, the pup stiffens and dies in your hands.

Your female develops mastitis and her breast ruptures.

Your female develops a uterine infection from a retained placenta. Her temperature soars to 105. You race her to the vet, he determines she must be spayed. He does the spay in an attempt to save her life, you pay them hundreds of dollars bill. The infection has gone into her bloodstream. The infected milk kills all the puppies and the bitch succumbs a day later.

All the puppies are fine, but following the birth, the female develops a hormone imbalance. She becomes a fear biter and anytime anyone tries to touch her she viciously attacks them.

Mom and pups seem fine, the puppies are four weeks old and are at their cutest. But one day, one of the puppies disappears. You search everywhere but you can't find it. A few days later another puppy is gone. And another. You can't figure how on earth the puppies are getting out of their safe 4' x 4' puppy pen. Finally, there is only one puppy left. The next morning you find the mother chomping contentedly on what is left of the last murdered puppy.

What if the new homes are not so happy?...

You give a puppy to a friend. Their fence blows down so they tie the puppy outside while they go to work. A roving dog comes along and kills the puppy. Your friend calls you up to tell you about the poor little puppy and asks when you are having more puppies.

You sell a puppy to an acquaintance. The next time you see them you ask how the puppy is doing. They tell you that it soiled their new carpet so they took it to the pound.

You sell a puppy to a friend (you give them a good price and payments). They make a couple of tiny payments. Six months later they move to an apartment. They ask you to take it back. You take it back and of course, the payments stop. The dog they returned is so shy, and ill-mannered from lack of socialization and training it takes you a year of work providing socializing and training to be able to give it away.

You sell a puppy to a wonderful home. They love her like one of the family. At a vet check done by their vet, it is determined that the puppy has a heart murmur (your vet found nothing when he checked the puppy before it was sold). They love their puppy and want the best for her. They have expensive surgery done. The puppy is fine. They sue you for the medical costs. They win because you did not have a contract stipulating conditions of guarantee and so, as the breeder, you are responsible for the puppy's genetic health.

You give a puppy to your mother. She is thrilled. Two years later the puppy starts developing problems. It begins to develop odd symptoms and is suffering. Hundreds and hundreds of dollars worth of tests later it is finally discovered that the dog is suffering from a terminal condition that was inherited. Possibly from your female since you know nothing about her family lines.

One loving home decides your puppy is untrainable, destructive and wants to return the pup and get a full refund, which you have spent on your vet bills.

One loving couple calls you and is very upset because their pup has crippling hip dysplasia and want to know what you are going to do about it. You have spayed your female so a replacement is out of the question, looks like another refund.

The Sale...

You put your ad in the local paper for your pups at the usual price and get only 2 responses and no sales. You cut the pup's price in half and broaden your advertising to 3 other newspapers in which the advertising totals \$120.00 a week.

You get a few more puppy inquiries from people who ask all about health testing you did before breeding and if the pups are registered. You tell them your dogs are healthy and it was enough and that you could get the papers. The callers politely thank you and hang up.

The pups are now 4 months old and getting bigger, eating a lot and their barking is really beginning to annoy the neighbors, who call the police who inform you of the \$150.00 noise bylaw.

Your neighbors also call the humane society which comes out to inspect the care of your dogs. You pass inspection but end up feeling stressed and harassed.

You finally decide to give the rest of the litter away but still have to pay the \$1200 advertising bill and the \$600 vet bill.

So you gotta ask yourself...do I feel lucky? Well, do ya, "breeder?"