

“Unauthorized Breeding (“Schwartzzucht”) is in Fashion”

BY: Bernd Krewer (Bio at the end)

Translated from German

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In my opinion, hunting in our time finds itself in the midst of a dramatic change in values. The traditional factors which have determined our actions over a long period of time appear to have become old-fashioned and scarcely play a role any more—above all with younger hunters. Hunting has become “Wildmanagement” (game management).

This has repercussions for breeding and the proper handling of our hunting dogs, so that they can be used wisely, or in other words, used with the goal of practicing sportsmanlike, humane hunting.

The first hunting dog breed clubs were established in Germany toward the end of the 19th Century with the declared goal of preserving and improving the natural hunting abilities typical of their breed(s) and to genetically display a consistent form optimally tailored to actual hunting practice. This was only possible, because these goals were not questioned by anyone until the recent past. Our versatile hunting dog breed clubs joined together in the Jagdgebrauchshundverband (JGHV) and were for the most part also members in the „Verband für das Deutsche Hundewesen“ (VDH) and thus indirectly in the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI).

The barriers for membership in the above-mentioned governing bodies are high – and that is a good thing! But we live in a free country, in which everyone can more or less do whatever they want, as long as they do not violate existing laws.

And so it came, as it had to happen: some hunters with their dogs – for various reasons – were not prepared to live up to the high standards, which their JGHV member breed clubs had established. In many cases, it was probably because of their dogs, which were denied breeding approval on account of health problems, defects of temperament, deficient hunting abilities or faults in conformation.

But because they didn’t want to accept this, they kept breeding anyway. And there are, unfortunately, always buyers for these puppies. “Hunted regularly” – this empty phrase is found in nearly all sales ads for puppies like this “o.p. ohne Papiere” (without papers/pedigrees). Sure, it can happen to even the most careful breeder, who keeps a stud dog and bitch together, that an unwanted mating occurs – perhaps because the breeding leadership didn’t approve it – (“but the dogs just wanted to...”). But these are rare exceptions compared to the large army which purposely breed puppies outside of the breeding regulations of the established JGHV

breed clubs. And because they feel more comfortable in a community of the "like-minded" and can also better market themselves in public, new hunting dog breed clubs were and are still being established. Above all with breeds, for which there is currently heavy demand. First in line are the two blood tracking breeds and the Weimaraner (which has even succeeded in creating a new breed club based on color, the "blue" Weimaraner).

And then a new governing body was created, whose logo is confusingly similar to the established associations. So there is now the „Fédération canine internationale“, which is obviously abbreviated with FCI. And in this organization there is – as pseudo counterparts to the JGHV and VDH—a "German Breed Association Wolfenbüttel". (The text in the logo: "For us, the papers (pedigree) don't matter, only the dog"). All of this isn't illegal, but strongly undermines decades of work by the established hunting dog breed clubs. In its member list there is even a "IG Saupacker" (note: "Interessengemeinschaft Saupacker", a breed related to the Great Dane or Deutsche Dogge, which have been used in hunting wild boar), although the use of "Saupacker" in Germany has been a thing of the past for a long time, or at least should be a thing of the past.

All newly established hunting dog breed clubs of the recent past are based on the genetic potential of the main breed clubs. But even the most consistent performance breeding is never free of negative variants. For good reasons, nearly all of the JGHV hunting dog breed clubs breed according to the motto: "Only the best is good enough for breeding", but there are still dogs which fall between the cracks in selective breeding over a hundred generations and do not reach the high quality requirements for use in breeding. I am surely not mistaken in the assumption that in most of the newly established breed clubs the initial breeding material was, and still is, in the category of negative variants of the main breed clubs. Because: If these dogs from succeeding generations were so good, beautiful and healthy, as they are touted to be in the sales ads, their ancestors would have readily obtained their breeding approval in the JGHV/VDH breed clubs, in whose breed books their ancestors are to be found.

If a hunting dog breed club gives its puppies to hunters only, this only makes good sense, because only in this way can they be sure that these dogs will be used only in their inherited, breed-specific natural ability and performance spectrum (and run at the matching hunting tests and evaluations). Only then can breeders receive feedback about the quality of the dogs being bred, and above all, whether the breeding expectations of the parental pairings have been met.

Every hunter, who would like to get a hunting dog, is thus well advised, to buy a dog with papers (pedigrees) recognized by the

JGHV. Even if such a puppy is somewhat more expensive than a pup without a recognized pedigree (sometimes, however, these dogs actually cost considerably more) – the buyer should remember, that they want to hunt for many years with a dog which is healthy, of good temperament and equipped with all of the desired breed-specific hunting abilities. In buying a new rifle or SUV, they don't look at the last Euro...

Unfortunately, in their hunting rules and regulations many Bundesländer (note: 16 German federal states) have dispensed with the need for serious papers (pedigrees) in registering for hunting proficiency tests ("Jagdeignungs-/Brauchbarkeitsprüfungen"). And so, for example, some hunting dogs with papers not recognized by the JGHV receive a certificate "suitable for the search of hooved game" after passing these tests with their minimal requirements, though these dogs are actually not at all competent for "real" searches.

And because it does no good for their own image, when an experienced handler tracks down wounded game with his blood tracking dog, after their own dogs have failed on a track or during a hunt. Then they refuse to use their own dog and proclaim in a tone of utter conviction, "The game had only a minor injury and would definitely recover anyway."

That is certainly not humane—and also not the sincere regard for animal welfare!

As once said by Konrad Adenauer (note: famous German chancellor after WW II): "No experiments". Hunting dogs from JGHV breed clubs offer a more likely guarantee of being a healthy, stabile-tempered and high performance dog, because of the breed clubs' long-term, selective breeding practice. Unrecognized second and third-class clubs seldom offer this security!

Bernd Krewer (born 1. Juni 1939 in Bitburg), well-known and respected forestry officer, search and blood tracking specialist, dog expert and author of numerous books on hunting, forestry and hunting, blood tracking dogs.

Forestry Civil Servant in the service of the German federal state of Rheinland-Pfalz, forest ranger of an important hunting area of red deer (Rotwild) in the southern Eifel region in the forestry office Wittlich until 1999 (region directly west of Frankfurt)

Has handled blood tracking dogs since 1958 and a breeder of the Hannoverian Blood (tracking) Hound (Hannoverscher Schweißhund) since 1969. Performance and conformation judge.



Managing Director of the Red Deer Council Cochem-Kondel until 2000.

From 1986-1992 Bernd Krewer was the Public Relations Officer and Spokesperson for the JGHV

1988 Co-Founder of the Hunting-Beagle Club

1997 – 2001 Expert and staff member of the former special interest broadcaster “Seasons”

1994-2011 Permanent freelancer for the magazine „Pirsch“

Member of the JGHV/VDH Breeding Commission

