I'm Certified to Breed – Now what?

By Laureen Little, member of NEMDA and Health & Genetics Committee

The following article is my personal collation of basic information that may prove helpful to new aspiring breeders. The views expressed are my own and may not reflect those of NEMDA in general, the NEMDA BCOE, NEMDA's Committees or members.

Congratulations! You are Certified to Breed! How exciting! What's Next? Depending on whether you have a female or male, you will have varying amounts of work and planning ahead of you. For the actual mating, a weekend date is all you need, if all goes well. But planning ahead will save you a lot of stress later. And if you have a female, you really have no choice. If you are going to whelp puppies, you have a lot to learn.



1. Check Your Certification – dates and results

In your preparation for breeding, you have completed OFA health tests for your dog and have a CHIC number. Now, check that your tests results meet the breeding criteria.

Health Testing

- ✓ Microchip
- ✓ DNA sample
- ✓ PRA-prcd genetic test
- ✓ Hip xray
- ✓ Patellae exam
- ✓ Elbow – optional xray
- ✓ **Annual** eye exam

OFA Hip Rating/Certification by OFA
Fair, Good, or Excellent.
At 24 months of age

OFA Patellar Rating/Certification
Normal, Grade 1, or Grade 2
At 12 months of age
Note: Grade of 1 or Grade 2 may only be bred to a dog that is certified with Normal patellas.

OFA Annual Eye Certification (CAER)
Normal or Normal with Breeder option, wB/O
Annually and prior to breeding

OFA Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA)
No Affected dog should be bred
Carrier dogs must be bred to Clear only

Go to the online OFA page and check your recorded health test results. Search by your dog's name or registration number. https://ofa.org/advanced-search/?quicksearch=nelson+hercules Then click on his CHIC marker to get his full report.

Check the date of your last eye exam as it is only valid for 12 months. Make sure that will cover you through the breeding window, (preferably until puppies head home at 8 weeks). And confirm that your actual test results meet the criteria in the box above. If you have any questions, the NEMDA Breed Committee, a BCOE breeder or your own breeder may be able to help interpret the rules with your test results.

Registry	Test Date	Report Date	Age(m)	Conclusion	OFA Number
PROGRESSIVE RETINAL ATROPHY	Nov 14 2016	Jan 29 2019	12	CARRIER	EB-PRA40/12M-PI-CAR
ELBOW	Nov 17 2017	Dec 4 2017	24	NORMAL	EB-EL111M24-VPI
HIPS	Nov 17 2017	Dec 4 2017	24	GOOD	EB-334G24M-VPI
PATELLA	Nov 17 2017	Nov 28 2017	24	NORMAL	EB-PA33/24M/P-VPI
*EYES **	*Jun 8 2018*	*Jul 12 2018*	*31*	*NORMAL W/BO E1: Cataract - significance unknown*	*EB-EYE100/31M-VPI*
CANINE HEALTH	Jan 24 2019	Oct 17 2023		CHIC	136520
*EYES **	*May 14 2019*	*May 29 2019*	*42*	*NORMAL*	*EB-EYE100/42M-VPI*
ADVANCED CARDIAC	Aug 2 2019	Aug 15 2019	45	NORMAL AUSC+ECHO	EB-ACA15/45M-VPI
*EYES **	*Aug 22 2020*	*Sep 9 2020*	*57*	*NORMAL*	*EB-EYE100/57M-VPI-GONIO*
*EYES **	*Nov 17 2021*	*Dec 10 2021*	*72*	*NORMAL W/BO E1: Cataract - significance unknown*	*EB-EYE100/72M-VPI*
DNA DATA BANK	Nov 29 2021	Apr 1 2022	73	BLOOD SAMPLE	EB-DNA-37/B
*EYES **	*Jun 7 2023*	*Jun 20 2023*	*91*	*NORMAL W/BO E1: Cataract - significance unknown*	*EB-EYE100/91M-VPI*

* Eye Certification is valid for one year from the date of the exam.

Once you have your dog's OFA health report, here's what you need to review. Look at the list of tests and check the results. Does it say Affected or Abnormal anywhere? Does it indicate w/BO, meaning "with Breeder Option" anywhere? If the report highlights any **result as abnormal** and **likely inherited**, you need to **stop right there** and get more detail. Look up the specific test at OFA

and discuss with your veterinarian to understand the details. You do not want to produce puppies that have known health problems without some serious consideration.

There is one final step before your romantic get-away. Call your vet and request a **brucellosis test** for your dog. This disease is highly contagious and causes abortion in females. It is uncommon but it is easy to confirm that your dog is ‘clean’, so get the test done and **require it of any mate** as well. The test requires a blood draw but it doesn’t take long to get the results and then you will be on your way.



2. **When should you breed? What is the timing for males?**

There are special considerations for the stud dog owner. It is less involved than whelping puppies, but there is still work to do. Your male should be over 2 years, in excellent health, fit and well exercised. First time males will need a little longer to figure things out, so plan on several days of seeing the bitch as she comes into heat and gets more and more interesting to him. Males should continue to sire litters as long as they are capable and interested. Older dogs provide a longer telomere, which enhances longevity in puppies.

Make sure he is eating a **top quality diet**. **Remove any joint supplements** during the breeding period and **check labels on every product** you use (vitamins, probiotics, toothpaste, cleaners, detergent, pesticides or herbicides in the yard etc.) to be sure it is safe for reproduction.

Prepare a **stud contract** and share that with prospective females. It should specify what period of time you will keep you **male available to them exclusively**, **how many ties** or attempts you guarantee (1 is adequate, 2 is normal, 3 is generous), **what frequency** of matings you prefer (every 18 hours), what will happen if there is not tie or if there is **no confirmed pregnancy** (repeat breeding at no cost? Or pay only once healthy puppies are born?). What will you charge for the stud service? Often the stud owner receives a puppy back or the price of a puppy. Be clear on **your commitments** – brucellosis test and confirmed qualifying health tests for your male. And write the **contract dates** in your calendar. Make sure personal plans don't have you travelling too far during the contract period so that your stud is available when needed. And expect that the female's timing will be off. Stay in contact with the bitch's owner.

Work with your bitch owner to ensure their puppy contract will be good for the breed. Ask them **NOT To include a clause requiring neutering** of the puppy. Try to convince the bitch owner to have puppy buyers agree **Not To Alter their puppy before a minimum of 24 months of age**. If possible, **have buyers commit to health testing** for breeding at 24 months of age and send you the results begore making a decision about neutering.

The puppies generally are the responsibility of the bitch owner, but you may be able to help some families with their **decisions to hold off on neutering by visiting with your intact male**. That is the single most important impact you can make on the future of the breed – after creating the litter.

3. **When should you breed? What is the timing for females?**

Both dogs must be **over 2 years** and of mature size. The **female will be cycling**, likely having a heat cycle every 6 months. She **should not be over 8 years old**. Females with **prior caesarian** deliveries must have a veterinary check that they are suitable breeding candidates for a planned vaginal delivery. The **male can be of any age** – older males provide a possible benefit to longevity of the pups. Both dogs should be **healthy, fit and well exercised** for strong muscles. Make sure they are both eating a **top quality kibble** or home made balanced diet. **Remove any joint supplements** during the breeding period and **check labels on every product** you use (vitamins, probiotics, toothpaste, cleaners, detergent, pesticides or herbicides in the yard etc.) to be sure it is safe for reproduction.

Consider your regular household routine and how breeding, pregnancy, whelping and puppy raising will fit into your schedule. Breeding is often **just a weekend** or a couple days. Then you carefully **keep your female quiet at home** so you don't pick up any infection and don't cause undo stress. You will maintain this special, semi-isolated status until the puppies go home – that's 1 month waiting for spotting, 2 months pregnancy, 2 months with puppies for a total of **5 months**. No dog shows, no classes, no big trips or scary situations, no unknown visiting dogs.

At **30 days** after the breeding, you can ask your veterinarian to check for pregnancy using an **ultrasound**. Some may offer you a **rough count of puppies**, but this is not always reliable. Dog

gestation is 58 to 68 days. Nothing really changes for the first month in terms of appearance or nutritional needs. Once you have confirmation of the pregnancy, you can start increasing her food about 25% each week. You should be planning on **puppies arriving around day 63**.

You will want to **prepare a whelping box** and familiarize the female to sleeping there a couple weeks before the pups are due. If you can **make yourself a bed** right next to the whelping box, that is very helpful. I like to have a sink nearby, a stack of dry, clean towels and my puppy supplies – thermometer, food scale, baby collars, adaptil collar for dam and a few over the counter medications – Vaseline, Fortiflora, Milk Thistle, Fenugreek, Pepto Bismol (check there is no xylitol), scissors, nail clippers. It is worth while to **learn how to tube feed a puppy** and have supplies on hand as it is much easier than bottle feeding. Find a recipe for **Mother's Pudding** and **Liver Water** for puppies. Talk to experienced breeders about their experiences and see if any are available to help on the big day/night.

It is wise to start a **list of puppy homes** ready before the pups arrive. I don't take **deposits** until they have all arrived and I know what I have in terms of males and females. If any pups are not completely healthy, I'll keep that in mind when filling my puppy list and may hold back a puppy that needs additional veterinary care for a period of time. That puppy may require a 'special home'.

Choose families after an application, a phone call, a visit if possible and **a lot of questions**. You want to know that you puppies will receive the love and care that they need and have a **stable, permanent home**. Hopefully more than half of your homes will end up whelping puppies – so take into account **the time, space and skills required**. Keep notes on what type of housing they have, unusual noises, sights or smells (near fire station, airport or slaughter house), how many in the family and their ages, how many guests they have, how much travel, where they work and vacation, their plans for the dog during work, how secure is the fencing, how many stairs (can create stress on young joints), daily schedule, shift work, current veterinarian and their personal experience with puppies and dogs. You can use this inventory to include **puppy raising experiences** that will prepare them for these challenges specifically. Sound tracks of ambulances or target shooting are readily available.

Many say that Entlebuchers are **not a good 'first dog'** and that owners should have previous dog owning and training experience. This is great where you can find it. But sometimes very capable people will apply that you are confident will be able to learn on the go and provide a great home meeting your expectations. If they aren't experienced, look for folks that are **smart and ready to learn**. There's a lot to be said for enthusiasm and desire.

I have been concerned with the **age of applicants**. Is a 20 year old, on their own for the first time, ready for this responsibility? Do they have reliable back-up? If they are 65 already (that used to seem old), and the dog lives 12 years, that means they will be caring for the dog until they are 77. Some folks at 77 are as active and capable as many 50 year olds and have plenty of free time. Others at 77 are fragile and very limited in activity. Somehow, you need to sort out where your applicant is likely to be on that scale and make a gamble, knowing that the dog may come back to you at some point. Every family situation is unique and you need to evaluate the whole package.

Consider **how much ‘maintenance’ the family will require**. Are they going to need personal calls every 3rd day until they go home? Maybe weekly after? You just won’t have that kind of time and it will become annoying. You need to expect your puppy families to be **humble, organized, capable people**, used to navigating situations and finding solutions on their own. While you want to provide help when it’s needed, you want them to make day today decisions confidently and in line with your own thoughts, most of the time. You also want them to know when to seek help.



If you feel comfortable inviting them to stay in your home, with you, over a weekend, you might have a good fit. If you are wary and have that tingly, uneasy feeling, move on. It may take you a while to figure out what’s ‘off’ but it is unlikely to go away. It is difficult to brush off a willing buyer when your list of homes is unfilled but have confidence that you will find a good home.

Where will you find puppy homes?

It can be tricky to find the homes that give you the assurance that your puppy will be properly cared for throughout its lifetime. Once you are an established breeder, it becomes a little easier. People may know you from dog shows or training and become interested in the breed through these interactions. When you are getting started, it can be challenging.

You may want to post your litter on the **NEMDA page (Litter Announcements), AKC Marketplace** or **CKC Puppy List**. You can create a profile at **GoodDog Breeders** and post litters there. Connect with **other Entlebucher breeders** as they may have families waiting. Do not plan to find enough puppy homes by word of mouth, through a Facebook post or Kijiji ads – as you likely will not find the type of homes you need. An average litter is 5.4 pups, but we have always had 8 or 9, and occasionally one with special needs. If you happen to have all girls (or boys) you will need a longer list of homes. I like to **plan for at least 10 homes** before puppies arrive and I chat with families about flexibility on sex.

You probably need a **webpage** that people can find in a Google search when they are looking for a puppy. If you plan on becoming a regular breeder with periodic litters, you can build your own website, but you may be able to **piggy-back off your breeder's page** or a profile at GoodDog, AKC or CKC. Somehow, you need to let people know that you are expecting puppies. Entlebuchers command a good price, so a little poster at the feed store is not likely going to find the homes you are seeking.

Entlebuchers are always cute, so post photos and stories often and always point them to your online presence.



For the conservation of our wonderful breed, please make sure you can find at least a few homes that will breed their puppies. Ideally, every pup should be health tested at 24 months and then bred if they pass all testing. Build your campaign and contract with the intent to **breed every qualifying puppy at least once**.

If you are in **Canada**, you need to be aware that buyers from the USA cannot take a puppy home until it is at least 6 months old, under **CDC rules**. This limits your market to Canadian buyers, which is much more limited. You'll need to plan ahead and really cement up those homes before you get too committed.

If you are in the USA, you have a huge market of highly mobile individuals. If you have **any interest from beyond the USA**, make sure you and the buyer investigate all of the rules for importing to their country and the airline rules for travel in cabin. After you have poured your heart and soul you're your puppies, you don't want them shipped by cargo. Every airline is different and they are not negotiable!

Your **puppy buyers** will likely require some **education** about basic puppy care, growth and the expected stages ahead. Make sure they also know about the **population crisis** and their responsibility to become part of the conservation of this breed. Some breeders offer a refund when all health tests are completed successfully. I haven't tried this, but you will need conversations and a lot of follow up with each family to achieve **breeding every qualified puppy**.

Prepare a **contract for your puppy buyers** and share that with them. It should lay out your expectations and what you will provide them. It should stipulate the price of the puppy and details about pick up location and date. If you have any specific demands or desires, put them in writing and discuss them with each family. GoodDog has some contract templates that might be a good place to start. If you plan to breed more than once, it may be worthwhile getting a lawyer to check over your contract. **For the preservation of the breed** please **Do Not** include a clause requiring neutering of the puppy. In fact, have puppy **buyers agree Not To Alter their puppy before a minimum of 24 months of age**. This provides a proven health benefit and gives you time to find a breeding opportunity for the puppy. Once you've helped buyers live with an intact dog until they are 2 years old, they may decide that neutering isn't necessary, bringing further health benefits and breeding possibilities. If possible, **have buyers commit to health testing** for breeding at 24 months of age and send you the results begore making a decision about neutering.

Talk to every family while you await puppies. You will not have this much free time again until the pups have left home. Talk about safe **toys (no tennis balls),** teething, about **heat cycles** and **humping** behaviour. Talk about **good quality kibble**, **Plaque Off** for dental care, **Omega 3 oil** and **Probiotics**. Talk about **training, biting, crying, sleep routines**, where they **eat** and how they will manage **vacations** away. Talk about them **health testing** and **breeding in the future** and how you may be able to help. Go over your **vaccination and titre schedule**, your advice for the **first days** at home, your first training ideas to build confidence and connection, your best short cuts to good care – leashes and treats by the door, regular yard clean up. Discuss poisonous plants and foods, collar safety, and safety around vehicles. Talk about **nail clipping** every 3 days, healthy weight, body scores and monthly **weigh ins** at the vet. Talk about the **Entlebucher community, NEMDA**

and Entlefest and help them **visit with several Entlebucher families** in their area. Try to become close friends before the puppies arrive.

I like to have the families meet each other over Zoom and try to establish them as a cooperative help group. They can share ideas and solve problems together. Entlebuchers generally have great people in their lives! You should expect your puppy families to become part of your social circle and close family group for the life of the dog at minimum. If they are local, have them visit and enjoy time with the ever-expanding belly of your female.



Whelping. The moment arrives

Puppies inevitably seem to arrive during the night or early morning, on weekends and holidays. Your vet's office will not likely be open or have appointments available, so plan ahead. Establish a great working relationship with your vet, have an emergency plan, a number to call and have the essentials with you at home. I usually **sleep beside my dam in the whelping room for a week before day 63**. As the puppies are born, all you may notice is a little '**mewing**' sound from the first

puppy. It is not very dramatic in my experience. Stay calm – you don't want to make your dam anxious. Quietly and gently, **dry the puppy off** and make sure it is breathing reliably on its own. Say hello and show it some love. Make it's first moments pleasant. Place it in a beer cooler wrapped in a clean absorbent towel. Ideally, warm the towel just a little next to your skin or in the dryer but be sure it doesn't have any hot spots! Refer to "Your Litter A to Z" at GoodDog for emergency care of neo-natal puppies.

The puppies will come quickly, often **every 15 mintues** but sometimes right after each other. As each is born, dry the puppy in a warm towel and **wrap it up like a burrito**, put on a **puppy collar** and add them to the cooler. Make sure they each have enough room for clear access to fresh air. Note the **collar colour, day/time** and **weight of the puppy** in your notebook. Once there is a lull in deliveries, over an hour, carefully palpate the dam to see if you can feel anymore pups. Call the vet's office and take her in to be examined when they open. Retained puppies can cause problems.

During the whelping pause, provide your dam with a little vanilla ice cream or Mother's Pudding and a calcium product, which will stimulate more contractions. Important: **Do Not** give calcium before the first puppy has been delivered.

It is not uncommon for the last puppy to be **stillborn**. Knowing this ahead of time may ease your conscience during whelping. These little 'angel pups' are part of the heartbreak of breeding. Preventing long pauses during whelping by providing calcium and having your bitch **healthy, fit and well-nourished during pregnancy** is about all you can do to try and prevent these difficult losses.

The **neo-natal period** is the **first 2 weeks** but the **first 48 hours are critical**. Plan to be up **24/7** for the first 2 days, and enlist help if possible. Even someone to clean up, prepare a meal and take your other dog(s) for a walk is a great idea. Plan to be with your dam and her pups constantly for those first two weeks, sleeping next to them at night. They may need it quite warm, (80'F), so be ready with your summer wear and a portable heater. Keep the area quiet, draft free and separate from the bustle of the household and any other dogs.

If you see a puppy that is not thriving, suspect **Fading Puppy Syndrome** and act quickly. You will see the puppy is quiet, by itself, away from mom, not acting like the others and not gaining weight like the others. I like to have "Fading Puppy Support" by Dogzymes and prepared Liver Water on hand. The protocol for treating fading puppies is 1. Hypothermia – **warm the puppy** gently first to raise its core temperature. 2. Hypoglycemia – raise the puppy's blood sugar to **provide it with energy** (a drop of karo syrup on the tongue every few minutes). 3. Hypoxia – increase the **oxygen** to the pup if breathing is very shallow. Make sure it doesn't have a towel over its face. 4. Hydration – provide **electrolytes in water** to rebalance the puppy's fluid system, a drop at a time on the tongue. Don't give more than a drop until the puppy swallows or you risk causing pneumonia.

Check all **puppy weights twice a day** and record them. For **fading pups**, increase this to **4 times a day** and call the vet for advice if you are not making progress. If the puppy is too weak to suckle efficiently, you may need to provide milk. There are commercial products but you can make your own with a good recipe. If you learned how to "Tube Feed", now is when it comes into play. Without tube feeding, the puppy uses a lot of energy obtaining milk, even from a bottle with a dedicated feeder (you). Tube feeding gets the milk right to the stomach with no effort on their part at all, and

quite quickly. Make sure they are warm (**Never feed a cold pup**) and then measure, fill and insert the tube, syringe in the milk, withdraw the tube and let them rest. **Weigh before and after each feed. Feed every 2 hours** until you see them gaining reliably and suckling on their own. They should perk up in terms of energy and movement and develop better body tone.

Once all the puppies are stable, get in touch with your puppy families and share some cute photos. Keep talking to the families that are not fully committed and **get those deposits paid**. Until you have a good portion of their purchase price, you can't count on them taking a puppy home. Families may think they want only a male but talk to them and learn why. Maybe you can relieve their anxiety and open them to a female if that's all you have available. If any **families are causing you to hesitate** or put off an update call, move on. What ever is not working now will only get worse with time and the pressure of needing homes. Unfortunately, you will come across plenty of families / individuals that **just are not a good fit** for you and your program. Imagine sharing space with them on a vacation if you aren't sure – that will help you decide. And **don't be afraid to say "no"**. These are your puppies, your heart and soul will be with them for life. Don't send them off to a future that makes you uneasy. You will find other homes.

Once you are through the first two weeks, they will **open their eyes** and you can enjoy the puppies without constant worry as you establish a routine. They will start to be **quite entertaining** just around 4 weeks of age, but they will also be a lot more work. The mother usually cleans up after the pups for the first period of time but then she leaves the work to you – and it is constant. Plan an **indoor play area** and somewhere **outdoors**. I like to have at least 2 puppy pens so that one is always ready while I clean the other. **Laundry and cleaning** are constant features of raising puppies. And having friends over to play with puppies!

At around **4 weeks of age**, you need to gather your puppy homes and **confirm** that they are still interested. Unfortunately, it is common to have a couple drop away for a variety of reasons, leaving you looking for another home, just as things get busy. I make my **deposits non-refundable** if they change their mind. I will return their money if I cannot provide a healthy puppy for them.

Be ready to be gracious when the phone rings, two weeks before pick-up and a **family backs out.** Grandma fell and broke her hip and they can't have a pup underfoot. If you were clear about a non-refundable deposit, keep their money and start looking for a replacement home. Consider the money compensation for the extra stress and work they have inflicted. You may end up keeping that pup a bit longer.

You will start providing **new learning opportunities** to the puppies every few days as they mature. You want them to be ready for the big world when they head home. Play sound tracks, take car rides, visit the vet's office, have guests to play with them.

Puppies are **ready to head home at about 8 weeks** of age. Organize a pick up schedule that works for you. I find selecting a weekend plus a couple days works well. Then I schedule families to come for 3-4 hours each to meet the dogs, go over paper work, sign contracts and take puppy home. It feels like constantly entertaining for most of a week but it helps the bitch and you to feel better about letting the puppy head out into the world.

Once you have thought through the 6 months around your planned puppies, choose the next cycle that makes sense for you. If you have been tracking cycles, you will have a better idea when this might be, but some females are notoriously unpredictable. You may have to be ready when you were not planning to have puppies or wait for the next cycle.

4. **Think about Possible Mating Partners**

If you are not already a member of NEMDA, consider joining now, and become a BCOE partner. https://nemda.org/Breeder-Partner-Application. On Nemda's Members page, there is a member directory and a map. A few of the BCOE breeders locations are shown on the map below. This list below is from the NEMDA website as of Oct 18/26, https://nemda.org/NEMDA-Breeders.

Breeders with Females

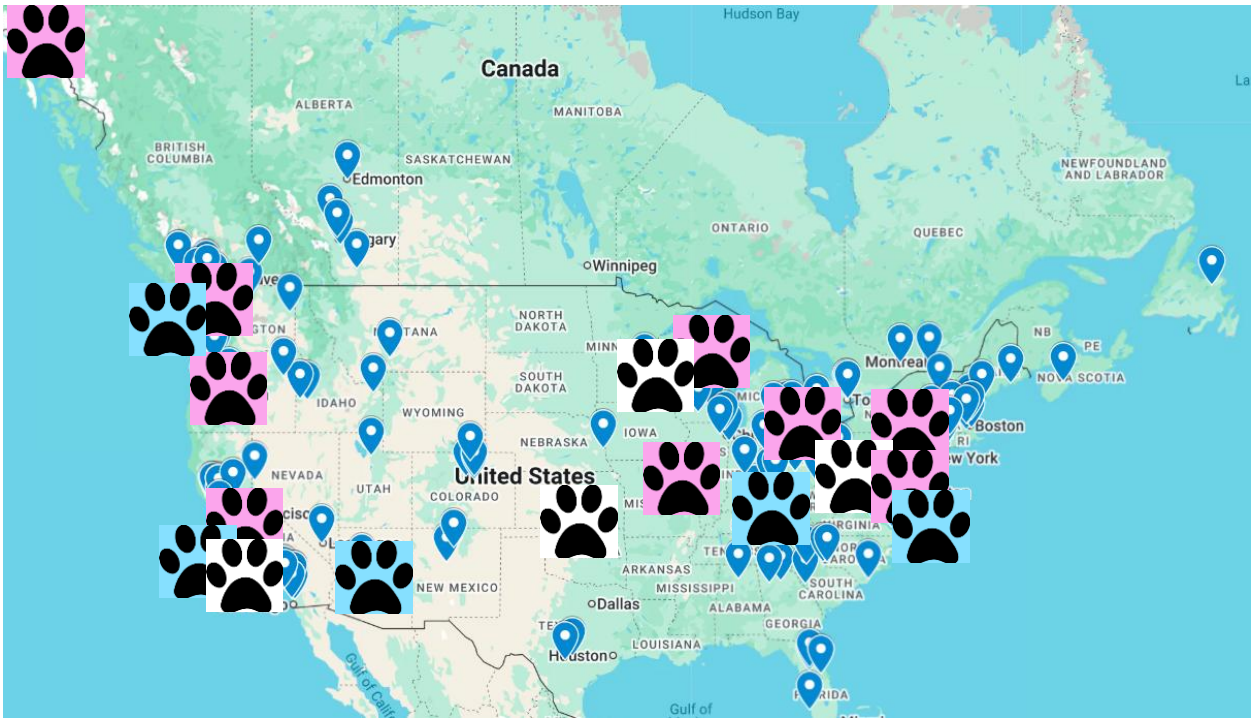
Blue Jay - OH
Entles Edge - VA
Eagleheart - OR
Ironclad - MO
Nor'easter - MA
Coast Mtn – BC, CAN
Fabled Tails – CA
Middle Fork – WA

Breeders with Both

Excel-Ents – WI
Dyberry Ck – PA
Mont Blanc – CA
QH – OK

Breeds with Studs

White Eagle - AZ
Ayomide - CA
Swiss Arsenal - VA
C&M Chewning -CA
Air Dog - KY
Tuggard - WA



The location of the NEMDA BCOE breeders is shown on the map above. To make your life easier, start with the ones that are closer to you and then branch out. Over time, you will develop preferences for specific dogs and owners, but to start with, try to stay a bit closer to home if you

can. This will facilitate the meeting and permit visits between families along the way. Your selected mate will hopefully bring a few families along to your list.

You can definitely go beyond these NEMDA recommended breeders, but keep in mind the criteria you have met and **make sure your selected mate also meets those same criteria**. Other breeders may be found in online searches or from Breed Clubs from other countries. It will require more effort, but could be worthwhile, depending on your specific goals.

As you look at the breeders, consider **transportation** to meet-up for a breeding. In our breed, the **females travel**. I **do not recommend shipping females in air cargo**, just before or after breeding. The stress could well put all your hard work to nothing. Anticipate that you will likely need to stay at the stud's home or very close by for several days and often up to a week. Keep in mind the weather and climate as you leave your home area and don't set yourself up for a long drive through a snowstorm if you are not a winter driver normally.

You may want to explore a reproductive veterinarian or **theriogenologist** near the male's home in case you need assistance in the mating. You should also find a reproductive specialist near your home base in case you need some help during whelping or with newborn pups.

What do I consider in finding a suitable mate?

How to select a mate? There are so many things to consider, but **location and relationship** are very important. You will need to develop and sign a breeding contract with the mate's owner. Often, the stud owner takes either a puppy or a payment equivalent to the price of one puppy.

Depending on your **personal Breeder Philosophy, Goals and Strategies** (which you should really take a moment to write down), you may want to consider which mate would be of most **benefit to the breed, for the future**. For me, this means pushing for more genetic diversity at every opportunity, while maintaining health standards.

Your overall **philosophy** will tell you **how you want to make decisions**. What health conditions are acceptable and which are absolutely not? Consider making **SMART goals** – Specific, Measureable, Achieveable, Relevant and Time Bound. Build a plan that outlines how you will take on this breeding project, what you hope to achieve and when you will measure your results. Then follow the plan.

> **Breeding Philosophy** – defines your **core purpose** – why you breed, the **science and standards** you will use, and your **ethical commitment**. Once these are defined, you will be able to frame all future decisions in terms of these 'priorities'.
>
> > ***For example****: Bar TT Ranch Entlebuchers breeds for conservation of the breed. We focus on health, longevity and temperament over show ribbons and competition scores. We will never knowingly produce puppies with genetic likelihood of a condition which causes death, ongoing pain or difficult management for their owners. We believe that beautiful dogs are the result of excellent conformation. We utilize available DNA testing and pedigree based health tracking to advance our knowledge of heritable diseases.*

Breeding Goals – describe the purpose of your breeding. You might consider aspects of health, temperament and conformation.

> ***For example****: Bar TT Ranch Entlebuchers has the following SMART goals for the next 5 year cycle. We will achieve at least one breeding dog from each litter produced. We will follow NEMDA recommended health testing as a minimum target and demand the same of all mates. We will choose mates to decrease COI so that puppies are consistently lower COI than parents. We will avoid overly popular sires.*

Breeding Strategy – will describe how you plan to achieve your goals. It may refer to sourcing your original breeding dogs and mates, genetics, type, temperament and conformation. It might also refer to your puppy raising methods – AVIDog vs other schools of thought. You might include thoughts about financial survival and how you will achieve this.

> ***For example****: Bar TT Ranch Entlebuchers will take advantage of our Canadian/Arizona presence to bring new genetic material into North America for the breed. We will host Entlebucher gatherings to help owners realize the wonder of this breed. We will share our knowledge widely to those that are interested in the drive to conserve the breed. We will maintain contacts with other breeders and breed clubs to advance our knowledge. We will cooperate and participate with NEMDA as long as the requirements continue to support our personal beliefs. We will not be part of punitive, devaluing treatment of others, members or not. We provide AVIDog based dam pre-natal care and puppy raising. We believe that repeat business is a measure of our success and will conduct all dealings with honesty and integrity. We will provide as much socialization as possible, vaccination and health certificate before puppies head to their homes. We want to be part of our puppies' lives from beginning to end with visits if possible. Our puppies will never land in shelters or rescues, rather they will be returned to us. We stand behind our puppies and will always take them back.*

Learn your own dog's pedigree

Look carefully at **your dog's pedigree** and find any **repeated ancestors**. You'll want to find a mate that does not have these ancestors to improve the likelihood of health & longevity. Too many common ancestors mean that the genes have likely accumulated in groups and are present in identical pairs – homozygous pairs. Recessive diseases thrive on these very situations. In a large and diverse population, genes remain heterozygous and although disease genes are present, the healthy version takes charge, and we don't see the disease. In our small breed population, genetic diversity is a serious problem. Most dogs are as related to each other as full blood siblings. So, check out those ancestors that appear more than once. Make sure you really like the dogs, their health information, their photos and their lifespan.

An easy way to check the **pedigree fit of a potential mate** is by using the **Pedigree Database**, (https://entlebucherdatabase.nemda.org/en/). If you haven't already, sign up for a member login and look up your dog. When you scan the pedigree you will perhaps see some dogs that are coloured and others that are blank. The colours indicate that a dog appears more than once in the pedigree. On your dog's pedigree page, you will find their **CoEfficient of Inbreeding (COI) – at 5** generations by default. Set that to **10 generations** and print out the pedigree breeder version with the COI recorded.

Compare the pedigree that follows in terms of repeated ancestors, inbreeding and COI. On the Pedigree Database online screen, the squares that repeat are coloured, but in the PDF version you need to find them yourself. It can be quite tricky as all the names are quite unfamiliar at first.

Destiny v. Semberweiden

Birthplace : Czech Republic
Birth : 30 Mar 2021
Registration : CMKU/ESP/3339/21
Coefficient of Inbreeding (COI): 1.76%
Ancestor Loss Coefficient (AVK): 90.32%
(5 generations: 100% complete)

Elbows : 0 - Normal✓
Hips : A✓
prcd-PRA : Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓
Breeders : *undisclosed*
Owners : *undisclosed*

parents	grandparents	g-grandparents	g-g-grandparents	g-g-g-grandparents
Ake vom Igernbach ♂ 09 Sep 2016 SSV-ES 61740u4Hips : A1✓ prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓	**Elias v. Mettinger Land** ♂ 08 Nov 2013 SSV ES 57651u4Eyes : Neg.✓ Hips : B✓ prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓	**Huddel-Hugo v.d. Schravelner Heide** ♂ 01 Nov 2008, SSV ES 51043	**Dexter v. Bogenthal** ♂ 14 Jan 2006, SHSB 648373 OHZB 1105	**Heikko v. Trub** ♂ 14 Sep 2002, SHSB 613585
				Carla v. Bogenthal ♀ 23 Feb 2004, SHSB 628595
			Galina v. Sterkrader Forst ♀ 03 Jan 2005, SSV-ES 45983	**Gismo v. Windhuk** ♂ 28 Aug 2002, SSV ES 42491
				Amara v. Sterkrader Forst ♀ 30 Aug 1997, SSV ES 34449
		Bella v. Saamberg ♀ 17 May 2006, SSV ES 47851	**Rocco v.d. Schießmauer** ♂ 11 Sep 2002, SSV ES 42532	**Fino v.d. Gänsewiesen** ♂ 18 Apr 1997, SSV ES 35758; ENTS 600
				Cina v. Wetterhorn ♀ 20 Aug 1999, SHSB 581570 SSV ES 39785
			Greta v.d. Transvaaler Höhe ♀ 06 Mar 2002, SSV ES 41523	**Elias v. Schauersberg** ♂ 08 May 1996, SHSB 551611, OHZB 0566
				Amelie v. Püsselbürener Damm ♀ 20 Sep 1998, SSV ES 36137
	Tess v. Igernbach ♀ 03 Nov 2009 SSV ES 52430u4Hips : L✓ prcd-PRA: Carrier (B;N/P;1.2)✓	**Glenn v. Espenleu** ♂ 09 Dec 2004, SSV ES 45821	**Bobby v. Bogenthal** ♂ 23 Apr 2002, SHSB 609293	**Caro v.d. Auenrüti** ♂ 18 Oct 1998, SHSB 571662
				Cindy v.d. Vehfreud ♀ 10 Feb 1998, SHSB 563258
			Baika v.d. Auenrüti ♀ 10 May 1998, SHSB 566437 SSV	**Lairo v. Güntenen** ♂ 29 Jan 1994, SHSB 511568
				Querissa v. Zusamtal ♀ 02 May 1995, SHSB 532193 VDH SSZ 298
		Ondra v. Igernbach ♀ 27 Mar 2004, SSV ES 44813	**Delinus v. Lühler Dick** ♂ 21 Feb 1999, VDH SSV ES 36767	**Elias v. Schauersberg** ♂ 08 May 1996, SHSB 551611, OHZB 0566
				Cara v. Lühler Dick ♀ 18 Jun 1996, SSV ES 32091
			Hexe v. Igernbach ♀ 28 Jul 1998, SSV ES 35977	**Calou-Berti v.d. Schravelner Heide** ♂ 07 Jan 1996, SSV ES 31015
				Ari v. Igernbach ♀ 04 Sep 1994, SSV ES 28787
Betty von Semberweiden ♀ 22 Mar 2018 CMKU/ESP/951/18/21u4Elbows : 0 - Normal✓ Eyes : Neg.✓ Hips : A✓ prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓	**Gustav v. Gehrshof** ♂ 24 Aug 2011 SSV ES 54653u4Hips : B2✓ prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓	**Eiko v. Espenleu** ♂ 20 Mar 2004, SSV ES 44761	**Dino v. Sterkrader Forst** ♂ 20 Apr 2001, SSV ES 40202	**Elias v. Schauersberg** ♂ 08 May 1996, SHSB 551611, OHZB 0566
				Amara v. Sterkrader Forst ♀ 30 Aug 1997, SSV ES 34449
			Baika v.d. Auenrüti ♀ 10 May 1998, SHSB 566437 SSV	**Lairo v. Güntenen** ♂ 29 Jan 1994, SHSB 511568
				Querissa v. Zusamtal ♀ 02 May 1995, SHSB 532193 VDH SSZ 298
		Felicia v. Gehrshof ♀ 22 Apr 2009, SSV ES 51614	**Great Kaspar v.d. Claswiese** ♂ 15 Jan 2005, SSV ES 45989	**Nanuk v. Wettbachtal** ♂ 25 Sep 1997, SSV ES 34551
				Dasha v.d. Claswiese ♀ 05 Aug 2001, SSV ES 40703
			Benja v. Gehrshof ♀ 08 Jun 2003, SSV ES 43899	**Caro v.d. Melt** ♂ 08 Apr 1996, SHSB 540568; NHSB 2075027; SSV ES 38262
				Ixi v. Igernbach ♀ 15 Jun 1999, SSV ES 37401
	Prana uit't Hollandse Entlinest ♀ 31 Oct 2015 NHSB 3023000u4Elbows : 0 - Normal✓ Eyes : Neg.✓ Hips : A✓ prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓	**Casper Till ze Staré Mincovny** ♂ 24 Jun 2010, CMKU 186/10/12	**Auksis Interpola** ♂ 22 Feb 2008, LSVK ETS 0006/08; CMKU/ESP/100-19/-08/08/10	**Kimo v.d. Auenrüti** ♂ 15 May 2005, SHSB 641475 OHZB 1123
			Abi Wolin Dogs ♀ 11 Feb 2007, PKR II 91297 CMKU/ESP/86/-07/07/10	**Pola Szwajcar** ♀ 20 Mar 2005, PKR.II-84195; LSVK ETS 002/05
				Tipo Porazynianka ♂ 17 May 2004, PKR II-81216
				Dixi Brabusz ♀ 16 Jun 2004, PKR II 80799
		Frida uit't Hollandse Entlinest ♀ 14 May 2009, SSV ES 53895, NHSB 2749458	**Dante** ♂ 08 Aug 1999, S43879/99	**Tryggestads Nicodemus** ♂ 04 Apr 1992, S36865/92
				Maxemal Kajsa ♀ 02 Mar 1996, S23373/96
			Janna v. Kolda ♀ 26 Apr 2004, ÖHZB/ENTS 0976; NHSB 252043	**Ares zur Entlebucher Spielstube** ♂ 02 May 2000, ÖHZB/ENTS 0783
				Hella v. Musskönig ♀ 27 Apr 1997, SSV ES 33706

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If the pedigree for my dog has these repeated, coloured squares, I'm going to dig in and get to know those ancestors a little better. Let's start with Destiny's repeats.

The first duplicate ancestor is in the 4th generation, Baika v Auenruti. I can look at her information and see online that she had a good hip evaluation (A) and is a carrier for PRA-prcd. When I click on her name, I can check on her lifespan – but it is not complete. Baika's COI10 was 22.82, which is quite high. She is a Swiss dog.

I will check the duplicates in the 5th generation next. Amara v Sterkrader Forst – also good hips (A), PRA-prcd carrier and COI10 of 22.7, a German dog. Elias v Schauersberg – hips (A), PRA-prcd clear, COI10 28.97, Austrian. Lairo v Gunenen – hips good, eyes good, COI10 23.21, Swiss. Querisa v Zusamtal – hips (C), COI10 24.83, German.

If any of the repeated ancestors has deaths recorded, I would **make note of their lifespan** and cause of death. Anything beyond 9 years is acceptable to me, personally, but 12 years or 15 years would be a bonus. Unfortunately, not all dogs have this information recorded.

Next, I'll look more closely at Destiny's parents & grandparents, especially for health or lifespan notes. Parents – hips, elbows, eyes, EU all good. Grandparents – hips (B & L), Ectopic Ureter asymptomatic. I'll definitely **not want to double up** any more EU abnormalities in the mate!

After looking through a few pedigrees, you'll become familiar with some kennel names and specific dogs that seem to come up repeatedly. Make your own conclusions, but those weird names will be much more familiar in a short while.

Now review the mate's pedigree

Next, I look at the **mate and their health record**. Check that they have their **CHIC number** and that their tests all **meet the NEMDA requirements**. Check the **date on the eye exam** and if necessary, ask them to update that test.

You can do a **trial mating** with any of the mates that you have just screened. Just type in the name of the mate you are considering and look at the theoretical pedigree. Watch out for too many coloured dogs in the generations behind.

Your theoretical pup has a calculated COI. At a minimum, try to **keep that number COI-10 below 10% if possible**. It is a measure of the inter-relatedness of the prospective parents, and again, we want genetic diversity, so the lower the COI and the fewer repeats in ancestors, the better. Always click the button to see the **COI at 10 generations** as it reveals a lot more. At a minimum, select mates that improve on the COI of the parents.

I see some repeated ancestors in the bottom half – Baiko vd Auenruti but the COI looks good. Review the pedigrees, COI10 and coloured blocks on a few possible mates and select the one that you think is a good fit.

Virtual Pedigree

Coefficient of Inbreeding (COI): 0.68%
Ancestor Loss Coefficient (AVK): 95.16%
(5 generations: 100% complete)

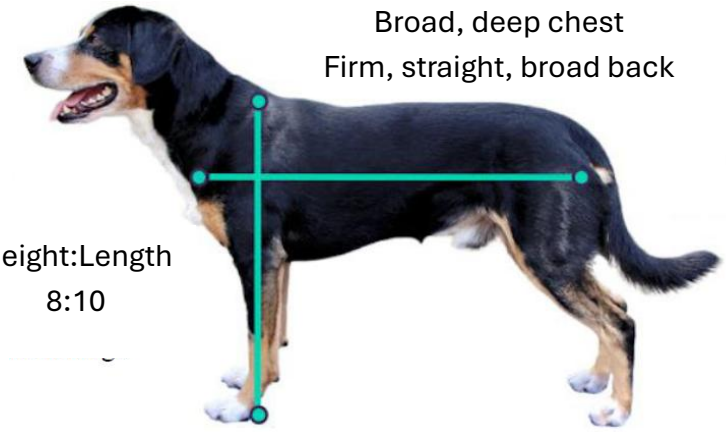
parents	grandparents	g-grandparents	g-g-grandparents	g-g-g-grandparents
Atrey z Kralovstva labiek ♂ 06 Nov 2022 SPKP 706u4Elbows : 0 - Normal Hips : A prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)	**Chanson D´Soleil from Balihara Ranch** ♂ 07 Feb 2021 SPKP 613u4Elbows : 0 - Normal✓ Hips : A✓ prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓	**D'Artagnan Zahrada Snu**♂ 17 Mar 2015, CMKU/ESP/642/15; SPKP 388/17	**Dexter v. Afkat**♂ 07 Jun 2012, SSV ES 55791	**Aiko v. Mettinger Land**♂ 18 Mar 2009, SSV ES 51503
				Dina v. Jordanbach♀ 08 Aug 2005, SSV ES 46757
			Akirké z Tichého údolí♀ 30 Apr 2009, CMKU/ESP/137/11/09	**Argus Novabon Paradise**♂ 17 Sep 2005, CMKU 54/05/07
				Alma Wolin Dogs♀ 11 Feb 2007, PKR II-90936; CMKU/ESP/84/-07/07/09
		Feebee from the Earth's Axis♀ 10 May 2018, CMKU/ESP/985/18; SPKP 500	**Benga v.d. Ursushoeve**♂ 06 Jun 2010, NHSB 2798045	**Dexter v. Jordanbach**♂ 08 Aug 2005, SSV ES 46751
				Joy Tara v.d. Hoeve Graan voor Vis♀ 20 Apr 2004, NHSB 2503925
			Droo from the Earth's Axis♀ 12 May 2013, CMKU 423	**Auksis Interpola**♂ 22 Feb 2008, LSVK ETS 0006/08; CMKU/ESP/100-19/-08/08/10
				Yvette from Balihara Ranch♀ 25 Feb 2006, SPKP 121; CMKU/ESP/83/-07/06/08
	Collet od Almili ♀ 24 Jul 2019 SPKP 547u4Elbows : 0 - Normal Hips : A? prcd-PRA: Carrier (B;N/P;1.2)?	**Benjamin Ráj na Vysocine**♂ 21 Dec 2013, CMKU/ESP/469/13/18	**Koohinoor van het Bressershof**♂ 23 May 2011, LOSH 1095741; SPKP 303/12; PKR.II-112085	**Artus v. oberen Dorfberg**♂ 06 Nov 2006, SHSB 656220
				Brinta v.h. Bressershof♀ 02 Dec 2002, LOSH 0916851
			Ballyhara's Kithara♀ 05 Jan 2011, SPKP 274; CMKU/ESP/244/-11/11/13	**Noble Nocturne from Balihara Ranch**♂ 01 Sep 2008, SPKP 207; PKR.II-103010
				Lillith from Balihara Ranch♀ 27 Aug 2008, SPKP 204/10
		Agnes od Almili♀ 06 Sep 2014, CMKU/ESP/589/14/19	**Amor v. Semberweiden**♂ 05 May 2011, CMKU/ESP/245/11/13	**Quinto v. Garstnaeck**♂ 15 Jun 2005, OHZB 1045
				Flory v.d. Amperauen♀ 17 Oct 2008, VDH SSV ES 51030; CMKU/ESP/118/-09/08/11
			Alpinka z Chvojkova dvora♀ 01 Oct 2010, CMKU/ESP/216/10/14	**Auksis Interpola**♂ 22 Feb 2008, LSVK ETS 0006/08; CMKU/ESP/100-19/-08/08/10
				Bella v. Pimikhof♀ 24 May 2008, CMKU/ESP/104/08
Destiny v. Semberweiden ♀ 30 Mar 2021 CMKU/ESP/1339/21u4Elbows : 0 - Normal✓ Hips : A✓ prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓	**Ake vom Igernbach** ♂ 09 Sep 2016 SSV-ES 61740u4Hips : A1✓ prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓	**Elias v. Mettinger Land**♂ 08 Nov 2013, SSV ES 57651	**Huddel-Hugo v.d. Schravelner Heide**♂ 01 Nov 2008, SSV ES 51043	**Dexter v. Bogenthal**♂ 14 Jan 2006, SHSB 648373 OHZB 1105
				Galina v. Sterkrader Forst♀ 03 Jan 2005, SSV-ES 45983
			Bella v. Saarnberg♀ 17 May 2006, SSV ES 47851	**Rocco v.d. Schießmauer**♂ 11 Sep 2002, SSV ES 42532
				Greta v.d. Transvaaler Höhe♀ 06 Mar 2002, SSV ES 41523
		Tess v. Igernbach♀ 03 Nov 2009, SSV ES 52430	**Glenn v. Espenleu**♂ 09 Dec 2004, SSV ES 45821	**Bobby v. Bogenthal**♂ 23 Apr 2002, SHSB 609293
				Baika v.d. Auenrütti♀ 10 May 1998, SHSB 566437 SSV ES 38265
			Ondra v. Igernbach♀ 27 Mar 2004, SSV ES 44813	**Delinus v. Lühler Dick**♂ 21 Feb 1999, VDH SSV ES 36767
				Hexe v. Igernbach♀ 28 Jul 1998, SSV ES 35977
	Betty von Semberweiden ♀ 22 Mar 2018 CMKU/ESP/951/18/21u4Elbows : 0 - Normal✓ Eyes : Neg.✓ Hips : A✓ prcd-PRA: Clear (A;N/N;1.1)✓	**Gustav v. Gehrshof**♂ 24 Aug 2011, SSV ES 54653	**Eiko v. Espenleu**♂ 20 Mar 2004, SSV ES 44761	**Dino v. Sterkrader Forst**♂ 20 Apr 2001, SSV ES 40202
				Baika v.d. Auenrütti♀ 10 May 1998, SHSB 566437 SSV ES 38265
			Felicia v. Gehrshof♀ 22 Apr 2009, SSV ES 51614	**Great Kaspar v.d. Claswiese**♂ 15 Jan 2005, SSV ES 45989
				Benja v. Gehrshof♀ 08 Jun 2003, SSV ES 43899
		Prana uit't Hollandse Entlinest♀ 31 Oct 2015, NHSB 3023000	**Casper Till ze Staré Mincovny**♂ 24 Jun 2010, CMKU 186/10/12	**Auksis Interpola**♂ 22 Feb 2008, LSVK ETS 0006/08; CMKU/ESP/100-19/-08/08/10
				Abi Wolin Dogs♀ 11 Feb 2007, PKR II 91297 CMKU/ESP/86/-07/07/10
			Frida uit't Hollandse Entlinest♀ 14 May 2009, SSV ES 53895, NHSB 2749458	**Dante**♂ 08 Aug 1999, S43879/99
				Janna v. Kolda♀ 26 Apr 2004, ÖHZB/ENTS 0976; NHSB 2520439

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4. **Check the standard for both dogs.**

NEMDA provides this excellent resource for Judge’s Education. Compare both dogs to the statements and photos that follow. You will not create the perfect dog – but your aim is to improve on known weaknesses. Start with **the traits that are obvious to you** and then move to more subtle weaknesses as your knowledge grows and your breeding continues.

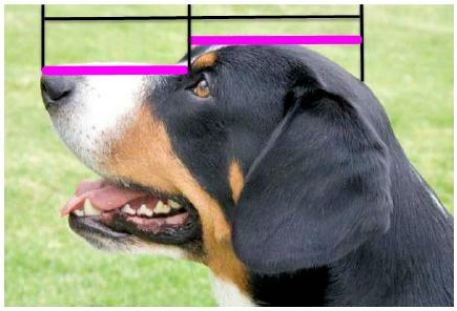
In a group of Entlebuchers, what do you notice about your dog? Is he a little tall & lanky compared to others? Short & stubby? Long bodied and loose in the middle? Does he move with grace and ease or lumber with effort? Are his markings perfectly symmetrical with the chest cross and black at back of neck? Make the same evaluation of the mate you are considering. As you plan a mating, try to work on these obvious traits first.



Broad, deep chest
Firm, straight, broad back

Height:Length
8:10

Muzzle:Skull 9:10



<u>Front</u>
Sturdy, short legs, square under body



<u>Hind</u>
Straight, parallel legs
Rear dewclaws removed



<u>Gait</u>
Ground covering, fluid, good reach, strong drive from rear



<u>Markings</u>
Black with tan (fawn to mahogany) and white, Symmetrical, Blaze from crown to bridge of nose, White continuous from chin to chest, White tip on tail, White on feet







Inverted cross on chest

Priorities of the Entlebucher

Overall impressions
The Entlebucher should appear:



- **Balanced**, **moderate** and just medium-sized - not exaggerated in any area.
- **Upper arms equal or slightly shorter than shoulder blade**.
- **Length of forearms** should be **in proportion** when compared **to** the **depth of body**.
- **Compactly built** - firmly put together with efficient use of space.
- **Athletic and fit** for the job of a cattle drover and all-purpose farm dog.
- **Age appropriate**: Generally, Entlebuchers can take up to 3 years to fill out.
- **Gender appropriate**: Females should look feminine; males should look masculine.
- **Self-assured and good-natured**.

On the chart below, make a '-' sign beside any area that you consider a weakness for both the male and female. Hopefully the weaknesses do not coincide. Now mark the strengths with a '+' in each colum and see if any weaknesses have been improved by the mating.

Female	Simplified Breed Standard	Male
_____	Body height to length 8:10 ratio	_____
_____	Strongly muscled, agile, balanced	_____
_____	Forelegs short, sturdy, straight, parallel	_____
_____	Paws point forward, well arched toes	_____
_____	Colour – Black, white & tan to fawn	_____
_____	Markings symmetrical	_____
_____	White blaze and white from chin to chest	_____
_____	White on all four feet	_____
_____	Gait – ground covering, drive from rear	_____
_____	Head – slightly wedge shaped	_____
_____	Muzzle to skull 9:10 ratio	_____
_____	Expression alert, attentive, friendly	_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____

Review both dog's **temperament** strengths and weaknesses to the standard.

Female	Breed Temperament	Male
_____	Confident cattle dog	_____
_____	Neither shy nor vicious	_____
_____	May be reserved with strangers	_____
_____	Lively, active, persistent, self-assured and determined	_____
_____	Cheerful and capable of learning	_____
_____	Loyal and protective of family, herd, property	_____
_____	Highly intelligent, versatile, adaptable	_____
_____	Strong willingness to work	_____
_____	Quick, responsive to commands	_____
_____		_____

Review any other health conditions ie. Allergies, kinky tail, undescended testicles, abnormal anatomy or physique. Consider if any of the characteristics of either dog would be lethal, painful or difficult to manage if inherited by offspring.

Once I have a couple mates that I could be happy with, I consider the other details;

- **Location & relationship** – if you don't know the owner personally, this is a good time for a phone call or zoom chat to get a feel for what it would be like working with them, are they serious about breeding?
- **NEMDA membership**? CKC or AKC membership?
- CKC or AKC showing or competition record – conformation, performance, recreational?
- Completed **CHIC & NEMDA approved health test results** – if any of the tests are missing online, ask for the test papers in PDF from the owner. They should be happy to provide them. If they are not – walk away.
- Annual **eye exam is current**, or they will redo it now. Get the paper copy before you sign the contract.
- If any of your tests are **Breeder Option**, make sure the mate is Clear
- Check that **one of the dogs has PRA-prcd Clear**. The other can be a Carrier. Do not breed dogs with Affected PRA-prcd. There is no reason to produce pups that you know will go blind.
- Meet the dog – do you like them? **Would you like a puppy just like them**? Do they meet the NEMDA temperament guidelines?
- Conformation – what are the mate's strengths and weaknesses in conformation? How do they line up with your own dogs? Do they have an IABCA or CEBA report you can rely on?
- Is the other owner ready to breed on your hopeful **timeline**?

5. **The actual mating**

If you are not yet enrolled, consider joining **Good Dog** online. https://www.gooddog.com/join-as-breeder They offer some excellent educational resources for new breeders, especially **Gayle Watkin's "Your Litter A to Z".** You don't necessarily have to use the entire GoodDog process if you don't want to (their payment terms can be expensive for buyers). It's probably worthwhile to build a profile.

You've selected your mate and are waiting on your female to go into heat. As you've noticed, she usually has some blood spotting for a few days. When you see the first drops, put on the culottes (period panties) and **count out 10 days**. It's not magical but it often works. Plan to meet with the male in the evening on day 9, briefly. The dogs will likely just smell each other and maybe play a little. Then plan to meet again on day 11 in the morning, day 12 in the afternoon and day 13 in the evening (or day 14 in the morning). Plan to meet every 18 hours for 3 ties if possible. If they don't tie, wait 18 hours and try again.

It is possible to use other methods (vaginal cytology, progesterone testing) to attempt to calculate the best timing for a mating but they are not simple nor inexpensive. This is a great way to start and will likely work for you.

At one of those meetings the dogs will likely get down to business. It often begins with the male humping the head or the side. Don't worry, just **give them time and quiet**, but be close by. When they do **tie** (it's a **physical connection that cannot be broken** without severe damage), reassure them that they are ok and stay right beside them. If they are **virgins**, they can be quite worried at not being able to get away. After a few minutes, the male will lift a leg so that they can stand butt to butt facing away from each other. A **good tie is 20 minutes** or longer, so you may want a stool or cushion.

When the tie releases, the male will disengage and walk a few steps away. He'll likely lick himself and stand there recovering for a few minutes. Your female will also be less active than usual. Call it a day and take them to their respective places to relax, rest and go back to a more normal routine.

If you have **achieved 2 to 3 good ties**, consider the job complete and head home. Count out 30 days and make an appointment for a **pregnancy check ultrasound** with your vet. You may or may not have puppies one the way for a variety of reasons – don't beat yourself up if things didn't work out this time. Most likely timing was off. Just get organized and try again. If two well planned attempts are unsuccessful, consider changing the mate (sometimes the 'chemistry' doesn't work). If that still doesn't bring success, you are likely going to need some professional help with reproduction. Serach for a theriogenologist in your area if you wish to continue.

If puppies are growing, bank as much **sleep** as possible, get **puppy families** on a list, **study whelping and neo-natal care**, chat with your vet about their schedule at the expected time of whelping and prepare for an exciting 3 months ahead. There is no turning back now.

Welcome to Breeding!