

Pure Dog Talk 484 – Five Ps in Passport to Successful Reproduction?

Pure Dog Talk is the voice of purebred dogs. We talk to the legends of the sport and give you the tips and tools to create an awesome life with your purebred dog, from showing to preservation breeding, from competitive obedience to field work, from agility to therapy dogs, and all the fun in between. Your passion is our purpose. Pure Dog Talk is proudly sponsored by Trupanion, medical insurance for pets.

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Laura Reeves:

Welcome to Pure Dog Talk. I am your host, Laura Reeves. I am being joined again by my good friend, Dr. Marty Greer, who is a gift to all of us in purebred dogs and all dogs. So thank you, Marty. I'm really excited. This is Marty's title. So I have to tell you, this is inspired, the five Ps, say that 10 times fast, five PS in the passport to successful breeding. I just love this. We're going to talk about things that you guys, as breeders, can do to improve your chances of a successful outcome in your breeding. So, welcome, Marty.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Thank you. I'm happy to be here.

Laura Reeves:

I am thrilled. So, we all go through this. We all have plans that go awry and all of those sorts of things. So, lay this out for us. What are our things that you, as a veterinarian, can suggest to our breeders that will give them a better long-term outcome in their breeding?

Dr. Marty Greer:

Sure. I'm thrilled to do this. We spend a lot of time in our practice working with breeders and have a lot of experience with the opportunities to see what goes right and what goes wrong. So I'm going to say from the outset, if 100% of your bitches get pregnant, 100% of them whelp successfully, you raise 100% of your puppies, you can just turn off right now. You don't need to listen to the podcast. So, you're good.

Laura Reeves:

Now, actually, I don't think that's true because if that's been the case for your first two, five, or even maybe 10 litters, there's going to be one that it's not the case for it.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. But for most people, somewhere along the line, they stumbled. They missed out on a breeding. They have an unsuccessful whelping. They lose a puppy. Something goes wrong and it just doesn't turn out to be wildly successful. I want to give people the tools that it takes to improve their breeding program. It doesn't matter what reproduction veterinarian you go to, they're all going to say, "Oh yeah, all five of these are important." Now, they may have other things that they want to add to it, they may have some tweaks on it, but I'm going to tell you, this is pretty universal among people who do a reproduction for their livelihood, for their practice in the things that we can do to make your outcomes better. So, we're going to do progesterone, prenatal care, puppy count X-rays, preparing for the whelping and planning a C-section. Those are the five PS. Now, we'll go through and talk about each one of them as a unit.

Laura Reeves:

I love it.

Dr. Marty Greer:

So, we can give you the tools. So every time I have a staff member that comes to me with a client on the phone or client in exam, and they're like, "Okay. Things are not going well," it almost all comes back to one of these five things. It's timing your breeding, taking good care of your bitches during the pregnancy and having a successful whelping. So, those are really the backbone, the foundation for great breeding success. Very few people can say that they raise 100% of their puppies with 100% of their bitches getting pregnant with 100% success. So if you do that, maybe you've had one litter. But like you said, if you had more than a couple of litters, chances are you've stumbled somewhere along the way.

It doesn't matter who I'm talking to. I talked to commercial breeders. I just spent a day and a half with Amish breeders, who are just incredibly wonderful people with unbelievable kennels and unbelievable breeding programs. So for those of you who think that the Amish are breeding in substandard conditions, you really need to take a look at some of the pictures I brought back. I would love to have some of the setups, the kennels and the opportunities that these breeders have. So it doesn't matter if you're a commercial breeder, if you're Amish, it doesn't matter if you're a Mennonite, it doesn't matter if you're a small-scale breeder where you have a litter over five years and you keep a puppy, or whether you have 30 litters a year, all of that is going to fall into these five pieces.

So first, we're going to talk about progesterone timing. We have a lot of people who push back about progesterone. They say they don't need it, their bitches will get pregnant without it. They don't really need our help. And I'm going to tell you that you can say that until you either don't have successful breeding and you miss, and you're not sure why. So we need to start progesterone testing early enough or repeating the testing often enough and long enough to make sure that she's ovulated plus one test beyond that. So ovulation in most people's labs is going to be between four and eight nanograms per mil, before she hits five. I don't want to have first progesterone coming at 32, and we see that.

Laura Reeves:

It just happened to me. I had a fellow that was breeding a bitch, and it was one of my litters and blah, blah, blah. I said, "Okay. Take her in for her first progesterone right around a week, because that's usually a good time." Yeah. No, she was at 25 on day seven.

Dr. Marty Greer:

There are some girls who skip right through that proestrus pretty quickly. So you want to be sure you start early enough and you go long enough that you've got one progesterone past five. So if you stop at 4.7 and then she doesn't get pregnant, we don't know if she ovulated or not. So we want to see one beyond. So, it's not only to get the breeding done successfully, it's also so that you can time when she's due to whelp. Now, again, you might say, "I don't really need that. My bitches are all free-whelpers," until they're not. That's going to be a dog that has an illness during pregnancy, a dog that goes into preterm labor either because she isn't keeping her progesterone high enough or the puppies are sick and they're causing her progesterone to drop prematurely. Or you sit up for three nights in a row waiting for her to whelp and then you realize that she's got a uterine torsion and you don't really know when the C-section should be done.

So, it's easy for people to say that they don't need it, but in reality, they really likely do. So if she didn't get pregnant, we need that to know for the diagnostic workup to try and figure out why she didn't conceive. If she did get pregnant, you need to know what day she's going to whelp on, and it's just going to make life a lot easier. Now, typically bitches are going to whelp 63 days after they ovulate, unless they're brachycephalic, so pugs, bulldogs, Frenchies, bully breeds all the short face breeds, those tend to go two days early, or she has an extra large litter.

Now, my farm dog just had a litter of seven. She was due on Wednesday. I looked at her three weeks before she was doing said, "Oh yeah, you're bigger than you've ever been before." She'd had the biggest litter she'd had. So I knew she was going to go Monday. But I knew she was due on Wednesday, but I was counting backwards saying, "Okay. Because you have extra puppies," and of course, I took my puppy count X-ray when it got close enough to that time so I knew she had seven. So Monday night at midnight, when she went into labor, it wasn't, "Oh my gosh, I'm shocked by that." It was, "Oh, yeah. I figured you'd go into labor this afternoon and not during the middle of the night." So, it's important that we do that. It's easy to say that you don't need it until you're in trouble.

Laura Reeves:

Until you need it.

Dr. Marty Greer:

And then you needed it and it's too late to go backwards in time. In fact, this morning at 7:30, it's Sunday morning, my phone rings. It's a client that said, "My bitch has been in first stage labor for the last 12 hours. She hasn't produced a puppy." I'm saying to her, "Okay. What does she have for discharge? What's her temperature? How many puppies are on the X-ray? When is she due?" Well, she didn't ultrasound her. She didn't X-ray her. She doesn't know when she's due. So I don't know if she's in pre-labor or if there's something wrong, if there's a uterine torsion, if there's a puppy that's too big, if there's a puppy that got in the wrong part of the birth canal, because sometimes they'll start down from the uterus and go toward the cervix and then take a turn back north and head up the other horn going north.

Laura Reeves:

Right. Which is a very bad thing to have happened.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. Coming out shoulder first never works well. So the progesterone timing, I cannot overemphasize the importance of progesterone timing. If nothing else, you're going to have the vet clinic on your side when you call saying, "Okay. We know you're going to need help today. We'll get you in," instead of saying, "Well, really, I have no idea when we're actually due. I don't know if you're overstating the crisis that you're in, if you're understanding the crisis you're in. But without that data, we really, as a veterinary community, don't have the information we need to start initiating early care to save your bitch, to save your litter." So I cannot overemphasize the importance of progesterone testing. It is super important. Do you have to do it every single day? Absolutely not. You can do it every two to three days. And then when she starts to get close to ovulation, your vet clinic will tell you how to proceed, but it's really useful information to have. And then there are people who say, "Well, I'll just do reverse progesterones. If I need to do something at the end, I can do that." Well, first of all, it doesn't work if the bitch has a premature progesterone drop. You're going to have premature puppies, and premature puppies don't survive. If they're born more than 48 hours in advance of when they're actually due, they don't survive. And then the other problem is we end up spending a lot of money on progesterone testing, because then we're going to have you come every day. Bitches don't drop their progesterones on a graph. They rise pretty significantly on a graph. We can usually predict when the progesterone is going up. But on the way down, I've seen bitches sit at three for 10 days. I have documentation of that. I've seen bitches dropped from 10 to one overnight in an eight-hour period so it's really hard to use reverse progesterones effectively. So, I cannot overemphasize the importance of progesterone.

Laura Reeves:

Okay. So, we are going to do progesterone. Everyone, hear me on this. Hear Marty on this. It really will. It really will. I have personal lived experience to absolutely give back up to Marty because I have had many litters that would not have made it had it not been for knowing exactly where I was on progesterone. So first P, progesterone, second P, prenatal care.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Right. Again, it's super important. We know from the human side how important good prenatal care is. There's a reason that women that are pregnant go to the doctor frequently. We now could do ultrasounds at every visit if we choose to, if we need to monitor the bitch during prenatal care. But even before she gets pregnant, we need to start folic acid six to eight weeks before she comes into heat. We need to have her at an ideal body condition. We need to make sure she's on an appropriate diet that doesn't contain legumes, peas, and beans. We need to make sure she's on a diet that's got the macro and micro nutrients that she's going to need to be pregnant and sustain a pregnancy. We need to make sure your supplements are in line with what they should be. Excesses of vitamin A can cause cleft palates and other midline defects. So, we need to be reviewing that.

Dr. Marty Greer:

We want to make sure vaccines are up to date because you can't vaccinate during pregnancy. If she comes due during the time she's pregnant, we cannot vaccinate. We want to make sure she's on appropriate heartworm and flea and tick preventives that are safe for breeding dogs. It doesn't say on the label pregnancy. It says on the label of a lot of these products not tested or not reused in breeding dogs, right? So if your eight-week-old puppy is going to be part of your breeding program, that's a breeding dog, no Seresto collars. They're not labeled in the U.S. No certain products. So if you do contact me, I'm happy to send you a list of those products that are labeled and the ones that are not labeled.

Laura Reeves:

Actually, Marty, one of our previous podcast, I will make sure to link it here, you gave us your list, which I thought was one of the most valuable things I'd ever had. I refer people to it all the time.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Good. Good. So we want to make sure her hygiene is good, that she's clean. I like to have them bathe before their bed, not the day of breeding because we want her to smell interesting enough to the male dog that he'll still breed her, but we want to make sure she's good and clean. She doesn't come in with mats or mud hanging off of her, whatever, because let's face it, some of these working dogs don't always stay clean. We want to make sure that we've brucellosis tested her well enough in advance that if she comes back positive, we can do the confirmatory test because up to 10% of the brucellosis test will come back positive and that can be a false positive.

Now, that being said, it's easy to say, "Oh yeah, brucellosis doesn't happen in the United States anymore." Guess what, that's not true. I've just spent several hours on the phone in the last month, talking to a client outside of Wisconsin who had a bitch come to her for her stud dog to breed. They didn't tell her she'd been brucellosis-positive at a former tests. They didn't tell her she previously aborted a litter.

Laura Reeves:

Oh my god.

Dr. Marty Greer:

And then after the breeding took place, she found out that the bitch was brucellosis-positive. She now has the state veterinary knocking on her door every 30 days, monitoring her breeding program. So guess what, brucellosis is still out there. You need to be aware of that and you need to test for it. You should be testing your bitches every time that they're going to be bred and you should be testing your males every six months or more often if they're actively being used in natural breedings.

So prenatal care, really important, ideal body condition, diet supplements, preventive health care, vaccines, heartworm, flea, and tick, hygiene, brucellosis, those are the summary of what you need to do in advance. She needs to be well-fed. Make sure she's on an appropriate diet that isn't one of the raw meat diets. I'm not a fan of raw meat. Personally, I like my steak rare, so don't get me wrong. I get it. But raw meat is not an appropriate diet for our dogs to be used in a breeding program because of Neospora, because of toxoplasmosis, salmonella. There's parasites and bacteria, and there are imbalanced in that nutrient profile that we can't compensate with for supplements.

So please, before you have her coming to heat, before you breed her, get her on an appropriate diet. What I recommend is either going to be the Purina Sport 30/20 or a Royal Canin diet. Those are the diets that I feed my own personal dogs. So if you're asking, that's what I feed. I buy my dog food. I am not given dog food by the pet food companies. I don't have an affiliation with them. In that manner, I get paid to do a webinar for them, but I do not work for them and I do not get their food for free. I buy my food just like all of you.

Laura Reeves:

That's good. I think that's an important thing. Too many people misunderstand those relationships, and so I think that's a really great point to make, Marty. Okay. So, progesterone timing, prenatal care. What's number three?

Dr. Marty Greer:

Puppy count X-rays.

Laura Reeves:

Yes.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Again, people say, "Oh, I am not going to do that. It's not safe or it's not accurate." I'm going to give you some tips that can make it accurate. If you were taking X-rays with a digital machine or with rare-earth film, it's very safe. The exposure to X-rays is very, very low. In fact, if you live in Denver, Colorado, where the altitude is high, you have the equivalent from sun exposure and radiation of five to 10 chest X-rays a year just living in that environment. So, two X-rays-

Laura Reeves:

That's a really interesting little factoid. I had never heard that one.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. People don't know that, so they think we're going to zap their dog and their puppies are all going to die of cancer when they're two years old. Well, that is not the case. The X-ray exposure because of rare-earth and/or digital X-ray is incredibly low. If we can effectively take an X-ray with two X-rays, and I'll explain how that works, we can have very, very low exposure and very accurate X-rays. Now, I'm going to tell you that if your vet clinic X-rays your dog and there's more than 12 puppies, I'm going to give him some slack and say, "Yeah, it's hard to get an exact count when you get to 12 or more," because they're so much scatter because the bitch's abdomen is so big and because the puppies overlaps so much. Once you get above 12, you're doing a C-section anyway, at least we're going to recommend one.

So, I don't worry too much if you get above 12, but if you leave your vet clinic and they say there are six to eight puppies, you didn't get what you paid for. You need to march back in the door and talk to them about it. So, number one, go to a vet that has digital X-ray, number two, take your bitch fasting. She needs to not have breakfast the morning you take her in for the X-ray. If she had breakfast, we can't fix the amount of food that's in her stomach. So take her in fasting, make an appointment in the morning if you can, take her in fasting. Number three is have her have a stool before you go in so that her colon is empty, because the more food and the more stool in the colon, the harder it is for us to see the puppies on an X-ray. I can show you great pictures of that demonstrated.

Laura Reeves:

Right.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Please do not put your puppy count X-rays on Facebook and ask people for their opinion, because by the time you do the JPEG of the picture, and then you downgrade the quality of the picture that Facebook requires to post it, you're going to have a really blurry X-ray that's not going to be helpful. If your vet clinic can't count, find a new vet, because you should be able to go to a vet clinic that can give you an accurate count. Now, if you go in and she's fasting, but she has stool in her colon, then you can either match her or put in a suppository or both. Believe me, everybody that shows dogs know what matching is. You take a paper match. Please do not use wood matches. Take a paper match or glycerin suppository, put it in, take her out for a 30-second walk, and voila, even in January, you will have an empty GI tract, which will make looking at the X-ray much easier.

So my staff is trained that if they take one X-ray and they see too much stool in the colon, they stop at that point. They put in the match. They send her outside. They come back in. And then we take two lateral X-rays, meaning that they lay on their side. We put them on the right side down and we put them on their left side down. I don't care what order you do it in, but I don't take them on their back and I take both laterals, one side, roll them over, do the other side, because what's really cool about it is many times you'll see seven puppies on one X-ray and you roll them over and an eighth puppy appears because they were perfectly aligned in the uterus and you missed one, but that roll, that repositioning of

the uterus, by putting her on the opposite side will illustrate another puppy. So that is our standard way that we take X-rays.

You have to have good settings on the X-ray machine. We use a grid for any pregnant dogs. So that if anybody that's in the veterinary industry is listening and you're struggling with X-rays, you can get a grid on your digital X-ray machine by talking to your vendor, but you need matches, suppositories, digital X-ray and a fasting bit. So if you're worried she's going to starve to death, she's not going to be missing breakfast. Take her food along. As soon as they're done taking the X-rays, feed her, then you can take her home so she's not overly hungry, because we certainly don't want our bitches that are late term to be underfed. And then we take the X-ray somewhere between day 55 and day 60 of her pregnancy. I don't like taking the puppy count X-ray before when it's scheduled and see a puppy knocking at the door like, "Whoa, wait, we're not on a five anymore, people. We're in whelp." So I don't like to see that puppy emerging out of the birth canal on the X-ray. That makes everybody's heart go pitter-pat.

Laura Reeves:

I was just going to ask you, day 55 to 60 is what my best protocol is. I would just wanted to make sure that that was out there for our listeners. I usually aim for about day 58, because after that, I get a little nervous about driving my bitches around to be perfectly honest with you.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Right. But if 58 is on a Sunday, do it on 57 or 59. If you do it too early, the skeletons are not as mature as they need to be so it's much more difficult to read them. If you bring her in a day 40, 45, they don't even look pregnant. Around day 50, you can start to see the skeletons, but because of the density of the pregnancy, you want to make sure that the puppies' skeletons are as mature as they can be without her being in labor. So yes, 55 to 60 gives you the window of time that you can see them, but not that she's already in labor. So please don't drive your in-labor bitch to that point, unless you need to because you have a problem.

Laura Reeves:

Unless you need to, because... Yeah, exactly. I was just going to say.

Hang tight guys, I got a little bit of information for you. We'll be right back to the podcast in a minute.

Hey, crew. Are you looking for the gold standard and canine DNA testing for your breed? Join the winning team at Embark and manage your dog's health, optimize your breeding program and improve your litter's bloodlines. As the highest rated dog DNA test on the market, they have a lot in common with Westminster's most legendary champions, plus they know your breed like the back of their paw. Select ideal breeding pairs to support healthy pedigrees and lifelong care. Find out why thousands of breeders have trusted Embark to help manage their breeding program from improving genetic health and diversity to screening for disease mutations, understanding traits, and more. To save on the most accurate, most comprehensive canine DNA test, visit embarkvet.com and use code Pure Dog Talk to enjoy \$20 off each kit in your order. That's embarkvet.com/breeders and use code Pure Dog Talk. Their world-class scientists and veterinary geneticists are standing by.

Laura Reeves:

Okay. So progesterone, prenatal, puppy count X-ray. Number four?

Dr. Marty Greer:

Preparing for an effective whelping with a complete kit of essential supplies and drugs, along with the instructions on safe and appropriate use for your successful whelping. So if you want to have your supplies all ready together in some box, that's great. You just pull out your kit, you're ready to go. I think it's absolutely essential that you whelp with calcium gel and a DeLee mucus trap. Now, if you want to throw the other things out the window, I can't help you, but if

you don't have calcium gel... I will tell you the calcium gel is hugely important in getting effective whelpings to take place. My last bitch, she's seven and a half. She had seven puppies in two and a half hours with calcium gel, not a drop of oxytocin. So, it's really a great tool to keep labor moving on quickly.

Laura Reeves:

Right. You're talking oral calcium.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yes.

Laura Reeves:

And the kind that comes in a tube that you push the plunger, right?

Dr. Marty Greer:

Correct. Correct. So, it's not the injectable. Now, if your vet is comfortable and you're comfortable with injectable calcium, I'm okay with that. But really, the gel works great, and the Revival Animal Health product tastes really good. So, bitches are pretty happy to eat it. In fact, I caught my bitch that had her litter chewing on an empty tube one day. Now, of course, I didn't want her to eat the plastic, but she was munching on the tube. So that tells you a lot about how flavorful it is compared to the other calcium products that are on the market. So, Revival has a calcium gel that tastes great. If you can't get it, use the other calcium gel. Give it orally. I had one person give it rectally. That's a bad idea. It burns so don't do that.

If you can't get the oral gel, the injectable is okay. Your vet clinic is more likely to use the injectable because it works fast, but make sure you've got your calcium gel. Make sure you've got your DeLee mucus trap. DeLee mucus traps are 10 bucks and they are the most effective tool in getting a puppy to start breathing that you could possibly imagine. Now, I can send you a list of the other supplies that people should have so we can, again, put it on your website, but bulb syringe, a DeLee mucus trap, your calcium gel.

And then the other thing that we've started using, we were using No Doz tablets for caffeine, but now we're using 5-hour Energy, the little red and blue bottles that you can pick up at any truck stop, any gas station, any grocery store, any pharmacy. That has calcium and a little bit of sugar in it. If you have a puppy that comes out that's either not breathing well or not breathing at all, a drop or two of that on their tongue is a nice respiratory stimulant. You don't need a prescription for it. It's safer than Dopram. Is there a time that I used to Dopram for puppies that are more than 10 minutes old and not breathing? Absolutely yes, but you've got to have a clear airway and you've got to have given all these other products first.

Laura Reeves:

Okay.

Dr. Marty Greer:

So have your kit ready and we'll put up the list of things. Don't come screaming out at the last minute. Have your hemostat for clamping off the cords. Have your dental floss to tie up the cords. Have your tincture of iodine to dip the cords in. Have all your stuff together so when she does go into labor, you're not running to the house digging through closets and in bags that you pack to go somewhere. It should all be organized together in a nice clean kit, that when she goes into labor, you can pull it out of the cupboard. Put it in the car in case you have to go to the vet during whelping. Have your ice chest cleaned and ready to go with some towels in it so if you do have to go in for a C-section, you've got a nice, safe place for the puppies to ride home in. Don't show up without some kind of supplies and equipment, kind of look like you're organized. Have your tank full of gas, have your cell phone charged, get your stuff together before she goes in.

Laura Reeves:

You know what we started doing, Marty, has actually been really, really helpful that might be a good tip for listeners. I bought one of those little clear plastic drawer file things that you can buy for \$10 at Walmart or whatever. It's got little plastic drawers, and I put everything in there. So I've got all my scissors and stuff in one place, and all my meds and stuff in another drawer and my heating pads, and my this and my that, my other thing. And that's like the essential. And then there's another couple of totes that have beds. I mean, we've put this all together in one spot, but those little plastic sliding drawers, because you could label them, you know what's in there. If I need fluids right this effing minute, I've got all my stuff there. So, that has been for me super helpful.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yep, I agree. That's how we organize it at the clinic, but not everybody has the space to do that. So whatever system you need, that's fine, just have it together before she goes into labor. When you start to see her pushing, it is a little late to start collecting your stuff.

Laura Reeves:

Yes, absolutely. Okay. We have one more, progesterone, prenatal, puppy count X-ray, prepared to whelp and...

Dr. Marty Greer:

Planning a C-section advance of a crisis if you think you're going to need one. Now, planning ahead can make the difference between great puppy survival and a heartbreak. So if you were planning to whelp and things don't go well, then having a plan in place can turn a bad situation around. So you need to have a vet that you know you can call. You need to have an emergency clinic that you know is available. Find out before you go in what kind of anesthesia they use. If they're going to hold your bitch hostage and only do the C-section, if you let them spay her, which is a terrible, terrible, terrible idea, I never spay at C-section because bitches lose up to 30% of their blood volume and can go into shock. I actually wrote a five-page document, again, that I can share with you because I was ranting one day about the kind of care that people get it at vet clinics that are not familiar in working with breeders.

So please be aware that you need to plan ahead, know what anesthesia they're going to use, Alfaxan or propofol, what kind of gas, sevoflurane. They must have an IV catheter. You can never have a C-section without IV fluids. They must put a tube in the trachea so that she has an open airway. If she started whelping in ate three placentas and vomits part of the way through the surgery while she's under anesthesia and vomits up a placenta and aspirates, that's a disaster. So just make sure that you are using a vet clinic that isn't doing a \$300 C-section because you can't do IV fluids and appropriate anesthesia and an endotracheal tube and gas and enough staff to really do a great job.

And then the faster you can get the puppies delivered... We always have our bitches' tails wrapped, shaved up, drugs in, everything ready to go before we anesthetize them, so that from the time we put her under anesthesia, the first drop of anesthesia hits her vein, within 10 minutes, I've got puppies out of the uterus and across the room in my techs hands. So you should have an experienced surgeon who's fast. You should have a team of people that know what they're doing. So, this is your hint. So work with your vet clinic or the emergency clinic in advance, take them a plate of cookies, take them a nice home-baked pie, take them something in advance so that when you call, they're happy to see you instead of going, "Oh no, it's her again. You don't want to be that person because when you're in a crisis, you need things to go really smoothly. We have a checklist in our practice for what needs to be out. I am the checklist fiend.

Laura Reeves:

No, really? I can't imagine that, Marty.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah, I really am. So there's a book called The Checklist Manifesto written by a physician. It's excellent. It's excellent. It talks about using checklists. Whether you're the World Health Organization or a small hospital or a pilot, no one would do without a checklist. So my staff has a checklist. They've got things organized. It's all out. It's prepared. It's ready to go. Do the same for yourself, get stuff together, get your baking done, take it to the vet clinic and advance and say, "Okay.

My dog is due to have her puppies on Memorial Day, so I just want to let you know that if I have an emergency, I am thinking that you're great people that work with." If you feed your vet techs, they're going to be a lot more likely to be willing to help you, to be willing to resuscitate your puppies, to do all the work that it takes. Make sure that the vet techs have a DeLee mucus trap. So if you don't think they have one, stick one in your pocket and take it in.

Laura Reeves:

Marty, I want to interrupt just for half a second because DeLees to me were a news flash a few years ago. I still think a lot of people are unfamiliar with them. Can you just run through really quick what it is? It is the silliest looking thing you've ever seen.

Dr. Marty Greer:

It is.

Laura Reeves:

It personally makes me gag, but make sure you have someone that doesn't have a high gag reflex to help you.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Well, it's just like you put a straw in your mouth. You put a little piece in your mouth. You put a section into the puppy's mouth, and in between is a chamber that the fluid drips into. So you're not trying to blow into the puppy's mouth. You are able to suction with this device called DeLee, D-E-L-E-E, mucus traps. You can buy them online at Revival. You can buy them online at WhelpWise. They're easy to get. They're under \$10, and they are honestly lifesaving. I had one client that was going to whelp his bitch at home. It was a Labrador. He was an experienced breeder. He's been breeding for a long time. I said, "Joe, you need a DeLee mucus trap." He said, "I don't need that." I said, "No, no, no, Joe, you are not leaving here without a DeLee in your hand. You're leaving with calcium gel. You're leaving with the DeLee, nothing else. You have to have those two things." He's like, "Okay. Fine."

I said, "Look, Joe, if you don't open the DeLee, when the puppies are born and they're doing fine, you can bring it back, I'll give you your \$10 back." He calls me in the middle of her whelping. She's had four puppies. They're all doing great. Puppy number five is out and he's not breathing. He's on the phone with me. I said, "Joe, where's your DeLee mucus strap? He's like, "It's in the other room." "Joe, you need to unwrap the DeLee mucus strap and use it." "Oh, all right." I'm like, "Joe, I'm going to stay on the phone with you until you do this." So I hear him open the package. I hear him put it down in the puppy's airway. I hear him suction and I hear the puppy start to cry. I'm like, "Seriously, Joe, you sell field trial quality labs and you weren't going to spend \$10 to save a puppy that's worth thousands. Are you kidding me?" He's like, "All right." So, I now call the puppy Ten-Buck Chuck.

So, I just think it's so essential for people to have it. If you don't need it, okay, that's cool, but you have it in case the puppy starts to aspirate when it's nursing. Everything seems fine. It's born. Everything is okay. It's aspirating. You can use it for that device as well. So have a DeLee in your hand, have it ready to go. In human midwives, they throw them away after a human baby is born, but of course, in veterinary medicine, we reuse everything. So, we just disinfect them. We're now using Clorox because of COVID. We're using chlorhexidine which taste really bad. So you can just disinfect it, let it dry, rinse it off, and it's ready to go again. Now, my staff each have their own so that they don't have to swap-spit, handing one to the next. So they bling them out so that they know whose is whose.

Laura Reeves:

Okay. Now, that is cute. I love this. The blinged out DeLee, I am down with this.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. So they don't enter the surgery room to pick up a puppy. I hand out a sterile colored towel with each puppy. I hand the towel. I hand them the puppy and they already have their DeLee mucus trap in their mouth ready to section as they are walking away from the surgery table to the resuscitation table. Now, you get a lot more fluid out of a C-section puppy than you do a puppy that's born vaginally because they don't get squeezed on the way through the birth canal. But even with free-whelp puppies, if you have those puppies that are born back in first, they're slow to get started

breathing or something isn't going well, that DeLee mucus trap is absolutely lifesaving. So please, please, please do not whelp without it. Take one to your vet clinic. Buy two, buy one for you, by one for your vet clinic. Once they have one, they'll buy more.

Dr. Marty Greer:

So make sure that you are equipped when you go into the vet clinic, especially if you're going to an emergency clinic and you don't know what their equipment and their supplies are. You don't want to wait until you have a problem and find out that they didn't have the equipment that they need because a DeLee is lifesaving.

Laura Reeves:

Excellent. Okay. I wanted to put in one final thing. I know we have spoken about this before, but I'm going to remind people. We have new listeners, so you never know who's heard what and who hasn't. Do not swing the puppy. This is a change from people who grew up in my era, where that was pretty normal activity. So let's talk about that just very, very briefly and why the DeLee has become so useful for people.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Sure. And so, basically swinging puppies is the equivalent of shaken baby syndrome. When you swing them, you increase their intracranial pressure. You slam their brain against their skull and you cause a brain bleed. I have seen puppies die from that. So, it's just really essential to not swing. It's life-changing to swing puppies. I grew up in the same era you did. We used to sling them or swing them. It seemed like a good idea to clear the fluid out of the airway, but we don't hang babies by their feet like they did in the 1950s when we were born or when I was born, I can't speak for you, when our mothers used to be put under anesthesia. So we no longer recommend that you swing puppies. You were much better off to suction them, alternating a bulb syringe with a DeLee mucus trap, get the airway cleared. If they're still not breathing, I use a 25-gauge needle.

Laura Reeves:

Okay. You froze. You use a 25 gauge needle on the nose, right?

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. Halfway between the nose and the nostrils in the upper lip, right down that crease, you just take a 25-gauge needle, boom, boom, boom. You can peck at it or spin it and twist it, and that will stimulate the breathing. If you've ever uncapped a needle to vaccinate your dogs and then stuck yourself in the lip in the process of doing it, if you've ever uncapped a needle doing that, you know that that's a respiratory inhalation point because A, you take a deep breath, B, you not only take a deep breath, but it also typically will cause you to say some unfortunate four-letter word.

Laura Reeves:

You know what, I want my puppies to say four-letter words because as soon as they're screaming, they're taking deep breaths.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yes.

Laura Reeves:

That's something I feel pretty strongly about. All right, Marty. Well, we are at the end of our time and you have provided our listeners as always with invaluable information and knowledge, and I cannot thank you enough. The number of listeners that contact me on a regular basis telling me that they are so glad they listened to Marty Greer's podcast on whatever it was because it just saved their dog's life, I really can't count that high. So, thank you.

Dr. Marty Greer:

I think that's really cool, and I appreciate that. So if you have a good story to tell, please let Laura know or let me know.

Laura Reeves:

Absolutely.

Dr. Marty Greer:

That will make a difference. Share this with your friends, because when they're driving, this is a really wonderful way for you to spend some time, is gaining a little bit of knowledge. And then if you have to stop the car or do it, hear this second time and sit down and write notes, please feel free. But I will put the whelping list. I'll go send that out so we can get that on there, on your website as well so that they've got access to the supply list.

Laura Reeves:

That will be amazing. Thank you, Marty. Have a great day.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Thank you.

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