

## Pure Dog Talk 432 – Infertility in Dogs: Regular, Random and Rare Causes

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### Laura Reeves:

Welcome to Pure Dog Talk. I am your host, Laura Reeves and I have my favorite veterinary voice here, Dr. Marty Greer. And we are going to talk about some of the fertility issues that can impact our bitches. We've talked a lot in the past about progesterone timing and we had that great series with the California girls talking about semen quality. We've talked with Dr. Jean Dodds about herpes. Marty and I have talked about brucellosis. There's a lot of things that can come into play, right Marty, when we're talking about a bitch that we can't get pregnant.

### Dr. Marty Greer:

There are lots and that's where it gets to be a real challenge is it can be a challenging diagnosis to try and understand the underlying cause and do something about it.

### Laura Reeves:

Right. So we have some great information that Marty provided we'll have in our show notes, but I wanted to kind of pick some of these out because A, they're things that I've seen or B, they're things that Marty suggests are common in her practice, or they're just kind of interesting. So we love to do the interesting ones. One of my things that I've actually encountered is a split heat cycle. And talk to us a little bit about that. How common is it? How do you know that that's what's going on when you're trying to get your bitch bred?

### Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. It is a challenge. Typically what happens is a bitch will come into heat and it looked like she's having a normal start to her heat cycle. She'll have swelling, bloody vaginal discharge, interest in the males, and the progesterone start to rise, but they never hit five.

### Laura Reeves:

Right.

### Dr. Marty Greer:

They come up a little ways. They come up to maybe 2, 2.7, 3.5, somewhere in there, and then they stall out and then the vaginal swelling and the discharge goes away and the boys are less interested and then you kind of shake your head and wonder, why did you spend all that money on progesterone testing and what happened and what's the deal? And we can certainly see it. We see it in young dogs that it'd be her first heat cycle and she's just pretending, she's just practicing coming into heat. So she doesn't really complete her ovulatory period.

### Dr. Marty Greer:

We most frequently buy breeds, seen in the Northern breeds. So the Sammys, the malamute, the Finnish Lapphund.

### Laura Reeves:

Interesting.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

The Northern breeds of dogs. And then we can see them just randomly in other situations. Sometimes there's another bitch in the kennel that may be influencing her cycle.

**Laura Reeves:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

She could have a cystic ovary and that's the other differential that we have is does she have a cystic ovary and that's the reason she hasn't completed her ovulation or is she splitting her cycle? And the only way to really tell is number one, weight. And it's really hard to wait because you expected to breed her and you had the male lined up-

**Laura Reeves:**

Right.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

And you had your veterinary clinic lined up and you had people waiting for puppies and now you're like, poof, somebody just burst your balloon. So sometimes you just have to wait until she comes back in. And sometimes if you've got a veterinarian that can do a really great ultrasound, sometimes you can see a cystic ovary on ultrasound. One or both ovaries can be cystic. And if indeed that's the case, I have a radiologist that comes to our practice that's really, really good with a needle and an ultrasound. And she can aspirate the fluid out of a cystic ovary with needle direction sometimes just with sedating the bitch, collect that fluid, and that does two things. One is it helps her to complete her ovulation.

If she did have a cystic ovary, she'll go on to complete her cycle. And number two is we can send that fluid to the diagnostic lab and get an answer on whether that was a cystic ovary based on the progesterone level. And it's important that if you do have that done, that you send the sample to a diagnostic lab. It is not a sample that you can run in your veterinary clinic because it's going to come back with a progesterone around 5,000, not five around 5,000. And it's going to take serial dilutions to get an answer and that's beyond the scope of what any veterinary clinic I know that even has a progesterone machine can do.

**Laura Reeves:**

Okay. So the cystic ovary, what's the mechanics that's causing her then to split the cycle?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Well she actually doesn't split, she just doesn't ovulate. She'll just hang at that 3.7, 4.2, something in that progesterone range. She'll just hang there and hang there and hang there. And I've seen her hang for 12 weeks and that's really quite dangerous for a couple of reasons. One is it can cause bone marrow suppression, which can be fatal to the bitch because she'll stop making red blood cells and white blood cells and platelets. Two is it increases her risk of developing mammary tumors and three, it increases her risk of pyometra.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

So if you think that's what's going on, if she's acting like that, then you need to address it. If you think she's just split her cycle, if you do a vaginal cytology and she's not cornified, then she split her cycle. If she stays cornified, she's probably got a cystic ovary. You're going to go down those two different diagnostic paths.

**Laura Reeves:**

Interesting. Okay. The idea of the ultrasound and the needle biopsy on the ovary is like sort of mind boggling to me. So I like this.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

I would not do it.

**Laura Reeves:**

I assume that's sort of specialized.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah. It's beyond what I would do, but I have, like I said, a great radiologist that travels to our practice and she can put a needle into just about anything and come up with an answer for us. It takes a particular skillset to do that and if you're fortunate enough to be in an area where you have a vet school or a radiologist that's able to do that for you then you're in much better shape than if you don't. So go for it if they give you that option.

**Laura Reeves:**

Right. So we sort of have made this tangent and we can expand on it, cystic ovaries, but there's also cysts in the uterine lining, cysts in the uterine horn, like we have endometriosis, women do. I did. I was spayed for it.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

There you go.

**Laura Reeves:**

So let's talk a little bit about that.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Sure. So we really don't recognize endometriosis in the dog. Although a lot of people make a correlation with infertility and endometriosis. We do see cystic endometrial hyperplasia pretty commonly. Most commonly in breeds like Bernese Mountain dogs and Golden Retrievers. And it is one of the reasons that after age six we see a decline by 33% of fertility in bitches overall. So it is important that you consider breeding your bitches young. When I was at NAIA I did a presentation on using that shiny, pink, new, healthy uterus. If you're going to use it, use it when it's young, don't wait until it's old and beat up and it's had a bunch of heat cycles. And frankly, the more often a bitch cycles, if she's one of those females that cycles every four to four and a half months, she's going to wear on her uterine lining.

So if you have a bitch with those kinds of cycles, you either need to address it by prolonging the inner estrus period with medication or you need to breed her and breed her and breed her. If you want three litters out of her, breed her back to back, get the litters out of her, get it over with because she is hurdling down a path that she's going to end up with cystic endometrial hyperplasia leading to pyometra or some other kind of a complication that's going to interfere with future fertility. So don't let anybody talk you into skipping cycles or messing around with this stuff. If you have a bitch that's cycling like that, it needs to be addressed before you get into trouble.

**Laura Reeves:**

Interesting. That definitely addresses the bitch that you and I were talking about offline. So that's super useful information. And another one that I have personally encountered, and I would love to hear you speak on it, is hypoluteoidism.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yes.

**Laura Reeves:**

When they cannot maintain the progesterone to maintain a litter.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Correct.

**Laura Reeves:**

So talk us through that.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Sure. And I think there's two causes of it. There's a primary cause and a secondary cause. Primary means that the bitch's ovaries don't make enough progesterone to keep her pregnant. That tends to be an inherited or familial disorder. So I'll see bitches that they did it when they were pregnant and her daughters and granddaughters go on to do it. So it is something to think about. You may not want to include a dog in that gene pool. On the other hand-

**Laura Reeves:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Usually those are the specialty winning bitches, of course.

**Laura Reeves:**

Yep. That's exactly what it was. Yeah. Top winning-

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah.

**Laura Reeves:**

ROMX. Yeah.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah.

**Laura Reeves:**

All that.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Of course. Of course. And so those are always the heartbreaks. So there's primary when her ovaries don't make enough and then there's secondary when there's something wrong with the pregnancy and the puppies maybe have something wrong with them. You may have a puppy or two that's deceased in the uterus and it may be causing her progesterone to prematurely drop. And it's important again, that you distinguish between the two and you can't just start supplementing progesterone until number one, she's past day 45 of her pregnancy so that it doesn't cause birth defects because premature supplementation of progesterone will cause intersex puppies, puppies that are neither male nor female, but something in between and I've seen that happen.

Or if it is secondary, you want to make sure that she at least has some live puppies in her uterus that make it worth pursuing. Now it can be an infectious cause like a septic pregnancy in which case you have to have a long, hard talk with your veterinarian about whether it's safe for her to continue a pregnancy.

**Laura Reeves:**

Right.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Because if she's got sick puppies and a raging bacterial infection in her uterus like a pyometra superimposed on a pregnancy, you may have to decide, and it's a tough decision, but you may have to decide to let that pregnancy lapse with some help with antibiotics, with medications, to empty the uterus with support. Sometimes it's just one or two puppies that have something wrong with them, but we can see Brucellosis. Of course, that ends your breeding career for that bitch and perhaps other dogs in your kennel. We can see herpes, which will interfere with that particular bitch's pregnancy. We can see bacterial infections. We can see Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, Ehrlichia, all the tick-borne diseases can make bitches sick during pregnancy.

Ascending infections. So bacteria that come up through the opening of the cervix, through the vagina, and into the uterus can cause dogs to be pretty sick. So with ultrasound you can take a look at that female and say, "Okay, I've got live puppies here, dead puppies here." Usually if it's an ascending infection it's the puppies closest to the cervix that are deceased and then the ones closest to the ovaries in each horn that are alive.

So there's a lot of nuances to this. This is not an easy disorder to manage because of the risks-

**Laura Reeves:**

Right.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Of intersects because of the risk of bitches getting sicker because of the risk of losing the pregnancy. But it is an important discussion to have with your veterinarian. So make sure you're going to somebody that's supportive of your breeding, that isn't offering spaying as your only option, but is somebody that's knowledgeable in how to manage complicated and difficult pregnancies.

**Laura Reeves:**

Yeah. It was definitely not my favorite breeding experience. I'm not going to lie to you.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

No.

**Laura Reeves:**

Right?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

No. And here WhelpWise can also play an important role. WhelpWise is the uterine contraction monitoring service.

**Laura Reeves:**

Oh, that's good. Talk to us about that particular service because I haven't used that. So I'm curious. I'd love to hear more about how that comes into play, specifically here, but in general.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Sure. So it's run by Karen Copley. Karen is based out of Colorado and has had this service for about 20 years. She's an obstetrical nurse that now applies the technology of monitoring uterine contractions during labor and delivery to the use of bitches. And one of the most valuable parts of it is to manage these bitches that have hypoluteoidism so that she can monitor uterine contractility and irritability. And by doing so, we can supplement with progesterone if it's appropriate. We can use Terbutaline, which is an anti-asthma drug. That's a smooth muscle relaxant. Sometimes it's just the medication.

**Laura Reeves:**

Done that.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah. Antibiotics. So with her insights, by putting the uterine contraction monitor on the bitch, we can assess uterine contractility and assess the success of pregnancy maintenance without waiting until a puppy plops out on your foot underneath your desk unexpectedly.

**Laura Reeves:**

Done that too.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah. I've had clients have that happen. And sometimes we'll see one puppy delivered and then the cervix magically closes and the bitch doesn't complete labor and she keeps the pregnancy going. But again, you really need ultrasound to assess viability of the puppies. Do they have heartbeats? How much fluid is in the uterus? Where are the puppies that are healthy and not healthy? You really need somebody that's skilled at high risk pregnancy management. This is not something that your local veterinarian may be interested in doing it.

Sometimes not what an emergency clinic will do. Many emergency clinics have one goal and that's just to spay your female. So be aware that there are people in Theriogenology that are very skilled at managing high risk pregnancies. There's typically about 100 across the country. So that averages out to about two or three per state. So have that person on your speed dial before you breed your female so that if you do run into a problem you know who to get ahold of when you're running into a problem.

**Laura Reeves:**

Right. Yeah. I will not tell this story on air because I will break down. It was devastating. So I add my recommendation to Marty's. When you know that you've got a problem seek and find the best reproductive specialist you can find. Absolutely the case. Okay. Abnormalities in the uterine lining, going back to the cystic issues. When you have multiple attempts, like you've tried, your timing's good, your semen's good, everything's good, you a natural whatever. Is there a way to go look for cysts? Can you find them? I mean, we're talking about your particular radiologists that can find them in the ovaries. Can you find them in the uterine lining, in the uterine horns, or not without looking?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Sometimes on ultrasound, if they're big enough, you can see them. Most of the time you can't. And many of the diagnoses that we have are made either at a surgical breeding, if we have a bitch that's missed on a pregnancy and the client has decided that a surgical breeding is going to be their next breeding attempt and we go in and we exteriorize the uterus and feel it and say, "Okay, wait a minute. This is thickened. It's not normal. It feels they're cysts." Sometimes we can tell that just based on how it feels.

And when you're working with somebody that does a lot of reproductive work Theriogenologist are people in the society for Theriogenology, they handled thousands of uterus's, we have in our practice. So I can tell you basically by feeling it, ultrasound can be difficult because there may not be large enough to assess on ultrasound-

**Laura Reeves:**

Right.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

But you can either find it at the surgical breeding, which of course at that point is too late to manage for that particular breeding. But we also have bitches that we'll take to surgery and do uterine biopsies about the time that they would be due to whelp their puppies, if they didn't get pregnant. We'll biopsy those uterus's. And frequently we will get a diagnosis. Not always, but frequently we will. The other place that I biopsy uterus is if I have a pregnancy that went to

term, but it had a lot of resorptions and frequently those bitches end up with a C-section because they have one or two puppies left in the uterus. So we'll take those bitches to C-section and that's a great time to biopsy the sites where the placenta formed that was normal and where the placenta's formed where the resorption. And those resorption sites will be kind of a yellow, gray plaque with this kind of gray, slimy, mucous fluid that looks for all the world like you would culture bacteria out of it, but in reality they're usually sterile.

So if you find yourself in a situation that your veterinarian's like, "Ooh, there's a bunch of resorption," say, "Please take a biopsy." You're already in surgery, you've already got her belly open, you've already got her uterus out. Just take a little piece of tissue out of that. And we have a diagnostic lab that we use at the Ohio State University that has a very experienced reproductive pathologists there that can look at those samples. And we've found all kinds of interesting things. We found fibrosis, which is scar tissue. That particular bitch just had puppies after three failed attempts. We finally got a litter of seven out of her. She had fibrosis. So we used a steroid protocol on her. We've seen them where they've had an allergic reaction to the semen.

**Laura Reeves:**

Yes.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

We've seen cystic endometrial hyperplasia.

**Laura Reeves:**

Okay.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yes.

**Laura Reeves:**

I want to know about the allergic reaction to the semen. We started talking about this earlier. That is just insanity.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah. I've only seen it once, but we of course suspect it. We've also got some bitches that don't get pregnant with extended semen, but do with no extender in the semen. So I have to wonder in those cases, if we have a bitch that's reacting badly to the semen extender, which have a lot of proteins like egg proteins and so forth in them. So we can see a lot of different things. There's antibiotics in those, there's egg proteins, there's things that we could imagine that a bitch could react to. So yes, you can have all kinds of interesting things. And without a diagnosis, you really don't have anything to fall back on for your next breeding other than to say you need to have good timing, good semen quality, good semen delivery, and then you have to dance to the Fertility Gods to the light of the moon with incense burning.

**Laura Reeves:**

Come on Kokopelli!

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Exactly. So get your corn-

**Laura Reeves:**

My one repro vet that would sing to the semen after she did a collection. Like rocket, like-

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Hey-

**Laura Reeves:**

Wow.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Whatever it takes man, whatever it takes.

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

All right crew. Check it.

Dog events are happening. For exhibitors who are able and willing to attend these events. It feels as if our tribe has been reunited once again. Meanwhile, for folks who are continuing to feel safest staying at home and away from crowds and for folks who are driving long haul between far flung events, I got ya. I've been working hard to bring you all podcast episodes that help you feel connected to our larger community and offer opportunities for education and entertainment no matter how. You have managed through this truly overwhelming year.

One of my favorite events this year is the monthly virtual Pure Dog Talk after dark for patrons of our podcast. Anybody can join this fabulous community of dog enthusiasts by visiting the website and clicking on the become patron link on the homepage. And while you're there zooming around on the site, you might think about checking out our shopping tab too.

We've linked dog show vendors from all around the country. So you can help support them during this really grueling loss of income suffered due to a lack of events. There's even a swag link that lets you order your Pure Dog Talk t-shirt, sweatshirt, phone case, mask, ringside towel, and so much more. Like the NPR of dogdom, Pure Dog Talk is here for you every day to make sense out of everyday things. To add nuance to your understanding and tools to your tack box. To bring history to life and propel the living history of purebred dogs into the future. So check out the links at [www.puredogtalk.com](http://www.puredogtalk.com). Your support adds up to a huge voice for purebred dogs.

**Laura Reeves:**

Another one that falls into the category of strange and wonderful weirdness in this particular department. One of the things you mentioned is genetic incompatibility between the dog and the bitch and talk to us how that even is a thing and how do you diagnose that and all of that.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Well we absolutely confirmed one case of it a number of years ago with a bitch that had puppies that did not carry to term. She conceived, the puppies weren't resorbed so they had to have died at around day 45 to day 50. And we submitted those puppies and that was the diagnosis that they came back was genetic incompatibility. But it probably happens a lot more than is really discussed because we see a lot of people that do tight line breedings and-

**Laura Reeves:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Generation after generation or line breeding on their dog. And then they call me and they say, Well you know I used to have bitches that had eight to 10 puppies in their litters and now I'm getting two or three." Well if you start really looking at the coefficient of inbreeding, the COI, and getting some help with the geneticist, you're probably going to find that some of that is due to such tight inbreeding that there probably are fatal genes being perpetuated. Sort of like when you breed the natural bob to the natural bob Australian shepherd and you end up then with puppies that have defects.

Those are things that we know about, but there's probably a lot of disorders that we don't really fully understand. So it is important that you outcross often enough that you don't end up with line breeding issues and if you are starting to see a decline in the number of puppies in your litter, you need to look at nutrition, you need to look at the environment, but



you really need to look at your coefficient of inbreeding as well and see if you're just getting a little too tight and if indeed that's the case, there are really great programs out there to help you develop better genetic diversity.

Dandie Dinmont Terrier club-

**Laura Reeves:**

Yes.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Did some really important work and were able to genetically diversify their lines, but still have dogs that were quality dogs that could compete in the confirmation ring and they ended up improving their genetic diversity because like a lot of gene pools in dogs there's was one that was becoming dangerously too tight and the gene pool was getting really, really shallow. Like you barely got your ankles wet in the gene pool.

**Laura Reeves:**

I did an interview with Betty-Anne Stenmark way back at the beginning of the podcast. You guys can go do a word search on it on the website. But Betty-Anne's remark was that it's not a gene pool, it's a gene puddle.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Laura Reeves:**

And she talked about that. The Dandie Club has done a lot of actually really, really interesting and important stuff with their breed without doubt.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Right. And the genetic companies are really helping.

**Laura Reeves:**

Embark's got some great programs for sure. That's the one I've worked with the most.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah. There's a couple of companies and there's geneticists that are willing to do consultation.

**Laura Reeves:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

So if you're running into problems with that, it's time to reach out to a geneticist and really get some assistance.

**Laura Reeves:**

Right. And to me, the mechanics of that, again, back to the mechanics, like how do they know, how does the sperm go to the egg and say, "Yo." It's just fascinating to me.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah. It's something of a miracle that any of us are even here if you really look at how the whole process has to work. And people say, "Why did this go wrong?" And my question is, "How did so many things go right that you actually got a litter of puppies?"

**Laura Reeves:**

Yes.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Because if you look at the list of things that we've got on the website, you're going to see all the things that can go wrong and have gone wrong and you'll be like, "Oh yeah, forget it. I'm never going to get a litter."

**Laura Reeves:**

To the dog breeders nightmare where the next door neighbors lab breeds your Springer bitch and they've got 12 puppies and you're over here carefully, carefully, carefully doing all of the things right. Yeah, no.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

There's genetic diversity for you. They're born in a snowstorm under the porch and they still survive.

**Laura Reeves:**

Crazy.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

It's not fair.

**Laura Reeves:**

It's just not fair. So I think that one of the things that is so amazing when we talk about all of this stuff is how many of these things are underlying issues. The hypothyroid is a perfect one. And maybe you could go on about thyroid a little bit because, not so much in my breeding program, but my mom's Clumber's, Clumber Spaniels are almost endemically hypothyroid. And the breed has tremendous trouble as a result with fertility.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Right. And there's a lot of question about what the significance of thyroid is. How profoundly hypothyroid do you have to be before you're not fertile is one question. The other is, do you really want to perpetuate a dog that is on thyroid medication? We actually have clients that come in and they just randomly found thyroid medication and started their dogs on it. And once you've made a commitment to a thyroid medication, you've changed their thyroid function because you've changed their feedback mechanism.

So it is not something that we just willy-nilly put bitches on it. It's not appropriate to do that and it's not a good idea for you to sneak it out of another dog's bottle of medication and put a dog on it without veterinary intervention and certainly Jean Dodds, I'm sure, has adequately addressed that in another program, but be really careful about it and think about whether you want that in your gene pool and this goes back to genetics, but basically you have to decide what's important in your lines and what you're willing to live with.

So I personally rate genetic diseases on a scale of one through three. One is a minor problem that is corrected pretty easily. Something like a retained testicle, an extra eyelash, those nobody dies from, but they are definitely genetic and they are things that your veterinarian will find at a six week puppy evaluation. Then there's level number two, for me is allergies, thyroid disease, things that require chronic medication or chronic management. Is that something that you would be comfortable selling somebody a puppy and saying, "Well, it's probable that she'll end up with allergies. So go for it." Are you going to sell those puppies?

So do you want that in your line? And number three for me are things that I just don't put up with and don't breed. Bad temperament falls into that category, hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, life-threatening and life altering things like seizures, really significant or a state of disease that's life-altering, life-changing, life-shortening. But for me bad temperament is a very important one that we see a lot of those. We have dogs that we have to muzzle to collect semen on. I'm like, "No. If that's the case, maybe this isn't the right dog. Do you really want to breed him?"

**Laura Reeves:**

Really?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Really?

**Laura Reeves:**

Yeah.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

So it surprises me-

**Laura Reeves:**

I know.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

That people are willing to do that and they make excuses for it. But personally I don't think that we should and there is no genetically perfect dog. I understand that. But we all have to make decisions about what's important to us, what our trade-offs are, and what we're willing to put up with and live with. So it's not for me to make those decisions for my clients. I'm here to educate-

**Laura Reeves:**

Right.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

People. But you still look in the mirror and say, "Is this okay for me to breed a dog with this disorder?" Before you find yourself in a situation that you've got people returning puppies or other circumstances that things are not going well.

**Laura Reeves:**

Yeah.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

So think hard about what you want to do.

**Laura Reeves:**

I absolutely agree. And mine is temperament and actually thyroid because I did have a lot of thyroid problems in my early pedigrees. And so I just flat will not at this point, if they're not fully normal, they don't get bread.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah.

**Laura Reeves:**

I've removed even equivocal from my breeding program because it is the Canary in the tunnel, in my opinion, to other more serious auto-immune diseases.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Right.

**Laura Reeves:**

And when you start seeing a lot of hypothyroid dogs, that's when you start seeing allergies and Addison's and seizures and more cancer and all kinds of things. And when you take that out of the equation-

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Right.

**Laura Reeves:**

At least anecdotally in my own experience with my own breeding program, all of a sudden my dogs are healthier and living longer.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Right. So these are hard decisions to make. There's no question that it's a challenge to make some of these tough decisions.

**Laura Reeves:**

It is. I've washed out some beautiful dogs. Trust me.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yep.

**Laura Reeves:**

Absolutely.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

But you have to say, "What would I be comfortable selling," in realizing that if you're responsible for taking those dogs back, you need to be on the up and up for it. So really think hard about what's okay in your breeding program.

**Laura Reeves:**

I agree. All right. Thank you, Marty. I appreciate you so very much. You are as always a voice of reason and a voice of sanity in our cacophony of chaos that we live in these days. So thank you.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Well it's always a pleasure to be here. So thanks for including me.

**Laura Reeves:**

All right. We will talk to you next month.

As always, if you have any questions or input, we'd love to hear from you. The show notes and links to resources on today's topic are available at [puredogtalk.com](http://puredogtalk.com). Drop us a note in the comments or email to [Laura@puredogtalk.com](mailto:Laura@puredogtalk.com). Remember guys, this podcast is for you. So if you want to know something, give me a holler. We'll do a podcast for you. If you wouldn't mind, you could help me out here. Take a couple minutes to visit iTunes and give us a review.

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