

PREGNANCY AND OBSTETRICS:

During the last 3 to 4 weeks of pregnancy, the bitch should be housed in familiar surroundings with minimal exposure to infectious diseases or dogs from other households of kennels.

Normal pregnancy in the bitch is considered to be 63 days from ovulation, but can range from 58 to 65 days depending on the timing of the breedings. It is often a good idea to confirm the pregnancy prior to delivery. Several methods are available. Pregnancy can be diagnosed by abdominal palpation (feeling the uterus through the abdominal wall) 28 to 35 days post-breeding.

Ultrasound can be used as early as day 28 and confirms both presence and viability of fetuses. The number of pups can only be estimated with ultrasound. Puppy count x-rays can be taken from days 58 to 62 of pregnancy. These are strongly recommended. This aids in determining puppy size, position and number. Knowing the anticipated number of pups will assist in determining when it is safe to consider her delivery to be complete and when a scheduled c-section should be recommended. X-rays are not harmful to the fetuses after the first 3 weeks of pregnancy.