PHFasDog: We are extremely happy to see you all here tonight and to welcome our very special guest, canine reproduction expert Dr. Robert Hutchison.

PHFasDog: Dr. Hutchison is one of the country’s top canine reproduction experts, and a popular speaker at specialties and other dog events. It’s a great honor for us to welcome him here tonight.

DrHutch: Thank you everyone for spending a Sunday evening discussing canine reproduction and puppy care.

DrHutch: I feel (and look) like a jolly old elf with my holiday bag filled with wonderful gifts for the canine breeder. Mibolerone (formerly Chequedrops) are available again, we have Cabergoline for estrous cycle induction and and have now added laparoscopic surgical ai’s and transcervical inseminations to our breeding arsenals. What a super way to end 2002 and start 2003!!

DrHutch: I guess I'll go ahead with your questions!

Question: Progesterone

DrHutch: I'm amazed at looking at the questions that were posted on the board, how much misunderstanding of progesterone there is

DrHutch: both by breeders and by veterinarians

PHFasDog: To ask a question, just click on "AskDrHutch: " in the right hand column, type your question, and hit "enter."

DrHutch: In this day and age, with the importance of progesterone, it's amazing how people misunderstand the significance of progesterone both on timing the ovulation

DrHutch: and on maintaining the pregnancy

DrHutch: in a perfect world the progesterone rises to 2-3 nanograms and tells the brain that the follicle is ripe and ready to ovulate and then the

DrHutch: brain releases the lutenizing hormone, the LH, which causes ovulation

DrHutch: unfortunately we were told that you only needed to know when it rose to 2-3 nanograms

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DrHutch: which used to be called the initial rise

DrHutch: we have now found that not all follicles especially in bitches under stress, immediately respond to the LH

DrHutch: so for progesterone testing to mean anything one has to test their bitch until she goes above 5 nanograms

DrHutch: the day the progesterone rises above 5 nanograms IS the day of ovulation

DrHutch: so all breeding is based on the day of ovulation

DrHutch: and how long we expect the semen to live

DrHutch: fresh semen will live 5, 6, 7 days in a bitch

DrHutch: that's why we used to be able to breed by vaginal smears, color of the discharge, and day of the cycle

DrHutch: things that made us feel scientific but probably mattered very little

DrHutch: so once the egg is ovulated it is an immature egg

DrHutch: that takes 48 hours to mature

DrHutch: then we have about 36 hours when the egg is fertilizable

DrHutch: so if we're using fresh semen, we can breed the day of, or the day after, she ovulates and expect

DrHutch: the semen to live until the egg is ready to be fertilized

DrHutch: however with frozen semen which only lives for about 12 hours in the uterus

DrHutch: we have to use it when the egg IS ready for fertilization

DrHutch: which is why we breed 72 hours after the bitch ovulates with frozen semen

DrHutch: fresh cooled probably lives about 48 hours, so we use it 2 days after she ovulates

DrHutch: so the timing is based more on how long we expect the semen to live, rather than the day of ovulation
Question: How high should a bitch maintain her progesterone to remain pregnant? At what intervals should it be tested so you are sure it is high enough during the pregnancy?

DrHutch: Once the bitch ovulates, the progesterone rises to a range of 15-40 nanograms and is maintained here for the next two months
DrHutch: whether the bitch is pregnant or not
DrHutch: in the bitch, unlike the cat, the ovary is the sole source of progesterone
DrHutch: the bitch doesn't change part of the progesterone responsibility to the placenta

PHFasDog: If you have trouble or need to be reminded how this works, just double-click on my name or the name of any other host with @PH in front of their name, and we will help you!

DrHutch: so a premature drop of progesterone causing resorption or abortion is rare
DrHutch: so a bitch only needs 2.5 nanograms of progesterone to maintain a pregnancy
DrHutch: If one suspects a problem, usually testing it at ultrasound time, around 26 days after a breeding, is a good time to make sure the progesterone is in the 20-30 nanogram range
DrHutch: It will cause birth defects in bitch puppies to give progesterone if it's not needed
DrHutch: I only supplement if the progesterone is below 5 nanograms with longer than 7 days to go

DrHutch: OK, next question is: Are there any measures to be used to prevent resorption?

DrHutch: The main thing in resorption is to confirm that they were pregnant
DrHutch: just because a bitch goes into a false pregnancy does not mean she was ever pregnant
DrHutch: things that cause resporption are one, uterine lining problems
DrHutch: the uterus not able to support the placenta
DrHutch: number 2, genetic problems in the fetus stopping it from growing
DrHutch: three, some different infections and viruses
DrHutch: herpes has been blamed, brucellosis
DrHutch: there are some chemicals and toxins that will cause it
DrHutch: and probably lowest on the list is premature drop in progesterone
DrHutch: it does seem as a BREED that the English Mastiff does have a higher rate of bitches
DrHutch: that prematurely drop their progesterone
DrHutch: it is thought that many bitches that do prematurely drop their progesterone, it may be a primary immune mediated problem rather than an ovarian failure

Question: Can a maiden dog/bitch be carriers of brucellosis? If this is true, is there any way of testing them as a puppy for this?

DrHutch: YES!
DrHutch: Brucellosis can be passed in all body discharges including
DrHutch: urine, blood, milk, prostatic fluid, vaginal discharge
DrHutch: so if a male or female has been to a show, a field trial, a boarding kennel
DrHutch: they possibly have been exposed to brucellosis
DrHutch: most of the human cases of canine brucellosis have been from contamination of infected urine
DrHutch: so it is a fallacy that brucellosis is only passed during breeding
DrHutch: you should test for it within the month of when you expect your bitch to come in season
DrHutch: and males should be tested at least twice a year even if they're only bred to negative females
DrHutch: you can easily screen the other dogs
DrHutch: the main thing is to test dogs BEFORE they are introduced into your kennel
DrHutch: most of my experience of kennels with problems is where they brought in untested dogs who contaminated everyone

DrHutch: numberous dogs had incurable disease and had to be euthanized.

PHFasDog: If you have a question for Dr Hutch, just double click on the "AskDrHutch: " in the right hand column, type it into the space at the bottom, and then hit "enter!"

DrHutch: because the test in the veterinarian's office is not made from dog brucella

DrHutch: 20 percent can come up not negative, or a false positive
DrHutch: and would require further testing that can take up to three weeks to get the results
DrHutch: SO DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!

A question on male fertility: When you have two bitches in season at the same time that need to be bred to the same male, what would be the optimum breeding intervals to cover both?

DrHutch: A normal male has a sperm reserve of semen he made months ago, so the average male could be used twice in one day
DrHutch: or could be used 4-5 days in a row without doing any damage
DrHutch: but since it takes a male around 55 days to make a sperm cell
DrHutch: if you overuse your male, you are putting yourself out of breeding commission for a minimum of 2-3 months
DrHutch: there is no reason to be breeding a bitch 5, 6, 7 days in a row
DrHutch: because the length of semen life is multiple days, and with progesterone testing
DrHutch: we should be able to pinpoint exactly when the bitch is ready to be bred

Question: Hi Hutch, nice to talk to you again. I have a 5 1/2 year old Weim bitch that you did a frozen semen implant on 2 years ago (produced 8 bouncing babies). Her heat cycles have been normal since the delivery (had to do the last baby via c-section) until this year. She came into heat in June and it only lasted 6 days. Thyroid tests normal range, blood workup normal ranges. What might have caused her to stop mid-heat back in June? She's in heat again now and I'm waiting to see if it's full cycle.

DrHutch: I LOVE these success questions!
DrHutch: in any heat cycle that one is concerned whether it's a normal cycle or not, ALWAYS do a progesterone test after the cycle to see if the bitch ovulated or not
DrHutch: if she did NOT ovulate, which may account for the short cycle, a number of things such as stress, ovarian cysts, or environmental changes can cause a bitch to go back out of season
DrHutch: but only the progesterone test would allow us to know
DrHutch: so THIS cycle
DrHutch: if we are going to breed we need to start running progesterone tests at about day 6
DrHutch: and then run them every third day until we confirm ovulation and hence breed her
DrHutch: OR if the progesterone does not rise and she goes out of season
DrHutch: then we should be doing things like ultrasounding the ovaries
DrHutch: and looking for reasons that are preventing ovulation

Question: Do you know if mibolerone is available again in the USA? And, if so, is it as safe (or not) as the previous 'Cheque Drops'? Any contraindications or cautions in using it? Thanks!

DrHutch: I feel like Christmas has already come!
DrHutch: mibolerone is back on the market since August
DrHutch: it is the SAME volume and same concentration as the old Cheque drops even
DrHutch: though it is made by a different company
DrHutch: the price has gone up significantly
DrHutch: so I am recommending for dosing to start the bitch daily for ten days
DrHutch: and then go every other day
DrHutch: as a standard dose
DrHutch: be sure that the bitch has had her first cycle before starting on them
DrHutch: and I ALWAYS recommend having an ALT, which is a liver enzyme test, to be sure there is no liver disease, before I start on the drug
DrHutch: it is still one of the most valuable drugs available to preserve the uterine lining from the damage of progesterone from the bitch's own heat cycle

Question: Where can we obtain mibolerone?
DrHutch: a company out of New Jersey called Wedgewood Pharmacy, but you need to purchase through a veterinarian
DrHutch: You should breed your bitch on the first cycle after they go off the drug, you do NOT need to skip that cycle
DrHutch: the normal bitch cycles 70 days after you take her off the drug
DrHutch: even though most bitches fall back into their normal cycle be it May and Nov or June and Dec...
DrHutch: and that may effect the timing of her first cycle after coming off the drug
DrHutch: I still think it’s one of the greatest drugs we have out there
DrHutch: Even though the bitch’s own body produces the progesterone, the progesterone causes inflammation of the uterine lining, and the uterus is never as healthy after a heat cycle as it was before that heat cycle
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Question: can Dr. Hutch tell us how safe are cheque drops?

DrHutch: Cheque drops in my mind are one of the safest drugs
DrHutch: we have
DrHutch: side effects include 1 percent tear from the eye
DrHutch: they will get a musky odor
DrHutch: and the most misunderstood side effect is it puts the bitch back into puppy vaginitis again
DrHutch: unfortunately, many vets and breeders alike
DrHutch: interpret any vaginal discharge as pyometritis
DrHutch: Cheque drops actually PREVENT pyometritis
DrHutch: I never hesitate to use this product on my own bitches

Question: What can you tell us about Canine Herpes virus?

DrHutch: Canine herpes virus is part of the kennel cough complex
DrHutch: it is one of the most common viruses our dogs are exposed to
DrHutch: that is why it is so rare to have a problem with the virus
DrHutch: any bitch who has been to a show, a kennel, a training class, probably has herpes virus
DrHutch: and when she has the puppies, she passes the protection to the puppies through the colostrum
DrHutch: and the puppies are now protected
DrHutch: where herpes becomes a problem is in puppies from bitches who have never BEEN exposed to herpes virus
DrHutch: the puppies have no protection and the herpes virus causes an extreme
DrHutch: vasculitis and hemorrhaging throughout the body
DrHutch: and is almost always fatal
DrHutch: Why it does not cause the same problem in an adult dog
DrHutch: is that with a body temperature above 100 degrees
DrHutch: the virus casues only a mild cough
DrHutch: if body temperature is under 100 degrees... and as I'm sure all our breeders know, a newborn puppy's normal temperature is 96 degrees, and a newborn puppy's temperature does not reach 100 degrees until 3-4 weeks of age... it can be devastating
DrHutch: the treatment is trying to raise the puppy's body temperature to 100 degress
DrHutch: the drugs that are used in humans for herpes are not successful

Question: Is supplementing a pregnant bitch with high doses (2000 mgs a day or more) of Ester C potentially dangerous for either the bitch or the whelps?

DrHutch: Vitamin C is part of the water soluble vitamins, so building up in the body is not a problem
DrHutch: it normally passes out in the urine
DrHutch: it can be a problem supplementing some other vitamins such as A and D, it can cause problems in the puppies
DrHutch: oversupplementation is probably not necessary in this day and age
DrHutch: the bitch also does not require the elevated doses of folic acid that human women require
DrHutch: it is a fallacy that supplementing folic acid stops cleft palates in dogs; cleft palates are primarily a recessive genetic trait

Question: I had a litter of toy pups whelped today, 56th day, weights are 3 to 3.5 ounces (normal is 5-6) and they are not nursing but appear strong.

DrHutch: Always check the puppy's temperatures if they are not nursing
DrHutch: if the temps are below 94 degrees, they should NOT be nursing and you should NOT be tube feeding
DrHutch: puppies who are not nursing, must be monitored... are they gaining weight, losing weight, staying the same, crying, is their coat rough, etc
DrHutch: puppies should not stop nursing
DrHutch: puppies should not stop nursing
DrHutch: but a chilled puppy will stop nursing and should not be supplemented until their temp is back above 96 degrees
DrHutch: please see your veterinarian about these puppies, many things can cause puppies not to eat. Have them examined by your veterinarian.

Question: I have a 5 YO bitch who has had 3 litters. She has been "open" for 3 seasons. I plan to breed her in April. she will be 6 at that time. Any special recommendations for a bitch that age? she has conceived easily all 3 times previous and had healthy litters, we plan a natural breeding.

DrHutch: With her age, it is possible she is starting to get uterine lining changes
DrHutch: you may see a smaller litter because of the thickening of the uterus
DrHutch: she may not be spotting as early as when the bitch was younger
DrHutch: so be CERTAIN to do the progesterone testing to ascertain the exact day of ovulation
DrHutch: once a bitch reaches six years of age her chances of conceiving drop 33 and a third percent
DrHutch: due to nothing more than the progesterone effect on the bitch's uterus over her lifetime
DrHutch: you'll want to be more precise on the timing and breeding than when the bitch was younger

Question: I have a 3 1/2 year old male (Paul) who was recently diagnosed as sterile. His grandsire and great grandsire also went sterile at this age. What is the probability that Paul will pass this to his male offspring?

DrHutch: We have followed numerous breeds, cockers, ESS, English Setters, where the males will be fertile and then
DrHutch: as time goes on the semen count drops until they have no sperm at all
DrHutch: some of these are genetic
DrHutch: and some the genetic part is where we get the body destroying its own sperm cells
DrHutch: I normally work these dogs up and may even do a testicular biopsy
DrHutch: to try to determine what was the cause
DrHutch: was it genetic
DrHutch: and maybe even is it correctible
DrHutch: dogs that lose their sperm is NOT due to thyroid disease, NOT due to bacteria, and is normally something that can go on inside the testicle as opposed to something affecting it from the outside
DrHutch: anytime you get three generations doing the same thing I'd expect it was genetic and could be passed on to the offspring

Question: Lots of questions were submitted on thyroid issues
DrHutch: the thyroid gland has little to do with reproduction
DrHutch: and in male dogs it's been shown that one can totally destroy the male thyroid gland
DrHutch: and have no negative impact on sperm production at all
DrHutch: and in the female
DrHutch: if she comes in season and ovulates, pretty much the thyroid has done all that it needs to do
DrHutch: so low thyroid is not going to cause a bitch to miss
DrHutch: is not going to cause the bitch to resorb puppies
DrHutch: and many of the things that have been attributed to thyroid disease
DrHutch: and suppplementing thyroid medication in an individual who does not need it can down the road
DrHutch: cause them to become hypothyroid

Question: I plan on taking my bitch to England and having her bred it will be a 8 hr flight would it be better to take her a little earlier so that she settles better so that her cycle will not be affected by the flight etc.

DrHutch: Stress and steroids both can have the same effect, by suppressing
DrHutch: the pituitary activity in the brain
DrHutch: so shipping a bitch for breeding
DrHutch: should be almost a thing of the past
DrHutch: with the advent of fresh cooled and frozen semen
DrHutch: and also with the restrictions by the airlines and increased costs
DrHutch: it is becoming almost prohibitive to ship a bitch
DrHutch: as I say that, especially crossing multiple time zones
DrHutch: if one has to travel or ship a bitch for breeding
DrHutch: the best time to do is the day after her progesterone goes above 5 nanograms
DrHutch: because the bitch cannot UNovulate
DrHutch: breeding her within the next 48 hours should give her the best chance of conception
DrHutch: one of the other mistakes that breeders make is shipping bitches early
DrHutch: with the thought that the bitch is going to suddenly like these people she's never met
DrHutch: when she'd rather be home on the sofa with you watching Oprah
DrHutch: and many times
DrHutch: bitches that are shipped early
DrHutch: bitches that are shipped early
DrHutch: we'll get that phone call from the people on the other end saying hey, why did you ship this bitch, she's not even in season!
DrHutch: many bitches under stress will simply go back out of season without ovulating
DrHutch: think how stressed we get when we're going to travel
DrHutch: and WE want to go!

Question: When is the best time to collect a male?

DrHutch: A male's peak sperm production should be between 2-7 years of age
DrHutch: a male normally has sperm after ten months of age
DrHutch: even though we have successfully frozen dogs 10-14 years of age
DrHutch: but the younger and healthier a male is when his semen is frozen
DrHutch: the better collection and recovery of the sperm cells
DrHutch: the male does not produce semen seasonally
DrHutch: but there is no doubt that many dogs coming off a hot hot summer do not have the semen quality they do other times of the year
DrHutch: and we need to realize the testicles are outside the body because they need to be COOL
DrHutch: so heat of summer, laying on hot concrete driveways, overuse of hairdryers, and frostbite during the winter
DrHutch: can cause damage to the testicles and their ability to produce sperm
DrHutch: once healthy semen is properly frozen it is usable for probably a thousand years
Dr. Hutch.... I am having a problem with my 2 & 1/2 year old CH. bitch. She had a surgical implant done at your clinic which resulted in 5 puppies, this was her first litter. We did a planned C-section in June. Her last heat cycle was over 6 weeks ago. Everything seemed normal. But about 3 weeks later I noticed a small amount of discharge on her white britches. It looks like old blood.

DrHutch: As long as the discharge isn't persistent, then I probably would not worry about it
DrHutch: it is more than likely just the body cleaning the uterus out
DrHutch: it's not a reason to start her on antibiotics
DrHutch: nor would we have to worry about pyometritis because pyometritis occurs when the uterus is under the prime effects of progesterone

Question: how does cabergoline work and what specifically does it do?

DrHutch: cabergoline is the new "wonder drug" that we're using to induce bitches into ovulatory heat cycles
DrHutch: the drug is what as known as an anti-prolactin drug
DrHutch: after the bitch ovulates the body maintains the progesterone for two months
DrHutch: it is prolactin that keeps her from cycling right away and is why the bitch's interval between cycles is 6-7 months
DrHutch: since we don't know exactly what makes a bitch come into season
DrHutch: we looked at it from the end of what prevents a bitch from coming into season
DrHutch: by taking out the prolactin, using cabergoline, the bitch will come into a cycle on her own
DrHutch: it is NOT an artificial cycle
DrHutch: we've done nothing to hormonally manipulate it
DrHutch: we've just removed the stopper
DrHutch: cabergoline is an oral product used once a day for 10 days
DrHutch: usually the bitch comes in within 2-3 weeks
DrHutch: it is a very safe drug
DrHutch: with minimal side effects
DrHutch: but it is a human drug
DrHutch: and can be relatively pricey
DrHutch: a couple hundred dollars
DrHutch: it was mentioned in one of the recent AKC Gazettes
DrHutch: it is NOT an experimental drug as was said in the Gazette
DrHutch: where I'm using it is on bitches that have not cycled within 12 months or I'm using it more and more for convenience for my clients to have puppies when they want them
DrHutch: it takes a bitch 4 and a half months for the uterus to get over the previous heat cycle
DrHutch: so we can use cabergoline any time after 4 and a half months since the previous cycle
DrHutch: follow our progesterone
DrHutch: breed her
DrHutch: and expect to have puppies!
DrHutch: it is NOT successful for bringing bitches into a first heat cycle

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Question: do you feel the bovine colostrum they have out in health stores or in the dog catalogs are actually good to give to dogs and puppies to boost their immune system? And would it be helpful for those pups that didn't get mom's colostrum?

DrHutch: Bovine colostrum is not really that useful
DrHutch: because puppies aren't exposed to the same problems that calves are
DrHutch: so giving bovine colostrum is nowhere near as useful as using stored bitch's colostrum
DrHutch: and what we do as a practice
DrHutch: and what anyone can do
DrHutch: is the next time you have a bitch with a lot of milk, is milk out some of the colostrum and put it in the freezer
DrHutch: we feel that it is probably good for a year
DrHutch: based on work that is done with equine colostrum
DrHutch: this is something we use many times in our practice
DrHutch: and colostrum is the accumulated exposure of the bitch's lifetime
DrHutch: so there are many things a puppy gets from colostrum that you cannot vaccinate for
DrHutch: a study out of Louisiana showed that puppies who do not get colostrum
DrHutch: actually have a shorter life expectancy
DrHutch: another concern is that we used to believe that colostrum could be absorbed during the first 48 hours
DrHutch: a recent study showed it might be absorbed only during the first 24 hours
DrHutch: a puppy through colostrum gets half of the mom's vaccination protection
DrHutch: and that cuts in half every nine days
DrHutch: so the higher the mother's protection
DrHutch: the higher the puppy's protection is going to be
DrHutch: if a puppy does not get colostrum
DrHutch: we will oftentimes give blood serum from the mother
DrHutch: to at least give the puppies SOME protection
DrHutch: and some of us old codgers remember
DrHutch: the old vaccinations used to be toxoid, which is a passive protection
DrHutch: as opposed to stimulating the development of protection

Question: What is the treatment for puppy vaginitis & does it lead to problems later in breeding

DrHutch: Puppy vaginitis is a NORMAL mucous production in young bitches before their first heat cycle
DrHutch: the total treatment is warm water on a cotton ball and wipe
DrHutch: these bitches DO NOT need to be on antibiotics
DrHutch: it does NOT lead to infertility
DrHutch: and it does NOT make them prone to pyometritis
DrHutch: it is not an infection at all
DrHutch: usually it's worse when the humidity is high

Question: There was a question on the board about how long it should take to get the results of progesterone testing

DrHutch: you really need to have a lab be able to get you your results within one day
DrHutch: if you can't, send it to me, I'll do it!

Question: Is it common for a bitch to continue to have occasional vaginal discharge up to 4 months after whelping?

DrHutch: Any bitch up to 7 weeks, discharge is normal
DrHutch: most bitches who discharge beyond that, especially if it looks like blood
DrHutch: probably it's subinvolution placental syndrome
DrHutch: this is a condition that we started to see when people got away from giving their post-whelping oxytocin
DrHutch: it is due to the cap where the placenta pulls off not resorbing
DrHutch: it keeps bleeding from the area
DrHutch: it is not infectious
DrHutch: so antibiotics don't help
DrHutch: at this stage giving oxytocin isn't going to help, or prostaglandin
DrHutch: usually it goes away on its own
DrHutch: if it doesn't
DrHutch: sometimes infusing with a betadine solution will help to treat the area
DrHutch: they should have it examined by their veterinarian

Question: Dr. Hutch, You did a surgical AT on my rottie bitch this last summer. Everything went fine, until she delivered 8 dead puppies. An autopsy showed staph/strep infection. When I breed her again, do I need to do anything different?

DrHutch: The actual cause of death was probably NOT the staph or strep
DrHutch: staph and strep are such common bacteria everywhere, that if staph and strep were going to cause puppies to die, dogs would be extinct
DrHutch: usually what happens is that puppies are stressed, usually due to premature placental separation, some viral problem affecting the placenta, or even progesterone dropping prematurely
DrHutch: dead puppies are unfortunately a great area for bacteria to grow
DrHutch: I do not believe in any way that if she had kept this bitch on antibiotics during the pregenancy that she would have eight live puppies
DrHutch: I always remind myself
DrHutch: that the skin is covered with staph and strep
DrHutch: it is only when we get an irritation from fleas or a bite or a scrape that the staph and strep on the skin form a hot spot
DrHutch: these are not primary disease causers
DrHutch: and the bacteria that are commonly found in the vaginal tract oftentimes are staph, strep, e coli, pasteurella, and mycoplasma
DrHutch: really serve a purpose by keeping out disease-causing organisms
DrHutch: so putting bitches on antibiotics pre-breeding or
DrHutch: doing routine vaginal cultures and treating the organisms that are found
DrHutch: probably makes us more PRONE to having a problem by killing the protective bacteria
DrHutch: allowing the disease causing organisms to come in
DrHutch: also
DrHutch: putting a bitch on antibiotics pre-breeding does NOT prevent her from developing pyo, because pyo is due to the inflammation of the uterine lining from progesterone, NOT due to bacteria that comes through the cervix
DrHutch: any time you have puppies born dead
DrHutch: it is probably as important to try to save a placenta to have the pathologist look at to determine the cause of death
DrHutch: the placenta is more important than the puppy
DrHutch: because the placenta is the life connection between the puppy and the bitch
DrHutch: next time you breed her
DrHutch: at ultrasound time draw a progesterone
DrHutch: check every 10 days-2 weeks
DrHutch: check heart rate, are they growing right
DrHutch: at whelping time, be sure the bitch goes into labor at the proper time
DrHutch: this can be determined because her due date is 63 days from her ovulation date, NOT breeding date
DrHutch: I would suggest another surgical AI regardless of the semen being used, to have the uterus evaluated

Question: I have been told that back to back breedings are actually safe for a bitch. What are your feelings on this and if you agree at what age do you feel the first breeding is best planned?

DrHutch: I normally suggest the first breeding after 2 years of age because that is when the health clearances are done
DrHutch: this varies by breed
DrHutch: because the bitch is unique in that their heat cycle is progesterone driven
DrHutch: the progesterone in a non-pregnant bitch lasts just as long as in a pregnant bitch
DrHutch: there is NO ADVANTAGE to skipping a cycle in a bitch
DrHutch: and a uterus is probably healthier in a pregnant bitch than in a non-pregnant bitch
DrHutch: and a uterus is probably healthier in a pregnant bitch than in a non-pregnant bitch

**Question: Transcervical vs surgical vs natural?**

DrHutch: We now have multiple methods of artificially breeding a bitch
DrHutch: and if the bitch is over three years of age
DrHutch: and we're using frozen semen
DrHutch: I normally suggest a surgical insemination
DrHutch: because it's the greatest chance of having puppies because it gives me the ability to evaluate the uterus
DrHutch: we now do laparoscopic surgical inseminations in bitches such as bulldogs
DrHutch: or in bitches that have had multiple abdominal surgeries
DrHutch: the transcervical insemination allows us to
DrHutch: look at the opening of the cervix
DrHutch: and we thread a catheter into the uterus
DrHutch: but we are not evaluating the uterus at that time
DrHutch: this is a popular method with fresh cooled and in a young bitch
DrHutch: it's all done on television, it's a very cool technique
DrHutch: the vaginal AI deposits it in the vaginal tract and depends on the body to pump the semen into the uterus
DrHutch: I determine which to do based on the type of semen we're using and the age and breed of the bitch

**Question: What does the future hold?**

DrHutch: In our practice we are now freezing ovaries
DrHutch: so that some day we can hopefully harvest the eggs out of the ovaries and use them for in vitro fertilization
DrHutch: this is NOT being done in the bitch now
DrHutch: this will probably be something that will come out of cloning research
DrHutch: a bitch never goes into menopause
DrHutch: her ovary constantly keeps working regardless of her age
DrHutch: you should spay a bitch when you're finished breeding her, so she doesn't go into pyometritis
DrHutch: SOMEDAY we'll be able to use these frozen ovaries to make puppies
DrHutch: we take the ovaries from a spayed bitch
DrHutch: We could go on for days
DrHutch: there is so much exciting stuff
DrHutch: Wow! What a night!! The questions tonight and on the board have been outstanding
DrHutch: I want to wish everyone a safe and very happy holiday season. I am sure I will see many of you at the Cleveland Classic Dog Shows this week. Stop by and say hello. To all of you, thank you, you are indeed the best!!