

## **BR 6- IRISH GUIDE DOGS - BREEDING POLICY**



### **Objective of policy**

Irish Guide Dogs has established this policy to provide information for the proper maintenance of the breeding stock of the breeding stock colony, which will supply a sustainable supply of pups to be trained as Guide Dogs and Assistance Dogs and to renew the breeding colony.

### **Governing Principles/ Ethical considerations**

Irish Guide Dogs Breeding Code of Ethics

### **Legislation, regulation and guidance**

- Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010
- International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) Breeding Standards
- Assistance Dog International (ADI)

### **Age Range of Brood Bitches**

Irish Guide Dogs will place potential bitches onto their Breeding Programme for a probationary period of 6 months. Bitches will only be mated having reached 18 months of age. Bitches will only be mated after they have passed Irish Guide Dogs' Temperamental and Health Assessment Criteria. No bitch will be mated to whelp after her sixth birthday. Bitches will not have more than 4 litters.

### **Housing and Care**

All breeding dogs are housed with vetted and trained volunteers. All homes are checked prior to placement of each breeding dog. If a dog is to be kennelled, it is housed at Irish Guide Dogs' Kennels or in a temporary home pre-approved by the Irish Guide Dogs.

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### **Breed stock selection/ Selecting Suitable Dogs for Breeding**

Dogs being selected to be part of Irish Guide Dogs' Breeding Programme are selected based on temperament and health. Potential breeding stock must meet Irish Guide Dogs' breeding criteria. Dogs will be accepted onto the Breeding Programme on a 6-month probation basis. On completion of the probation period, the dog will become part of Irish Guide Dogs' Breeding Programme when age appropriate. The tests required to be carried out are:

- Behaviour Check List (BCL) Temperament Test
- Certified Ophthalmic Exam
- Pennhip & CT of Elbows
- Gonioscopy – Golden Retrievers only
- Clinical Exam & Ultrasound of reproductive organs – Broods
- Clinical Exam & Fertility test - Studs
- Speculum Exam – Broods only
- Genetic Tests
- Echocardiogram
- Blood screening
- Urinalysis
- Other required tests specific to breed

### **Use of External breeding stock**

We currently do not use external breeding stock other than ones within the service dog community which we may get from other service dog schools around the world.

### **DNA Testing**

As part of IGDB breeding criteria, genetic testing is carried out on each potential breeding dog.

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### **Breeding Procedures**

Once age appropriate (18 months), the brood bitch is mated on her next season. Progesterone tests being on day 7 of her season and continue until progesterone levels indicate she is ready for mating. The brood is brought to the IGD-approved veterinary partner (Southview Vets in Clonmel) for Transcervical Insemination (TCI). Breeding decisions are made by the breeding manager and carried out on a case-by-case basis and under veterinary supervision and expertise.

Four weeks post TCI, the brood has an ultrasound scan to confirm pregnancy. The Breeding Dog Volunteer will have regular check ins from the breeding team in the lead up to the whelp. Once the pups are born, the breeding dog volunteer will receive weekly visits and continued support until pups leave the nest at 8 weeks.

**Consecutive breeding will only be considered providing a satisfactory veterinary assessment has been conducted, confirming the bitch is in appropriate health. A decision will then be made by a veterinary collaboration of Pat O'Doherty, Sarah Mitchell and the IGD breeding manager.**

### **Whelping Procedures**

Brood Bitches are whelped indoors in a pre-approved area of the home. The brood and litter remain indoors until appropriate age. A member of the IGD breeding team will be present for the whelp to support the breeding dog volunteer.

The breeding dog volunteer contacts their local vet to ensure veterinary support, if required.

If a brood does not whelp with 24 hours of due date, she is brought to the IGD chosen veterinary partner to progress next steps.

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Whelping collars are placed on each puppy when born, and puppies are named by 3 weeks old. Puppies are checked daily and weighed each day for the 1st week. They are weighed weekly thereafter.

Any complications or health concerns of the brood or litter will be raised with the breeding manager immediately.

### **Litter Care**

All litters born are socialised under the IGD Early Socialisation Programme. Each puppy is monitored, and health checked daily for any abnormalities. Puppies that die or are stillborn are brought to the IGD veterinary partners for an autopsy. All puppies are recorded on the IGD database system.

All puppies are microchipped and receive their first vaccine at 7 weeks of age, the second vaccine at 11 weeks of age and the third vaccine at 16 weeks of age.

Puppies will receive their kennel cough vaccine at 8 weeks old when attending their Behavioural Checklist (BCL) assessment in the IGD Training Centre in Cork .

### **Weaning Procedures**

Puppies are weaned at 4 weeks, earlier if the litter is large or the brood requires support with feeding. Each puppy is fed an approved IGD diet and the required amount as per weight, age and breed.

### **Veterinary supervision**

All breeding is carried out under the IGD chosen veterinary partners. Pat O'Doherty, Riverview Veterinary Hospital, is the IGD Breeding Programme primary vet. Sarah Mitchell, Southview Veterinary Hospital, is the IGD Reproduction Specialist.

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### **Postmortems**

All sudden and unexplained deaths of breeding stock and/or puppies are required to have a postmortem carried out.

### **Data Recording and Evaluation**

The following data is recorded on the IGD database system.

- Identity and details of parents/ pedigree
- Temperamental assessment of parents
- Forecast planning calendar for mating and whelping
- Mating and whelping history
- Frequency of mating and length of time
- Types and dates of mating – natural or artificial insemination
- Number and gender of puppies born
- Number and gender of puppies stillborn
- Number and gender of puppies that die in the nest, including dates
- Health, weight, vaccination and worming history
- Date of weaning
- Success of each puppy / litter
- Type, incidence and degree of inherited abnormalities

### **Progeny testing programme**

All progenies are assessed during their training and qualification to assess temperament suitability regarding continuing a breeding line.

All breeding dogs attend a biannual veterinary check-up and an annual ophthalmic check by a registered ophthalmologist.

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### **Management of Frozen Semen**

Frozen semen importation and management is carried out by the IGD chosen reproduction veterinary partners.

### **Euthanasia- End of life**

The decision to end life is on the evaluation of veterinary expertise with the IGD chosen veterinary partner.

### **Retirement of Breed stock**

#### **BROOD BITCH**

- When they reach the age 6 years
- After 4 litters
- That have required 2 caesareans
- Infertility – diagnosed under veterinary expertise
- Under veterinary advice

#### **STUD DOGS**

- When they reach the age of 7 years
- Infertility – diagnosed under veterinary expertise
- Under veterinary advice

### **Quality Control & Compliance**

Any animal welfare concerns or non-compliance reports are investigated by the IGD Breeding Manager. If required, these are escalated to the CEO Tim O'Mahony.

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### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Dogs being assessed for breeding suitability undergo continued assessment during the first 12 months. Temperament Assessments are carried out at four and eight months. Each potential breeding stock undergoes a Behaviour Check List Temperament Test (BCL).

All litters progressing through the IGD training programmes are under continued assessment by the Early Training Team Supervisor and Breeding Manager.

### **Changes to the Policy**

Any changes to this policy are by agreement with the CEO of the IGD Tim O'Mahony and Breeding Manager, and IGD's veterinary partners.