

Breeding during Covid19

What does a dog fancier of Australian terriers do in the middle of a pandemic, when there are no dog shows to attend, no trials, and wonderful dogs at home? We attempt to breed a litter. Attempt is a the key work here as Covid19 has caused major travel restrictions, especially between countries.

In July, we were notified Rain (CANCH Tidewalker RainCoast Gypsy) had come into season. Rain is a bitch we co-own with a pet family with the agreement we would have breeding rights. First we needed to contact the co-owners to express our desire to breed and then book with our vet for progesterone testing. Of course, we happened to be on our boat in the middle of no-where with no cell reception. A full day was lost finding cell service. Then, while circling a small area, we are able to talk to the owners and call our vet, obtaining permission to breed and booking a progesterone test on day seven of her cycle.

Now, to find an appropriate stud dog. The Canada/USA border had been declared closed and we had heard stories about delays at the border for frozen and chilled semen. Not Good. A live breeding of a dog close by would be best. As luck would have it a nice Australian terrier stud, Carson (GCH Benayr Johnny Come Lately), twice winner of BOB during the US National weekend and sire of several known nice pups was in Alberta, Canada. He had been there since February, unable to get home due to the border closures. We hatched a plan to fly him via one stop to Victoria, BC. This made Carson's owner happy as flights from BC to Seattle were still taking live cargo. When Carson arrived in Victoria, a well-known local handler picked him up to care for him until I could get him.

On day seven of Rain's cycle the progesterone test was taken. The results, provided the next day, showed Rain had ovulated. Oh No! The numbers were through the roof! With the saying "Best laid plans" ringing in my head, several calls were made while, again, circling in an area to find cell service! Arrangements were made for Rain's co-owner to pick up Carson, and take him and Rain to the vet. A successful breeding was managed. However, there was still great uncertainty as to whether it was too late! -- A lot of running around if it didn't take.

I arrived home a day later and picked up our Aussie guest ! Carson was easy to have here, loved his toys and a walk each day. I immediately began to arrange to get him on a plane, as per my agreement with his owner. This required medical certificates, shipping paperwork and a 2 hour ferry ride to the mainland. After several days, I was able to turn over all the paperwork and the dog to airport cargo officials. These officials told me "Don't wait, all is in order - catch your ferry home!" An hour into

my ferry home, I get a call. The computer isn't working and won't create a waybill – no waybill, no boarding of the dog. Oh the Drama!

Calls to Carson's owner, calls to the people waiting to pick the him up from the airport, calls to friends about what to do, calls to the airline and the cargo office and finally an agreement that the airline was at fault. They agree to put Carson up at an international kennel for the night and get him on the plane in the morning. Good thing Carson was up for the adventure and managed all the changes well.

On July 31st Carson makes it onto the flight from Vancouver to Seattle. We were told "You are very, very lucky!" It was the last airline company, and their last flight, taking live cargo to the US for the foreseeable future!!! As I write this, it's now Oct 28th and flights are still not carrying dogs between Canada to the US.

I have to share with you that we were lucky twice! First, Carson arrived home safe and sound. Second, a litter of 5 healthy pups, 2 males and 3 females, were born despite progesterone numbers that indicated it was too late to breed! Phew! Breeding during a pandemic, well ..breeding period is always an adventure.

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