

## **Advantages of being a registered stud breeder**

*(by Herman Labuschagne, SA Stud Book)*

The breeding of a “purebred” or stud animal, is vital for the long term retention of the unique traits of a specific breed. Without a well organised organisation to stipulate and discipline the physical appearance and breed standards, a breed will not be able to sustain its uniqueness or even improve genetically.

People do not always understand the meaning of a stud, “full blood”, pure bred or pedigree animal. Some of these concepts are mostly misunderstood and to receive a piece of paper (registration certificate), is not always enough to add value to a bred animal. We have the advantage in SA to have the Animal Improvement Act, 1998 (Act62 of 1998) which regulates and stipulates the concepts of stud breeding clearly.

To understand these concepts it is important to take note of a few definitions in the Act. The first is to understand what the Act means by an “animal” namely:

“ ‘animal’ means a kind of animal or an animal of a specific breed of such kind of animal which has in terms of section 2 been declared as an animal for the purposes of the Act.”

The animals form a breed and the definition for a breed is as follows:

“‘breed’ means a population of animals which produces progeny possessing a high degree of genetic stability as evidenced by identifiable uniformity in breed standards and performance.”

The breed standard is defined as follows:

“‘Breed standards’ means a written set of phenotypic or genotypic standards of excellence determined and applied in terms of the constitution of an animal breeders’ society for a kind of animal.”

The definition for a breeder of such an animal is as follows;

“‘breeder’ means the owner of a breeding female animal at the time of natural or artificial conception or at the birth of progeny.”

“‘stud book animal’ means an animal registered or recorded in the herd book kept by a registering authority”

A registering authority like SA Stud Book's definition is;

“registering authority’ means an animal breeders’ society or a group of animal breeders’ societies which is registered as such in terms of the Act”

This is all a mouth full but what does it mean for a dog owner and breeder? It is important to note that the Boxer has been declared as a “breed” by the Registrar of Animal Improvement. The Federation of Boxer Clubs of Southern Africa furthermore complies with the Act in that it is registered with the Registrar as a Breeders’ Society. The persons joining the Federation are then according to the Act registered breeders of that breed in South Africa, in this case Boxer dogs. The Federation also makes use of SA Stud Book as their registered Registering Authority. Animals registered at Stud Book through the Federation are therefore officially stud animals or registered animals. The Act also stipulates that there can only be one Breeders’ Society for a specific breed in South Africa. This ensures that all the people breeding with the same breed of animal, are under one Society and that Society is then the custodian of that breed in South Africa. The AGM of the Society is the highest authority for that breed because the meeting appoints the board, all breeders taking responsibility for the management of the breed according to its Constitution.

The Boxer breed is according to the Act a registered breed and only the members are registered stud breeders. This is an advantage for any Boxer breeder who is a member of the Federation and registered animals are for this reason more valuable than any dog that looks like a Boxer. The Boxers registered through the Federation are bred through specific breed standards by people who have the welfare of the breed at heart.

The fact that the Federation uses SA Stud Book for the recording of the dog data adds further advantages because Stud Book is a member of ICAR (International Committee for Animal Recording). The membership is advantageous in the sense that all the systems and procedures are audited every three years. The audit ensures that the services rendered by Stud Book adhere to international standards. SA Stud Book has been in the recording of animals for more than 108 years and has enough experience to render the services needed by a breed. Despite of the other departments, Stud Book employs a team of geneticists who can do research on any breeding related issue.

A stud breeder is someone who has a vision and mission with the breed they are involved with and it is also financially advantageous because the animals' value is higher. The communion of breeders also increases the level of knowledge about the breed and other matters.