



THE KENNEL CLUB  
DOG HEALTH



## What are popular sires?

Popular sires are **male dogs that are used to produce large numbers of puppies**. These dogs are often **chosen because they have characteristics that are desirable to a breeder**. Popular sires are often used to **help improve the breed**, but **excessive use** of any males **can impact the health of the population**.



## Goal for Breed Management

To **manage genetic diversity** within the breed to **maximise the variety of healthy and desirable dogs within the gene pool**. It is not necessary to use all dogs in the population (especially those with undesirable traits). Health, genetic diversity and good husbandry must work together in balance.

# Popular sires - The Biggest Contributor to Inbreeding



The over use of a sire can **shrink the size of a breed's gene pool**. The gene pool is the total amount of genetic variation within a breed. Unless new dogs are introduced into a breed, the gene pool will become smaller over time – popular sires speed up this process.

Every litter produced by a popular sire means one less opportunity for another male to reproduce. The **genes from the other dogs** which were not chosen for mating, **will become rarer and may even disappear from the gene pool** entirely.

## What are the effects of a popular sire?



Extreme degrees of inbreeding **can lead to inbreeding depression** (reduced litter size, increased puppy mortality, reduced fertility, a shorter lifespan etc.) and an increased risk of developing both **known and unknown inherited disorders**.



The smaller the gene pool becomes, the **more difficult it can be to find unrelated individuals for mating**. Smaller gene pools may be more difficult to manage and may result in **increasing levels of inbreeding**.

