

# NEUTERING OF FARM (AND OTHER) DOGS

## BITCHES:

### Pro Speying

#### Convenience Reasons

When a bitch is speyed both her ovaries and uterus are removed. The ovaries are removed to prevent her from coming into season and the uterus is removed so as not to act as a reservoir for infection. As you know she will not be able to have (unwanted) puppies, she will be available for work all year round and there will be no distractions to the male dogs in the team. For house dogs there will be no bleeding on the carpets and furniture.

#### Medical Reasons

1. Pyometra - This is a condition where the uterus fills up with pus. Normally it occurs in older bitches though it has been known to occur in bitches as young as one year old. Classically it occurs shortly after a season. Sometimes the cervix is open in which case pus is seen to be coming out of the vagina, in other cases the cervix is closed. These are a lot harder to diagnose. Signs include general lethargy, drinking a lot of water and maybe vomiting. This is an emergency condition and the bitch needs to be speyed as soon as possible. With her being so sick there is a greatly increased anaesthetic risk.
2. Mammary Tumours – Mammary cancer in un-speyed bitches is more common than in women. It is often a particularly nasty form of cancer, having spread before it is noticed. It is very difficult to treat. Surgery is long and involved and the tumours have usually already spread to the lungs where they can't be treated.

### Anti Speying

#### Convenience Reasons

Obviously once the bitch is speyed she will no longer to be able to have puppies. Some bitches do become overweight after they have been speyed. This should not be a problem with proper dietary control (they do need less food). Working breeds are less prone to obesity than say Labradors at a young age.

#### Medical Reasons

A very small proportion of bitches become incontinent and leak urine. This is more of a concern for house dogs. If large amounts of urine are being leaked the bitch will need to be treated. This is easily controlled by the use of tablets or syrup.

## MALE DOGS

## **Pro Castration**

### **Convenience reasons**

Castrated male dogs are less likely to fight or wander. Ideally castration should be done at a young age before these vices become a habit.

### **Medical Reasons**

1. Prostate gland – Older un-castrated male dogs frequently have enlarged or even cancerous prostate glands. This can lead to various problems like severe constipation.
2. Anal tumours – These are frequently seen in un-castrated male dogs.

### **Anti Castration**

Apart from not being able to breed from the dog and a slight tendency to put on weight if the diet is not controlled, there are none.

## **SUMMARY**

It is recommended that all bitches are spayed for medical reasons. It is quite disheartening treating the older bitches for mammary tumours or losing them from infected uteruses because either the condition has not been picked up or the bitch was not able to get to the surgery in time. With a potentially good working bitch that you might want to breed from it is recommended having puppies early in her life and then spaying her.

Male dogs with undescended testicles should be castrated. There is a high risk of cancer in the undescended testicle (as it is kept too warm). The condition is hereditary so the dog should not be bred from. The decision to castrate other male dogs is entirely up to the owner.

Spaying a bitch is a major operation as the ovaries lie deep inside the abdomen with a large blood supply. The operation is best performed at the clinic where there are trained staff to monitor the anaesthetic and ideal operating conditions. It is far far safer for the bitch to be operated on in Stanley. Dogs can easily be flown in from West Falkland by FIGAS.