

Thinking about breeding greyhounds

Breeder Booklet No. 1



This is the first in a series of booklets developed to support the successful breeding of racing greyhounds.

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Thinking about breeding greyhounds

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Developing a breeding program - understanding genetics

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Starting a breeding program

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You are thinking about breeding a litter of greyhounds

Many people who are involved in the sport of greyhound racing consider breeding a litter at some stage.

Some may have had a successful racing female who they have now retired and want to pass on her talent to her pups. Other people may see it as a way of being involved throughout their racing greyhound's life. Before you make a decision to breed, you need to consider that breeding is expensive and requires a lot of time and effort. Apart from lots of planning and preparation, there is a large amount of work in caring for both the female during the pregnancy and then with her and the pups when they arrive. It is also important to remember that genetics plays an important part in racing success and both the female and the male contribute to the genetic potential of the pups.

There are a range of different costs associated with breeding, some of which are mentioned below in Figure 1.

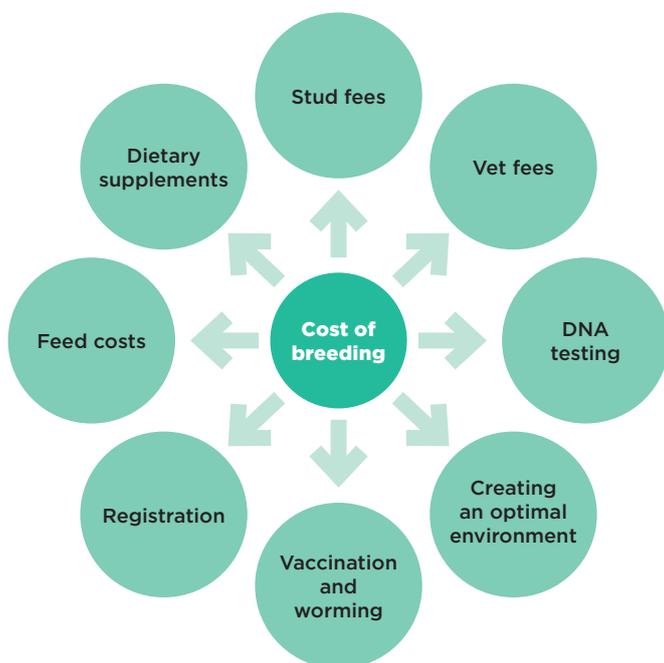


Figure 1: Breeding costs

It is important that you also be prepared for surprise costs that can occur when things go wrong, such as when a pup gets sick, or the female needs a caesarean to whelp. a litter is time consuming and costly.

The cost of breeding and raising a litter of pups yourself may initially seem a good option when compared with the overall cost of buying a couple of well-bred pups, given the mating costs are spread over possibly 6 or more pups. However, if contractors are used for whelping, rearing and education, the cost of the litter could easily reach \$50,000, all of which needs to be paid in less than two years!

In addition to keeping the female healthy, every step of the way, you need to 'get it right' to ensure your pups can reach their genetic potential. Growing pups need the benefit of the best possible food, the right amount of handling and exercise, and close monitoring if they are to develop into athletes. Some of the most critical stages of a greyhound's life in preparation for a racing career are the whelping, rearing and education phases.

Early socialisation and best practice handling and management of a greyhound during this time is essential. The readiness of a greyhound to transition through these steps based on confidence and an ability to cope in new environments and situations will ultimately impact on their racing ability. It will also impact on a greyhound's capacity to adapt to a domestic environment in retirement. It is important that you do not cut corners on as it will ruin any future chances of success.

You also need to think about what you plan to do with the pups you breed. Will you sell all or of them or will you be retaining them for yourself? If your female has a large litter, it may be impractical to keep all the pups and you will have to decide which you are going to keep.



Having more dogs does not increase your chances of winning if you are cutting corners.

Your fastest greyhound need not be the only one that can enjoy a successful racing career. There is a comprehensive racing program that caters for all ability, performance and age levels of greyhounds. However, you must think about what will happen to those dogs that do not make the track.

Finally, you need to seriously think about the facilities you have and whether they will be appropriate for your planned breeding activities. Good facilities make for easy and safe handling of breeding greyhounds and result in healthy and happy pups. There are very strict minimum requirements for the design of housing for whelping and lactating females that must be complied with. These requirements can be found in the *Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds*.

You also need to understand local council rules relating to how many greyhounds you can have and house, and what you can and can't do depending on how your property is zoned.

Speak with your local council and read the guidelines for greyhound facilities: www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/planning-reform/new-planning-guidelines-for-greyhound-facilities-across-victoria.

There are also rules, minimum standards and legislation that you will need to understand and comply with in relation to animal welfare. These include the:

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*;
- *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*;
- Rules of Racing at <https://greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/rules-of-racing/>

You are also required to think and act in the best interests of your greyhound when considering their future, when they retire from racing, breeding or other activities.

Is breeding for you?

Building your skills and knowledge

If you are seriously considering breeding and whelping, then research, research, research. Remember that it does require a significant investment of time, money, facilities and technical knowledge. Find out as much information as you can. A suitable mentor may also help – someone who has been in the industry over a long period of time and who have had success over a number of years, not just one or two good dogs. Look for someone who:

- understands genetics, anatomy, husbandry and breeding; and
- is well respected with a good reputation.

Knowing what to do in caring for your female when she is pregnant and then ensuring both her and the pups are healthy before and after birth is also essential. Appropriate intervention - including when not to intervene - is equally important. Participating in these activities will build your knowledge and experience. Assisting a mentor with their whelping and helping them with the care of their pups is also an important way to get experience and to see if breeding is for you.

Seeking out other information about caring for greyhounds before, during and after birth is an important way to build your knowledge and apply your skills. Consider what education and training might be available to you that you can take advantage of.

Becoming a successful breeder takes time. It also requires critical analysis of your own actions.

- What could you have improved or done things better?
- Which combinations worked well, and which didn't?



Finding a veterinarian

If you are seriously considering breeding, start to think about finding and establishing a good working relationship with a veterinarian well before the breeding takes place.

Having a good relationship with a veterinarian is also important. Under the new *Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds* you must have a veterinary agreement with a local veterinarian. This veterinarian will be responsible for providing veterinary services to you, offering 24-hour emergency services or referral to a 24-hour clinic, and will be responsible for approving your Establishment Health Management Plan. Ensuring you have a veterinarian who is able and willing to perform all of these functions is essential before commencing a breeding program. A copy of a template veterinary agreement can be found at the end of this booklet in Appendix One.

If you are planning to use frozen semen on your female, you will have to use one of the approved frozen semen facilities registered with the various state authorities. You can find information related to frozen semen at <http://www.galtd.org.au/services/frozen-semen>. You can also speak with GRV to obtain information on approved facilities.

Discussing your pregnant greyhound and her impending litter with your veterinarian is also a good idea. They can help advise you about nutrition and care, along with what to do when things go wrong.

Once you have a litter, you are also going to require vaccinations, health checks, microchipping and care, all of which require the assistance of a veterinarian.

Understanding the paperwork and record keeping requirements

It is important that you are aware of GRV's requirements **before** you breed your litter. Throughout the breeding process it is a requirement under the Rules of Greyhound Racing that various forms are submitted to GRV. It is important that you understand

which forms need to be submitted and when. That way you will be prepared, and there will be no hold-ups when it comes time to sell your pups. If you do not comply with these requirements GRV may refuse to register any pups from the mating.

In summary these are:

Transferring the breeding female into your name	If you are not already the owner of the breeding female, there must be a transfer of ownership into your name or alternatively, if you are just leasing a female, then an 'Authority to Breed' must be submitted. This way you will be listed as the breeder of the litter, and you can access all the necessary paperwork via your FastTrack login.
Pink card registration	If this is your female's first litter, she will need to be registered with GRV for breeding. She must also have a valid Pink Card which is required for all litters. To be eligible for breeding registration, your greyhound must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. be named; 2. be microchipped; 3. have undergone DNA testing; 4. have a C5 vaccination administered within the last 12 months and a copy of her vaccination certificate submitted to GRV (clearly identifying the greyhound, the type of vaccine, and the date the vaccination was administered); 5. be less than 8 years of age; and 6. have not had 2 or more litters within the past 18 months.
Registration of male	Before you can register a service or a breeding unit, you must have registered the male dog for stud with GA. This will include providing a DNA sample, a semen evaluation report and a fee. Your male dog must also be up to date with his vaccinations. You will need to provide GRV with a copy of your dog's vaccination certificate showing his vaccinations are current and the next due date.
Transfer of ownership of a breeding unit	If you plan to use frozen semen, you will need to have the straw(s) of frozen semen (called "breeding unit(s)") that you intend to use transferred into your name prior to using them. This process is facilitated by GA. Any transfer of breeding units needs to be notified within 14 days of the transfer with the person selling the breeding unit submitting a form, and you as the new owner also submitting a form to GA. Your veterinarian will not complete the service unless this process is completed.
Notification of service	GRV must be notified that your female has been mated ('served'). It is a requirement that the details are submitted within 14 days of the service occurring. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of a natural mating, or artificial insemination (AI) using fresh or chilled semen, this process is completed by the stud master, by lodging a service by the sire in FastTrack (MyDogs). • In the case where frozen semen is used, the inseminating veterinarian will submit the details of the service to GA.

Litter registration	<p>Litter registration describes the following four processes required to register a greyhound litter with GRV:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notification of mating result 2. 6-8 week vaccination 3. 10-16 week vaccination and microchipping 4. Ear brand registration <p>The forms for this process are available via FastTrack after the Result of Mating has been recorded.</p>
Notification of mating result	<p>Once your female has whelped, you are required to notify GRV of the number of pups of each sex in the litter, along with their colours. Additionally, you will also nominate the veterinary practice that will microchip and vaccinate the litter. If your female 'misses' (does not get pregnant) then you must notify GRV that she has missed. The result of mating is completed online on FastTrack (MyLitters) and must be completed within 14 days. After these details are lodged, the paperwork for the 6-8-week vaccination will be available.</p>
6-8 week vaccination	<p>At 6-8 weeks of age, the litter must be vaccinated to a minimum 'C3' level. This vaccination protects against three killer diseases of pups – Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvovirus. The proof of vaccination must be submitted to GRV before you can proceed.</p>
10-16 week vaccination and microchipping	<p>At this age, the greyhounds receive their booster vaccine. This is also the time when each pup needs to be microchipped. The pups are required to be vaccinated to a 'C5' level (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus and Kennel Cough) and that the proof of vaccine is clearly marked with each pup's microchip number and forwarded to GRV.</p>
Ear brand registration	<p>An ear brander is automatically allocated to you based on the location of the litter. All you need to do is arrange a time for the ear brander to visit the property. It is important that this process is not left any later than 20 weeks of age. All greyhound pups must be ear branded and individually registered with GRV before they leave their place of birth. The ear brander will check the microchip and mark off each dog on the Ear Brand Registration form available via FastTrack. Once ear branded, the breeder must submit this form to GRV, where upon verification, the litter registration is finalised, and each dog is individually registered.</p> <p>The entire process of registering your litter, from the service through to the final ear branding stage and can be done online using FastTrack. If, however you do not have access to a computer, or have any questions make sure you contact GRV.</p> <p>It is important to note, that a litter cannot be split, sold or relocated until this process is complete, or unless express written permission is granted by GRV.</p>

Remember that if you are going to breed a litter for someone else, then an owner may need to issue you with an Approval to Breed which you must submit to GRV.

Once you commence breeding it is vitally important that as a breeder, you keep excellent records, not only in relation to the breeding you do, but also for each greyhound involved in your breeding program. This will include information about the greyhound itself including:

- health and illness records;
- results of any testing;
- seasonal cycles and breeding information; and
- litter and whelping information.



Extra information may also be required to comply with any relevant racing rules and/or the *Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds*.

Information about the pups produced is important, as are records of sale. As a breeder it is also important to keep copies of health care, veterinary treatments and sale documents, and details of the new owners.

When a breeding female is mated, details about the mating will need to be carefully recorded - who was the sire, the date(s) and type of mating, any issues during mating and the expected date of whelping. Aside from a good filing system for your records, a calendar is very helpful for calculating and displaying important dates. When pups are born, you will need to record how many, what sexes, and any notes relating to the birth process, for example, did the female require assistance or did your female require a caesarean operation? You will also need to record when the pups are due for worming and vaccination. If you have staff, then they need to know what needs to be recorded, how often, and where.

Making sure the facilities are appropriate

If you are planning on breeding, you will need to have appropriate facilities for doing so. This may mean:

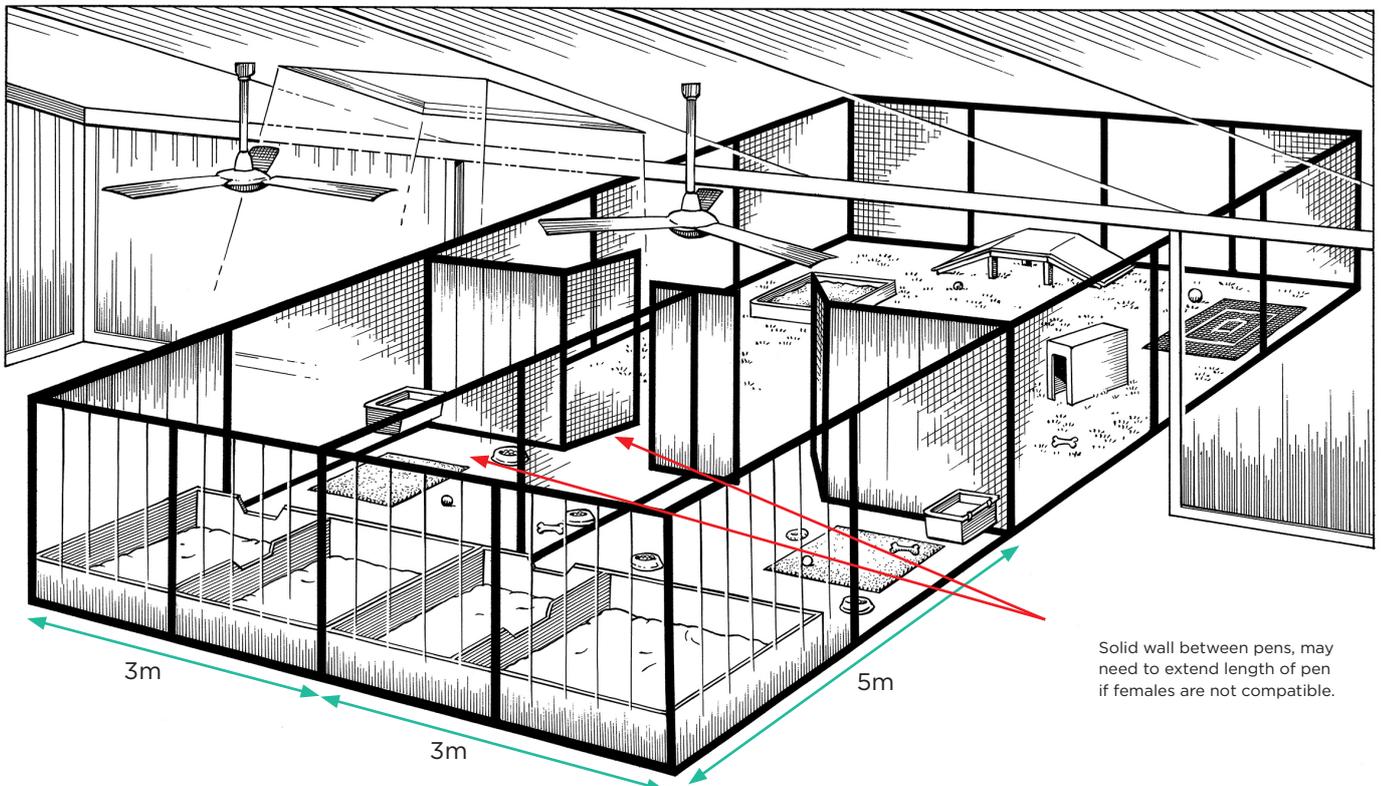
- separate housing for greyhounds that are in season, pregnant, whelping or lactating;
- housing for males that are to be used for breeding and who may need to be kept away from the females at certain times;
- appropriate areas for your females who have a litter and who are feeding their pups, away from your other animals; and
- areas for litters when they become older and need more space.

All of these housing areas need to:

- be safe and secure;
- provide shelter from extremes of weather;
- be well ventilated and free from dampness, noxious odours and draughts;

- provide bedding that protects greyhounds from weather, vermin and harassment from other greyhounds, is not mostly made of concrete and metal, is raised off the ground and is kept dry with soft, warm bedding material;
- be kept clean and hygienic;
- provide sufficient space for the dogs to behave normally and to move around with minimum pen sizes of 15 square metres;
- provide continual access to fresh clean water at all times; and
- provide continual access to natural light during daylight hours.

You also need to make sure that the housing arrangements and conditions meet the requirements of any relevant racing rules and the new *Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds* (commences 1 January 2020).



This diagram shows an example of how two whelping pens can be constructed inside a shed with access to an external enrichment yard. The rear half of both whelping pens have solid walls to give the pups and the mothers privacy, but if the mothers are not compatible, the entire dividing wall between the pens may need to be solid.

Appendix one: Example of a Veterinary Agreement



Veterinary Agreement

I, _____, hereby declare that as a veterinary practitioner registered under the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997*, with relevant experience in greyhound health and management, I agree to be nominated as the veterinary practitioner for the following participant's greyhound establishment.

Participant name/s: _____

GRV participant member number/s: _____

Establishment Address: _____

I am capable of and agree to provide the following services to the participant at the establishment listed above:

- use of my veterinary facilities for the treatment of greyhounds
- provision of isolation housing at my practice if the establishment does not have separate isolation housing; and the supervision of greyhounds if in isolation housing at the establishment
- advice on and approval of the establishment and health management plan (EHMP)
- provision of vaccination certificates and up to date health details for the greyhound record of each greyhound being sold or transferred from the establishment, prior to transfer or sale
- humane euthanasia of greyhounds by barbiturate overdose, and being available by phone in emergency situations 24-hours a day
- providing approval to euthanase in emergency situations in the manner approved in the EHMP
- provision of veterinary assistance for the establishment in accordance with the EHMP; provision of treatment and/or services within a minimum time of _____ hours
- 24-hour contact or treatment availability, or where I am unavailable, provision of veterinary services through the following alternative 24-hour emergency practice:

Nominated 24-hour/emergency practice

Practice name: _____

Practice address: _____

Practice contact details: _____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria Number: _____

Contact number: _____

Practice name and ABN: _____

Practice address: _____
