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From: ExtMAGDRL@yahoogroups.com on behalf of lissa [lissa@lissa.net]
Sent: Sunday, November 06, 2005 5:48 PM
To: Extmagdrl@yahoogroups.com
Subject: [ExtMAGDRL] DOE Topic #22: How old is your dog?

Hi All,

It's time for another Dog Owner Education topic, so here's #22! I used to think that one calculated a dog's age in linear fashion, with each dog year equaling 7 human years. I was wrong! Turns out that maturity during the first year is about the same regardless of breed, but it accelerates each year based on the size and breed of dog.

The good news is that the lifespan of dogs in the US has doubled in the last several decades. According to the ASPCA, the average lifespan for dogs has increased from 7 years in the 1930's to more than 12 years today. The basic dog hasn't changed much, but the care of dogs has improved dramatically. Beyond genetics, good nutrition, daily exercise, medical care, a warm family environment, and an interesting life all serve to increase the lifespan of a dog. As over the years veterinarians are better able to treat and manage health related problems or previously fatal diseases through new techniques, better drugs, and better and earlier diagnostics, we are seeing improved quality of life which has the effect of reducing premature euthanasia, as well as increasing longevity in the dog population.

Some interesting statistics follow:

- It's estimated that about 25% of dogs in the U.S. are obese, and that keeping a dog slim can increase his lifespan by 15% -- very important knowledge for us Dane owners.
- The average lifespan of a dog that receives timely dental care is 10-20% longer than one that doesn't.
- "The average life expectancy of a spayed or neutered pet is 40% longer than an unsprayed one. Over 60% of dogs that are hit by cars each year are unneutered males. 60% of unneutered males will also develop prostate disease or cancer. 75% of unsprayed females will develop breast cancer and 75% will develop a serious uterine infection called pyometra." (<http://www.bestfriendsvet.com/pdffiles/SeniorDog.pdf> and there's a useful health checklist at the end of this document.)

According to Workman Publishing's 365 Dogs Calendar, "An average-size dog, living an average lifespan of 11 years..." will cost a responsible guardian at least \$13,000. However specific breeds such as Shar Peis and Bulldogs (6 - 8 years), and Great Danes (7 - 9 years) have higher costs and shorter life expectancies than their size would suggest because of breed-specific health issues.

So, how old is your dog? You can get an estimate by breed using Pedigree's Age Finder here: <http://www.pedigree.com/PedigreeCenter/DogAgeCalc.asp> , or take a look at the general age chart below.

Large and Giant versus Small Breed Dogs

Dog years	Human equivalent years		
	Giant breed	Large breed	Small breed
1	16	16	16
2	23	21	20
3	30	26	24
4	37	31	28
5	44	36	32

6	51	41	36
7	58	46	40
8	65	51	44
9	72	56	48
10	79	61	52
11	86	66	56
12	93	71	60
13	100	76	64
14		81	68
15		86	72
16		91	76
17		96	80
18		101	84
19			88
20			92
21			96
22			100

I have a whole new respect for owners whose Danes live to age 12 or 13! One more tidbit that's food for thought: Because pets age faster than people, taking a dog to the veterinarian once a year is the same as a person seeing their doctor or dentist once every seven or more years. Many vets now recommend twice annual wellness exams, with incidental visits as the need arises.

And as always, thanks for educating yourselves to benefit dogs and their owners!

Lissa Scott

AKC Canine Good Citizen Evaluator

MD/DC Adoptions & Events

Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue League

MAGDRL web: <http://www.magdrl.org>

MAGDRL events: <http://www.lissa.net/Joya/MAGDRL.htm>

"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." - Josh Billings
