

Pigs'n Poodles

by Dr. Geoff Cochrane

**Violence
in Purebreds**

Q. Why do many purebred dogs become so violent?

A. In purebred dogs, breeding for traits other than temperament and lack of criteria for culling can create problems at a later time. Puppies should be selected on the basis of temperament. Animals have a type of social development which is divided into stages. The time of onset of each stage constitutes a critical period. Stress such as isolation or mistreatment at such periods will affect the socialization process and may be reflected in a permanent behavioral effect (aggression). Most breeds of dogs follow a similar pattern of development but the stages may occur at different ages.

In dog breeding, there have been many successes in selecting for specific behavioral traits but there appears to be a very definite limit to the capacity for improved behavior through selection. Despite many thousands of years of domestication, the dog shows no behavioral patterns which are also found in its wild ancestor the wolf. Selection has increased or reduced the intensity of certain traits but patterns of feeding, mating etc. are still quite similar in the dog and the wolf. Aggression as a behavioral abnormality appears in several breeds but more commonly in poodles, cocker spaniels and German shepherds.



WAITING BY THE CHIMNEY

Pretty soon ol' Santa will be emerging with a ho-ho from the fireplace in front of which Heather Gardner, of Navan, and children Dennis, centre, and Kelly are relaxing. They prepare for the big day with a look at an Advent calendar. (Photo by Rowsell).

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