

Rottweiler Breed Council of K.U.S.A

Breed Convener Report 2014

This edition of the Breed Convener Report will focus on the most pertinent issues affecting the Rottweiler in South Africa and the trends which merit further comment and analysis. As most are aware, our registrations have experienced a significant surge in the September 2012 through August 2013 period with the net result that Rottweilers are the second most registered breed (1119) with the number one KUSA registered breed (2309) being the Yorkshire Terrier. It's quite interesting that two such different breeds share the top positions as the most popular purebreds in this country but more importantly that one breed is subject to certain breeding controls and additional registration requirements and the other is not. Hopefully this will demonstrate to KUSA the Rottweiler is able to thrive numerically even when registration regulations are in place and that any further breeding controls which might be proposed by this council will be seen within the context of improving and protecting the breed which ultimately helps promote its popularity. There are signs that the upward registration climb is likely to continue for the foreseeable future before levelling out. Nevertheless, we have to remain vigilant as the consequences of over breeding a toy dog as opposed to a powerful working dog are drastic and the negative consequences associated commercial breeding objectives are well known and often magnified in a working breed.

From a type perspective, the Rottweiler is undergoing some notable changes in recent years. The huge amount of recent imports (28) within the 2012-2013 periods for Rottweilers is indicative that breeders are increasingly relying on new bloodlines within their kennels and this has had a logical impact on the type being presented in the show ring. For the most part the better imports have definitely had a positive influence and breeders are to be commended for the considerable investment and development opportunities these worthwhile imports represent. We have now reached the point where a restricted class like Import can be numerically stronger than the unrestricted Open class at some specialist shows. Nevertheless, there are still notable challenges resulting from the veritable flood of imports, primarily revolving around the dubious origins of some imports and the unscrupulous breeders anxious to exploit new markets for their kennels. There can be several negative consequences to the gene pool in South Africa and the obligation to protect the health and accuracy of the stud book for our Rottweilers should remain a high priority. Some visiting judges have been quite frank about the ethics of certain well known breeders in Europe and we should be quite cognisant of this information when making importing and breeding decisions. Also worth mentioning is that breeders must self evaluate the direction their breeding programmes are taking and what the intended purpose of these imports actually are. All too often the impression is that some breeders are simply importing in the hope they will revolutionise and dominate the showing and breeding of Rottweilers locally with their newest acquisition. This mindset invariably leads to disappointment when the actual quality of the import does not meet expectations and instead of learning from these mistakes, some enthusiasts continue to import without any seeming worthwhile objective or knowledge of the bloodlines being bought. To conclude, the long term impact of the recent high levels of importing will need some time to be fully evaluated and a great deal will depend on genetic worth of these dogs and the skill required by breeders to maintain and propagate those traits which add value and improve the breed in this country.

Submitted by Alex Varela 28/06/2014