



# MEET THE BREEDER-JUDGE

**CATHARINA LINDE-FORSBERG of Sweden**

*Catharina Linde-Forsberg, DVM, PhD in 1988 with Int. & Nord. Ch. Field Ch. Bodigga Royal Occasion.*

**Q-** Many of us know of you as a noted canine reproduction specialist, obviously a veterinarian, and as I recall, you have contributed to a lot of important research on the subject. Can you give us an overview of your professional status and tell us something about your work?

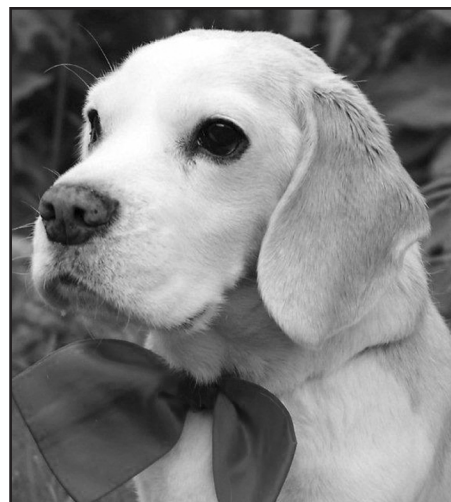
**CLF:** My interest in canine reproduction stems from my interest in breeding Beagles. I got my first Beagle in 1968, from the Rossut kennel in the U.K., while I was still studying to become a vet. I bred my first litter of Beagles in 1969. My bitch experienced a couple of difficult parturitions, and I really learned a lot about "canine midwifery" hands-on this way. I did my first freezing of dog semen in 1973. After my graduation as a vet I stayed on at the Royal Veterinary College as a teacher and researcher and built up the teaching curriculum in dog and cat reproduction and AI. I did my PhD in 1982, was appointed as full Professor in Small Animal Diseases in Norway in 1996, and in Small Animal Reproduction in Uppsala, Sweden in 2000. I am a Diplomate of the European College of Animal Reproduction. I founded the Swedish Association for Small Animal Reproduction, and in 1997 was one of the initiators of the European Veterinary Society for Small Animal Reproduction ([www.EVSSAR.org](http://www.EVSSAR.org)), which is doing a truly great job promoting this field in veterinary medicine with regular attendance of US veterinarians at its yearly congresses. Today I am Honorary Member of both organizations. I have published more than 200 scientific and other papers, and written several

veterinary text book chapters. Among the most recently published chapters are two in the veterinary "bible" Ettinger & Feldman, Textbook of Veterinary Internal Medicine, Diseases of the Dog and Cat (2010) on Artificial insemination in the dog, and Abnormalities in pregnancy, parturition and the periparturient period, and one chapter in Bojrab (2010): Mechanisms of Diseases in Small Animal Surgery, on Parturition in the bitch. I have been the major adviser for 13 PhD, Licentiate and International Masters theses, and developed a system for chilling and freezing of dog semen which is one of the best scientifically documented on the market. I have now taken a voluntary redundancy and started my own company CaniRep HB ([www.canirep.com](http://www.canirep.com)) but I am still also working at the university part time, doing research, some teaching, and running the fertility clinic and the canine semen bank there.

**Q-** That is quite the resume! Can you tell us something about other projects you've been involved with?

**CLF:** I have been doing reproductive research in cattle, sheep, and swine, too, over the years, but am now specialized in cats and especially dogs. As I am also a clinician much of my research has been clinically oriented. Sweden has a long tradition of performing artificial inseminations, especially in farm animals, as early as the 1950s. And as we are a fairly isolated country (or used to be) we had a quarantine system for dogs that prevented traveling abroad to mate them which led to an early interest in the development of systems for semen preservation and shipping of semen for AI.

Some of my projects over the years were, for instance, aiming at identifying



*Top: the influential sire, Ch. Beagler's Black Gold. Above: Ch. Beagler's Royal Tan.*

the optimal days for mating of the bitch and female cat; studying the sperm transport mechanisms in the uterus of the female cat; developing and improving methods for transcervical AI in the cat and bitch and developing methods for medical treatment of pyometra in breeding bitches.

I have also done studies on dystocia in the cat and the dog and have developed a method for the treatment

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of prostatic problems in the male without causing a deterioration of libido or semen quality. One major area of my research has for many years been focused on improving methods for the preservation of cat and dog semen. With our extenders and methods for the preservation of chilled semen and for freezing of semen, results from AI have improved considerably. And all of this research has been published in international scientific journals of high standing. This is in total contrast to most of the commercial companies running semen banks for dogs and cats, whose methods and extenders are proprietary. This in turn has led to my methods being used by experts worldwide. As I and my husband, prof Mats Forsberg, are now also running our own company, CaniRep HB, we also provide clinicians with our extenders readymade. Others choose to make them themselves.

**Q-** Do I recall correctly that you were instrumental in the Transcervical Insemination technique that is becoming more available and will hopefully soon totally replace Surgical Insemination for frozen semen? Can you briefly outline the advantages of Transcervical Insemination?

**CLF:** This is correct. In Sweden, and nowadays also in the U.K., it is illegal to perform surgical AI in the dog. The method of non-surgical transcervical artificial insemination in the bitch was originally developed in Norway, as a further development of the method used in farmed foxes in the early 1970s. I have been practicing this technique since 1976. It takes a certain perseverance to learn, but once learned it is, in most bitches, a very quick and totally safe procedure. It is done in the non-sedated, standing bitch, and usually accomplished in just a couple of minutes. One of the secrets to success is that the bitch should be on an empty stomach. You must be able to palpate the cervix to manipulate the catheter through. It is not at all painful; on the contrary most bitches in heat quite appreciate "the touch".

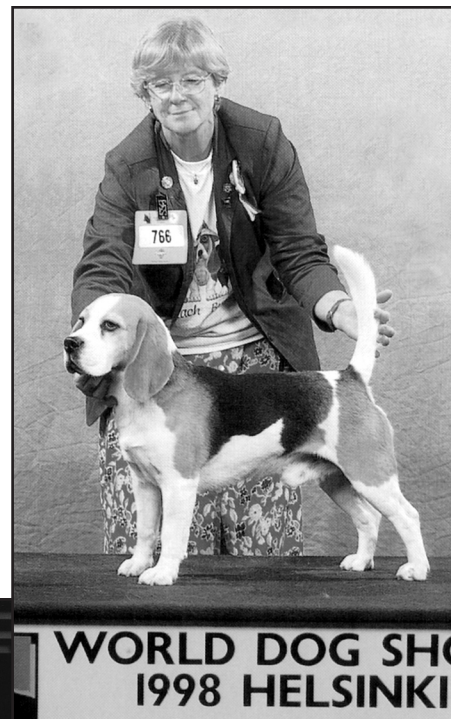
Another non-surgical option is by endoscopy, i.e. the use of a long rigid endoscope with a light source to visualize the cervix, and then to ease an ordinary dog urinary catheter through the cervical canal into the uterus. This method, however, also takes some time to master, and requires quite expensive equipment. But I am happy to see that more and more colleagues are using this technique rather than the surgical approach. With the non-surgical methods the AI can be repeated in the same heat cycle, which improves the outcome. Obviously a bitch cannot go through repeated abdominal surgery on successive days.



**Q-** Do you know how many clinics or sperm-banks in America are now offering it?

**CLF:** I believe that more and more colleagues around the world are now adopting these non-invasive methods, but have no idea to what extent. To speed this process up I think the pressure must come from the breeders, as they come to realize that there are other much less stressful techniques than by invasive surgery.

**Q-** What has your research and/or experience demonstrated to be the most common reproductive issue in Beagles; or in canines, for that matter?



*Above: Aust. Fin. Ch. Hildamar The Way To Go, (Bernie) shown in 1998 with Catharina, World Winner and BOB under Andrew Brace. Left: Bernie with handler Ray Lindholm of Champhurst Kennel.*

**CLF:** The Beagle, as we all know it, is generally a very healthy breed. When it comes to its reproduction, some lines may be willing to mate for quite a long period during

the heat, which may cause confusion about what is the proper day for breeding. If they are bred too early the sperm cells will have died before the oocytes are ready to be fertilized, which occurs at the end of the heat period. A progesterone test is a great help in these cases. Sometimes they may accept mating several days after they are already into metestrus. In these cases progesterone is not always of help, whereas a vaginal smear will clearly show that the estrus period is over, with the characteristic mixture of the epithelial cell types and presence of white blood cells.

Apparently some lines of Beagles may have difficult whelpings, and this seems to be a bit more common in the USA than in Europe. Primary uterine



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inertia is the most common cause of dystocia in the bitch, and seems to run in families. It is likely propagated on both sides, so choosing a male from a line of easy whelpers may improve the situation.

**Q-** So let's talk more about your affiliation with Beagles. How did that interest further develop?

**CLF:** My kennel name is Beagler's and I got my first Beagle in 1968 when, with the aid of Joe Braddon, I imported the bitch Rossut Promise from Cathy Sutton in the UK. I have bred 35 litters over the years and have been awarded both the Swedish Kennel Club and the Beagle Club Field Breeder awards in Gold. In addition to being an FCI Championship Show judge I am also a field trial judge. I have judged Beagles in many countries in Europe, and also several times in the breed's country of origin, the UK, as well as in the USA, Australia and New Zealand.

In the 1970s I imported the tan and white bitch Pinewood Courtesy from Mrs Heather Priestley in the UK. Courtesy was by the legendary Ch Southcourt Wembury Merryboy and was to become the mother of two of the leading Beagles in Scandinavia, the full brothers from different litters Beagler's Black Gold (born in 1975) and Black Gold II (born in 1974). Their father, Beagler's Gold Smuggler, was by I.C. Christensen's import from the USA, Ch Seven Hills Black Gold out of Jidjis Anemone, a bitch from both US and UK blood that I got from Mrs Marianne Forst-Danielsen. Black Gold II came to Denmark to the Parup's kennel and had 10 Best In Show wins at general all breed Championship shows. On one occasion he also beat the Crufts BIS-winner of that year, a Fox Terrier handled by none less than the Terrier legend Albert Langley, which made his win extra sensational. B Black Gold was also used quite extensively at stud, and I think it is correct to say that he had a very big influence on the breed in Denmark and other parts of Europe. He was also one of the founding dogs in Eeva Resko's internationally successful Daragoj kennel.

More imports followed over the years, and among the most influential are the litter mates Int.Nord.Ch. FdCh. Bodigga Royal Occasion and Dual Ch Bodigga Royal Celebration. (They were named after the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana that same year). My latest import was Aus & Fin Ch Hildamar The Way To Go (Bernie) whom I found when I was judging a Beagle Specialty in New South Wales, Australia in 1995 and had given Best In Show from among around 250 Beagles. He really impressed me and I was eventually allowed to have him from the breeders Margaret and David Hill in Adelaide. Both Bernie and earlier Occasion (who were distantly related) had the long, sloping shoulder blades that are so rare in this breed. And Bernie also had a head and reach of neck out of the ordinary, and was a great mover, with a free stride and absolutely parallel. Bernie has sired litters both in Australia and in many countries in Europe. I still have frozen semen in storage from him for future use. As I am a veterinarian and am running the Swedish Canine Semen Bank I have stored semen from several of my old dogs, and I even have one dose from my old Beagler's Black Gold. This I will save for a very special bitch in the future, which I have not yet found!

**Q-** Sweden is noted for its *serious* winters. How does one *keep* beagles in such a climate? What sort of kennels are required and how are the hounds exercised? It must be a challenge.

**CLF:** There are very few really large kennels in Sweden these days. Most breeders have just a few dogs and keep them indoors as family pets, walking them twice daily on a leash. In our climate any kennels must be well insulated and have heating. This winter has been both very cold (down to below -25 to -30C for weeks and weeks on end) and with a lot of snow, 50-70cm deep. It has therefore been impossible to hunt the Beagles since well before Christmas. Walking the dogs is quite exhausting, but they have a lot of fun in the snow, chasing each other and digging tunnels.

**Q-** You are obviously a qualified dog



*Walking the dogs in Sweden in winter is tons of fun for the Beagles, but plenty of work as it provides serious exercise!*

show judge in Europe. In addition to Beagles, what other breeds do you judge?

**CLF:** I was first authorized as an FCI Championship Show judge for Beagles in 1977. I now judge most of the scent hounds, e.g. all the Basset breeds, Dachshunds, Foxhounds, Hamiltonstovares and all the other Scandinavian and European Stovares, Bavarian and Hannoveran Schweisshunds, and in addition Dobermanns and Boxers. I have judged at CC-level in many countries in Europe, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, England and the United States.

**Q-** How difficult is the process for getting a judge's license in Europe? What is entailed?

**CLF:** The rules vary, but in many of the European countries, to become a show judge you have to have been a successful breeder for at least 10 years, and acted as a licensed show secretary for several years. In Sweden you then have to attend courses on anatomy and ring procedures and pass written exams. You can then apply for a one-week judges course, which is held every second year or so. This course contains both theory and ring procedures, and finally you must judge a number of dogs, critiquing them all in writing. If you pass this you have to do two apprenticeships in the show ring for each of the chosen breeds (up to a maximum of 5 at this stage of your education) under a qualified judge, and then an examination in the show ring

when your assessments of the dogs are compared with those of the formal judge. If you pass you will be licensed for these breeds. After 2 years of frequent judging you can apply for more breeds. The breed clubs must accept your candidature for their breeds. Within the FCI all dogs at the shows are first graded according to their quality, as the judge sees them, and only those graded a 1st will continue to compete for the placings in each class. Each dog is also given a written critique stating the reasons for the grading and the placing. This is quite time consuming, therefore, each judge is only supposed to judge a maximum of 80 dogs each day.

**Q-** You must be looking forward to judging during Nationals Week this year in the US. What are your thoughts about looking at so many American Beagles?

**CLF:** When judging the bitch classes at the Beagle Club Championship show



*Judging Beagles at the (now defunct) Great Lakes Beagle Club in 1991. 13-inch Best of Winners and BOV Briarhill's Born To Be Wild, winning from the 6-9 puppy class. She was bred, owned and handled by Bruce Smith.*

in the UK last summer, I had an aspiring judge by my side. This person, who judged several other breeds, after a while commented that the Beagle must be one of the more difficult breeds to judge because of the differences in type. I think this is true, at least for a non-specialist judge. I feel a bit the same about judging Basset Hounds. I studied them for many years before I took them on, for just this reason. The US Basset Hound and the British Basset Hound are about as different as the US and UK Beagles, both having their obvious advantages. And as for the colors in the Beagle, I can assure you that I appreciate the diversity!

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