

Breeder's Notebook: Frozen in Time

New techniques using frozen semen allow long-deceased dogs to sire litters and produce new champions.

By D. Caroline Coile, Ph.D.

Would you spend \$10,000 to produce a litter of one puppy? That's what breeders spent to produce Ch. Randenn Tristar Affirmation ("Yes"), a black Standard Poodle. When Yes strutted her way to a Non-Sporting Group win at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show this year, it doubtless seemed like a bargain. She had already won 94 Bests in Show and was ranked the No. 6 dog of all breeds in 2008. But this special Poodle gained attention not only for what she accomplished, but how she came to be.

Yes was born in 2003. Her sire, the well-known stud dog Ch. Eaton Affirmed ("Snapper"), died in 1990. It's not unusual for a puppy to be conceived after the sire is deceased. What was unusual, however, was that the frozen semen that produced Yes was 25 years old.

Yes was far from the only dog entered at Westminster to be produced from frozen semen. In fact, since the American Kennel Club recognized frozen-semen breedings in the 1980s, thousands of such litters have been registered. In 2006 (the most recent year for which records are available), 760 frozen-semen litters were born.

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