Table 29. Some consequences of inbreeding

Trait	*Consequence*
Fertility	Reduced; more matings 'miss'
Semen traits	Reduction in quantity and quality
Embryonic mortality	Increased; more embryos die
Litter size	Reduced; fewer puppies born
Stillbirths	Increased; more puppies born dead
Survivability	Reduced; more puppies die after birth
Disease resistance	May be reduced
Abnormalities	Some increase in their number
Growth rate	May decline slightly
Stature	May decrease slightly
Hip dysplasia	May have minimal effect; in some cases inbreeding to good producer will help
Conformation	Variable effect; some features improved
Prepotency	Inbred dogs stamp their 'type' more readily on progeny

In general, inbred mothers will show adverse effects and if inbred mothers have inbred progeny the effects will be magnified. Of course inbred mothers can produce outbred progeny if the bitch is mated to an unrelated sire and an outbred bitch can give rise to inbred progeny if mated to a related sire.

Some breeders differentiate between inbreeding and what they call *line-breeding*. In reality they are the sam, differing only in degree. If inbreeding is harmful then less intense line-breeding will be less harmful and vice versa.

Inbreeding is not something that novices should undertake. You need knowledge of genetics and the breed to tackle inbreeding successfully. Certainly you cannot just look at some famous ancestor in your bitch's pedigree and mate her to a male with this same ancestor in his pedigree and thinks this is inbreeding. On paper it will be but in real terms it will depend upon the influence of the ancestor upon both parents. Good inbreeding must be carefully planned and anyone undertaking it must be prepared for an ready to tackle harmful effects even if this means culling large numbers of puppies.

If you started with 100 different lines and inbred each one by a continuous programme of say brother/sister matings then after several generations probably 90 of these lines would have died out, 8 might be struggling to survive and 2 might be better than when they started. Dog breeders must therefore treat inbreeding cautiously but, in fairness, I have not seen canine pedigrees which were more that about 45% inbred and even those are exceptional. Most breeders, even inbreeders, operate well below these levels.