

A Word From Mr Koos Hassing Tiekerhook German Shepherd Kennel Holland PART ONE

By Von Forell Australia

Dated: Jan 27, 2010

In 1997 Kuran Van Tiekerhook IPO 1 came to Von Forell Australia. A super high drive male that certainly made an impact in the working dog scene. Von Forell Vilco Sch 111 National Schutzhund Champion being is one example.

After us the “Great Flood”

Sport organizations and clubs which respect themselves have to aim for continuity and development in accordance with their statutes. Because it is about the fact that we wish that our sport and hobby can be continued by our successors. In our case this means in the broadest sense of the word the leisure time activity with the German Shepherd Dog and his world wide reputed versatile traits.

Now we have to demand a clear understanding of the subject matter from the representatives in the organizations from the very top all the way to the very bottom. They have to show the willingness and readiness to make important decisions when necessary to the benefit and the existence of our breed.

The founder of our breed did make this statement for nothing:

“Make sure my shepherd dog remains a working dog for I have struggled all my life for that aim!”

Many developments are naturally subject to social changes, but the principle has to be maintained or better said, the goal has to remain the same. And that has to be thought about carefully.

Why this prelude you may ask?

Friday evening, after the courage test at the “Hauptzuchtschau” in Ulm was over I got an alarmed phone call from a sport friend who was there and told me that many of the SchH 2 and even more of the SchH 3 dogs did not pass protection.

Sunday evening I calculated that 63 males and 49 females failed. Furthermore, we are talking about exclusively KKL 1 dogs here who had received the rating of “TSB pronounced” in their ZtP/Körung.

I doubt that the number of failures had ever been that high. My information showed that protection may have been judged marginally harder but not significantly harder than in years past. I was even told that had the helper work been consistent for all the dogs there would have been even more failures.

There were glaring differences between dogs from performance lines and those from show lines. OK, that may not be such a big deal, but it clearly accentuates how big the differences are.

Only a few years ago I myself was a witness to the way protection was handled at the “Hauptzuchtschau”. I came to the conclusion that some assessments were at the very bottom of the rating “pronounced”, some even below.

Dogs who came off the sleeve during the attack on handler still got a rating high enough to remain in the competition. In individual cases apparently the manner in which the dogs prevented the attack (energetic gripping is desired) was of secondary importance. Obviously some things had improved somewhat, but it has to be said.

It appears as if the top people in the SV, who got there due to political circumstance, chose this result, and everyone seems OK with that. One would think based on that that the general public is also satisfied with the result! Keep going that way.

In my opinion, this can never be the right solution. The movement in this direction already became apparent years ago. But it is exactly like judging one's own affairs, it is rejected in society and politically and no significant improvement can be brought about.

That brings me back to my opening, the preservation of the breed. So, if we analyze what has been developing, and I would like to do that in the broadest sense of the word, one does not have to be a college graduate to come to the following conclusions.

The goals set in the bylaws and the trial regulations as well as the breed suitability regulations are all very clear in their statements. Nobody can argue that. Where things are lacking significantly in my opinion is the putting the written standards into practice and their interpretations.

The Chain

The people who are the main links in the chain of responsibility for the preservation of the German Shepherd Dog should be the first place we look.

- Board members of the Netherlands like the commissionaires for cynology and training
- Breeders
- Performance judges
- Körmeister (breed survey judges)

Naturally, there are secondary links in the chain as well (trainers for example and others). But I want to limit myself to the main group. I am convinced that the leadership is lacking in matters of breed preservation.

The Leadership/Board

In the bylaws and regulations the goals of breeding just like the breed characteristics are clearly defined.

Over the different decades certain individual aspects were pushed aside, but the principles were not altered. On paper everything stayed the same; from time to time some regulations were changed and even improved a bit.

Almost automatically my thoughts wander back to the time when the Martin brothers used their influence as SV-members/SV-board members/SV Körmeister to create their "own" German Shepherd Dog. In my opinion that was a German Shepherd who deviated significantly from the breed standard. It goes without saying that they could not accomplish this on their own and by themselves. But considering their considerable influence at that time not much happened without them and their input. Their influence on the leadership level was unmistakable.

The influence of a Canto von Arminius (W. Martin), a dog with bad temperament and character, and of a Quanto v.d. Wienerau (H. Martin) was praised to high heaven in the creation of a, pardon the expression, artificially constructed (read: modern) German Shepherd Dog.

Working abilities were hardly if at all talked about. The Kennels in Viernheim were sometimes jokingly referred to as the breeding factories of beauty. Some even dared to say that they (Martin brothers) did great damage to the breed. You can read Walter Hoffmann's original report on the topic. I agree with that entirely.

It was a very single minded direction for which the German Shepherd they created was set as a standard. Ego, prestige, and profit dominated, especially when the Asian countries became part of the picture. That

the working traits and abilities were reduced to a minimum seemed to be acceptable. During that time I watched trials in Germany where dogs got their Schutzhund trial “stamp” (for breeding) in ways that I would prefer to forget quickly. But at the time it was a reality.

That was a dangerous development, because the chances that one “breaks through the thin ice one skates on” become very real (as we have seen since then). But the whole world followed the SV (read: Arminius and Wienerau) because their rules had to be followed if one did not want to be thrown overboard.

Even the boards of foreign clubs (Holland, Belgium, etc.) followed suit along with many breeders. If one wants to see a silver lining in this cloud, one could say that for some breed fanciers this movement was a wakeup call (at least in Germany) to breed better working dogs.

It was a necessary evil if one wanted to preserve the working abilities. Police, military, and customs could not find a sufficient numbers of suitable German Shepherd Dogs. People were fed up, and I was around to witness this development first hand.

Alfred Hahn, from the kennel “vom Busecker Schloss, was very clear. He told me: “Koos, if you want to improve the German Shepherd Dog, and I know that is your goal, then consider this for the future. One can improve the anatomy of the German Shepherd in only a few generations. But to improve, temperament, character, and the necessary working abilities take much much longer. Good males will always be around, so focus on the quality of your brood bitches!” In my opinion, the pure truth, spoken by a very experienced breeder and Körmeister.

END OF PART ONE

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Email	Click to email author
Phone	+61357865388
Fax	+61357865277
Address	PO Box 419 Greensborough 3088
City/Town	Melbourne
State/Province	Victoria
Zip	3757
Country	Australia