

# LLEWS NEWS



HICKORY HOLLOW LLEWELIN SETTERS, LLC  
Winter 2024

## For the Future of the Breed



Richard Llewelin created something pretty special when he developed the Dashing Bondhu line of English Setters we know as Llewelin Setters today. For those of us with Llewelins we know they are the perfect blend of stamina in the field, devotion to their handler, and bird finding machines, but the breed is at risk for lack of genetic diversity.

Creating genetic diversity requires outcrossing. Outcrossing is different than line breeding and in breeding because it brings new blood to

established lines. Line breeding is just as important, but for a different reason. Line breeding puts pups from healthy breeding pairs on the ground and available for outcrossing.

Not just any new blood will do for genetic diversity. Those new genes also need to come from healthy breeding pairs so we can develop healthy pups. Mix these challenges with others such as geography, desirable couch and field qualities, finding owners who are willing to invest in the health testing and be willing to breed their Llewelins, and even desirable coat traits...well you can figure out fairly quick it's hard to do an outcrossing the right way just based on the limited pool.

The Llewelin world is very small. We are constantly looking at outcrossing options and other Llewelin breeders are looking as well. This "look" recently took us to a Llew from great lines in North Carolina. Everything checked out great until we got to the eyes...juvenile cataracts. Back to the drawing board we go.



### Planned Litters

We have a breeding planned this spring with whelping occurring over the summer. Shelby will be bred. The stud she will be bred with is uncertain and we are currently working out those arrangements. If you are near the top of our call back list, expect a call this spring sometime. Around 65 people are on our call back list.

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## LLEWS NEWS FROM HICKORY HOLLOW

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# More Litters Please



Probably the most frequent question we get at Hickory Hollow is regarding available pups. Let's start with some background. Realistically we can only provide 2-3 litters of pups every year at best. When we purchased Hickory Hollow, we already had a sizeable pack of Llews at three. With the purchase came three more. Since Llews can't produce pups forever, we have also invested in a seventh Llew to utilize as a Dam in the future. Producing quality Llew pups requires about two and a half years before a new Llew can contribute. Given the various life stages our Llews are in, we have two to breed for pups right now.

The other component of producing pups is a successful breeding. With seven females running around our place, we don't like the idea of a male running around with them. So, we contract stud dogs. Some are traced back to our pups produced in the past and some are completely outside of our lines. Regardless, there are some logistical challenges to a successful breeding because of distance between us and some of the studs. In addition to the challenges of getting sires and dams together, the biology must work. We do what we can to time it right with progesterone testing, so we get sires and dams together at the right times, but the timing isn't always convenient for the human component and progesterone testing is costly.

Lastly, breeding, whelping, and taking care of pups is not easy. It takes a ton of time and commitment to do it right. Both Jen and I have day jobs, we have two young kids involved in everything young kids are involved in, we both regularly volunteer for different organizations, and we do have things we enjoy beyond breeding Llews. That said, it's not easy for us to expand our operation nor do I think either of us really want to. It would lose some of its flash if we were just in it to produce pups, which in turn could lead to pups with lesser qualities, poorer care, and so on. We would love to say "yes we have pups", but instead the message is usually "please be patient."

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# LLEWS NEWS FROM HICKORY HOLLOW

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## Stella's Corner

A Quarterly Column from the Elder Llew



Let me tell you about my season. So, my owner, who is usually pretty cool about taking me out hunting all the time, has basically incarcerated me this season. He says I tore my right rear cruciate ligament in early September; and I say I just tripped in a ditch chasing something he couldn't finish. Regardless, I ended up at the Kansas State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital for TPLO surgery where I am now Ms. Popular among vet school students. This is due to my charming personality and good looks, of course. He should have known I would wield my charm to punish him for the incarceration by manifesting expensive vet bills through unsuspecting vet students.

Anyway, the message isn't really getting through because he keeps walking out the door with all that orange on and 3-4 other Llews in tow. When he drives off, he gets to see my beautiful face of disappointment in his rear-view mirror. He keeps saying, just a few more weeks. But so do the vet students. I seem to be the only one who truly thinks I can handle a little running and sniffing. I can't imagine how much he's missed in the field without me. Those youngsters he's been hanging out with couldn't find birds if they were perched on their tails.

So here we are, only a few more weeks left in the season, and I'm still incarcerated. For nothing, in my opinion. He should be glad I'm not the one with the trigger finger at this point. When the time does come, I'll show him all he has missed all season. Of course, it's starting to look like it will be next season at this point. Let's see...season ends at the end of January and starts at the beginning of September. That's seven months I have to plan his demise if he leaves me behind anymore.

### HLS GEAR SHOP

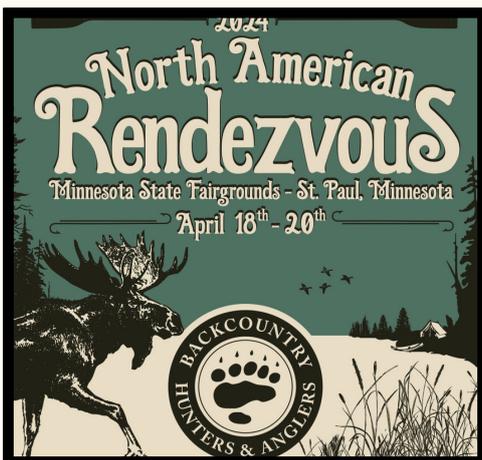
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