

HUNTING DOGS, in addition to their eagerness and desire to carry out their tasks while hunting with the hunter, are “dogs” too. Being a hunting dog can sometimes be a demanding job for our four-legged friend, though at the same time fun, life enhancing, and an adventure.

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Sometimes training for the hunting season can be hard, it can tell on both hunter and dog, and the hunting itself can also be demanding, depending on the terrain, length of hunt, weather and the going. The age and condition of the dog of course always has to be considered as well with respect to how much one can expect and require from the hunting dog one has with you on the hunt. How well is the dog trained in advance, how old is it, and what sort of burden can it bear per day and over time?

The hunting season is closing in and we have to get to work, whatever the basic condition of the dog is in, fit or not so fit. Do you have several dogs or just the one?

A love of life, love of hunting dogs and nature means that we spend the length of time in the country everyday according to what the dog can tolerate, the condition it is in and its physique, i.e. its physical status vis-à-vis condition, musculature, skeletal structures and any other internal organ's status or clinical picture.

Mastering and achieving...

Being good and getting praise...

Being used to going on the hunt...

Being sick or getting something wrong and no longer being as good as before, even though the will is still there...

The dog, man's best and most honest friend.

It can be an advantage to have several dogs one can use in a hunting situation since there are dogs that have problems with their musculature/skeletal system, so-called musculature-skeletal system disorders.

One is then able to divide up the work and burden between the various dogs. This means that hunt is doable and those dogs that have weaknesses will be able to manage their parts and will experience the joy of being along on the hunt.

Unfortunately the best hunting dog isn't always the fittest. Rehabilitation: what can be done and can anything be done to get the dog back into the condition it once was in (rehabilitation, prevention and the progression of symptoms)?

Do we ask as much of ourselves as we ask of our four-legged friends?

Can the dog still be used for hunting despite the fact that something is wrong with it and how serious is the problem we are dealing with, not to mention can anything be done about this problem, can one mend the injury, can one prevent an injury deteriorating, or is the dog 'finished'?

Is one willing to spend time and money on helping a dog back to health, fitness and wellness?

And does one know which measures are adequate or suitable to accomplish this?

And will this succeed and which methods and which profession would be the correct way to go with respect to reversing, preventing and alleviating negative conditions?

I hope this has focused your attention on the hunt and your hunting buddy, training, the terrain, the going and, if something is wrong, what can be done or what can be expected in relation to correctly rectifying an injury or negative conditions. And can the dog participate in the hunt? Or can't it? What can it actually do? A lot or a little?

And what can we do regarding prevention, the corrective alleviation of symptoms with physiotherapy, or possibly by visiting a chiropractor, using acupuncture or homeopathy combined with vet medicine? Many of muscle-skeletal disorders will be able to be corrected with the aid of various treatment measures.

One can do all of it or some of it well before hunting starts so that one prepares the hunting dog for participation in this season's hunt. Having said this though the dog may not be completely ready, it may be able to perform some hunting related tasks anyway. As I said in the first article I wrote, they have a much longer tradition of treating dogs and using physiotherapy abroad. Here a system has been established with rehabilitation clinics where one often finds physiotherapists, chiropractors, acupuncturists, and homeopaths, working together with veterinaries or in collaboration with veterinaries.

The treatment follow-up with an adequate choice of methods and the right choice of profession according to the hunting dog's condition and diagnoses, together with the right dose of training and follow-up during the rehabilitation phase will then be an easier goal to achieve than if one didn't have the services of experienced professionals and expertise in this field.

I would thus appeal for greater cooperation between veterinaries and other professions that together can manage to rehabilitate a hunting dog and restore its quality of life, hunting training and allow it to hunt again.

In the next issue of Fuglehunden I will try to shed some light on a concrete example, describe a hunting dog's diagnosis, clinical condition and illustrate the various routes one can take vis-à-vis treatment follow-up and rehabilitation.

With this I hope to get dog owners to seek help when injuries occur and at the same time think of pain alleviation, rehabilitation and prevention to get the hunting dog fit again and back to work and hunting.

Hopefully increased cooperation between professions will achieve this goal.

Happy hunting!

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