

DOP

REHOMING PORTUGUESE DOGS

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EVENTS

You remember that in December we have advertised a vaccination project. We delimited a part of the shelter, a group of 28 kennels hosting over 110 dogs. The project consists of checking individually each dog (ears, teeth, heart, eyes, weight) and vaccinating him (or re-vaccinating) with rabies and the polyvalent vaccination (the kennel cough vaccination is not included). With your donations that helped us buy the vaccinations, we are doing well. We have covered so far 18 kennels. The vet, Sylvia, is doing the check-ups and vaccinations on Mondays.



We would like again to thank all those who bought DOP calendars 2013. To prove you that your support is well used, here is what we did (so far, more to come) with the small profit that the calendars brought us:

- * We bought a grooming table for our spa team
- * We bought 3 boxes of kennel cough vaccinations for old dogs
- * We supported controlling of a street cat colony (sterilisations and food)



Winter is a period of cold and rain in Portugal. The days might be warm but the nights are cold. It is therefore easier for the dogs to catch cold and especially kennel cough. The vaccination against kennel cough is expensive and we cannot give it to all dogs. We have decided to prioritise puppies and senior dogs – their defence system may be weaker so they are getting the kennel cough vaccination. If you would like to help, you can choose a dog you would like to sponsor and support the costs of the kennel cough vaccination for him/her. Like this you will help us protect the dogs better over the winter.

Kennel cough is an infection of the respiratory system caused by a virus or bacteria. It is easily transmissible in a closed environment, like kennels – this is where the name comes from.

At the beginning of the infection the dog may not present any visible symptoms of the sickness nor suffer any general weakening of the organism. At the next stage, he/she will start coughing but the cough gives more of an impression that something got stuck in its throat – it gets worse in the moments of excitement or during an exercise. The cough can be humid or dry but generally it is accompanied by loss of appetite and loss of energy. If the cough is not treated, it may lead to pneumonia.

The contagion of the sickness is very easy, it mostly occurs through drops transmitted by the air, this is why a dog can catch it during any contact with another infected dog, even at such simple activity as a walk in the park. It may happen any time during the year although it is most common in colder months.

The easiest to be infected are puppies, old dogs and dogs with other health problems which usually means that they have weaker immunitary defence system.

Normally the sickness is self-curable but there is always a risk that it may develop into pneumonia, this is why it is advisable to treat it with adequate means, e.g. antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, anti-cough medication, etc. (consult your vet!).

How to prevent?

There are vaccinations against kennel cough available in the market – they should be administered by the vet according to a scheme prescribed for the relevant vaccination.

If your dog is not vaccinated, avoid contact with dogs that may have kennel cough in order to avoid contagion. If you suspect that your dog may have kennel cough, limit his/hers contact with other dogs until recovered.

In colder months do not give too many baths and when you give a bath, make sure that the dog is dried properly. Older and smaller dogs, with short fur, should wear a coat outside and be covered for the night.



DOGS OF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS BREEDS: LAW AND SOCIETY

In 2003 seven breeds of dogs and their crosses ceased to be seen as equal to other dogs when they became legally classified as "potentially dangerous". By the Portuguese Decree-Law No. 312/2003 of 17th December seven breeds were listed as potentially dangerous: Fila Brasileiro, Dogo Argentino, Pit Bull Terrier, Rottweiler, American Staffordshire Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier and Tosa Inu.

Since then, these breeds, which by its constitution and appearance were already potential targets of discrimination, have been given a clearly negative connotation in the face of society. The muzzle and short leash (up to 1m) became mandatory for dogs of these breeds in public, increasing the stigma on them. The more sensationalist media dropped the designation "potentially" and started identifying these breeds simply as "dangerous", regardless of the history or temperament of each dog. The highlight of their "attacks" has honoured newspaper covers and televised news journal while extraordinary services that dogs of these same breeds provide to society, are ignored.

Is it really that a dog, by its breed alone, could be potentially dangerous? Interestingly if one consults the characteristics of these breeds in various national and international publications and authors of several specialised organs, we find that the word "dangerous" or "aggressive" is never mentioned among their characteristics. It is indeed sure to find words like "sociable", "obedient", "extremely faithful", among other features, which make members of these breeds extraordinary pets when harmoniously integrated into human families.

Should a dog that attacks a person be killed? The Portuguese Decree-Law no. 315/2009 of 29th October (which repealed the previous act) states that: "The animal that causes serious harm to physical integrity, duly attested by a medical report, is to be euthanized using a painless method, after the consideration of the circumstances, including the aggressive nature of the animal." This decision that the municipal veterinarian adopts after "having considered the specific circumstances" may therefore or may not be euthanasia.

This law, for many considered an achievement in animal rights in Portugal, also provides for the possibility of the animal to be returned to its holder in accordance with certain obligations and requirements, thus leaving an open door for rehabilitation/education.

In the same decree we can read a very important message: "The conviction that the aggressiveness in dogs relates to educational factors or absence of socialization, rather than to their race or cross-breeding (...)", which is a positive sign, but there's still plenty to do and regulate. In particular, further attention should be given to the parameters to be used in the evaluation of the animal and who performs such evaluation; the possibility of the animal to be delivered to third parties (individuals or associations) for the purpose of rehabilitation should be considered; the certification of canine schools and their coaches is missing, etc...

Nina and Max are two cross Pitt Bulls living at Cantinho da Milu. Both are up for a responsible adoption! Nina is a gentle female of 5 years old, with a calm temperament, gentle with people and social with other dogs. She is also obedient and willing to learn. Max is a 4 years old big and very strong male and he has lots of energy. He needs a home with a place where he could run and have an active lifestyle. He loves people, he is obedient and gentle but he wants all the attention and this is why we would not advise him with another dog.

If you'd like to adopt one of them, please get in touch with us:

dogsofportugal@gmail.com



We need laws that can effectively protect the animals and their rights. Having such laws in place will be the starting point for us humans to also feel protected. The truth is that not all people are prepared to have a Rottweiler... as not all people are prepared to have a poodle... and also not all are prepared to have and care for any dog... regardless of its breed!

All animals have their needs and in order to to keep a dog healthy and balanced its family has to know and meet its needs for exercise and maintain a coherent and assertive education: ultimately a dog is a reflection of its family and the environment he lives. Regardless of its breed, it is through experiences and teachings that the dog will become gentle or not.

Is the real problem in the breed or in the education and conditions in which it was raised and maintained?

We leave this question for consideration as it is evident to us that it should be the starting point for any discussion on this matter.

GET TO KNOW...

Nina is a small fluffy dog of 6 years old. She is nearly blind and soon she will become completely blind. She has been seen by a veterinary ophthalmologist, one of the best in Portugal, who claims that her condition is reversible. She has cataracts that are progressing but that can be removed. He can operate her for 1100€ which is a 50% of his normal price. This is still much more than a shelter can afford so she will only be operated if we manage to collect sufficient amount of donations. Every month we have hundreds of viewers of this newsletter. If every reader sent 10€ it would not make a dent on their budget but it would make it possible for Nina to regain her sight. Please?



If you want to donate, there are things we always need:

- deworming tablets
- spot-on against fleas and ticks such as *Advantix* and *Frontline* and also *Advocate* for dogs with skin allergies
- collars and leashes
- dog food
- *Actidox* and *Becozyme* for treatment of tick fever and *Conofite* and *Oridermyl* for treatment of ear infections (all can be bought at the pharmacy)

DOP PARTNER

We would like to thank "Mimos e Amigos" for helping us prepare Natasha and João for their trip to the new home. Mimos and Amigos do bathing and grooming, as well as pet sitting and dog walking in the area of Oeiras and Cascais.

<http://www.mimos-e-amigos.pt/>



ADOPTIONS THIS MONTH

In January 2013 a total of 13 animals were adopted!

The lucky ones were: Beatriz, Happy, João, Ken (now Mulle), Leo, Marina, Marisol, Martinha (now Maddie), Nina, Paloma, Pantufa (now Pan), Pantufas and Sammy (now Anakin).

If you have adopted a dog or a cat from us, give us news!



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