

People believe there is money in breeding a litter.

For instance your bitch has a litter of six puppies which you are going to sell for \$1500. The Breeder decides to keep one puppy (though it is not unusual for Breeders to keep two puppies out of a quality litter) that leaves 4 or 5 puppies to be sold for a total of \$6000/\$7500. Not a bad return for not having to do anything except own the bitch!

That is the mistaken idea that many people have when they are buying a puppy.

My purpose in writing this article is to present as accurate an account as possible of the costs associated with whelping a litter of German Shepherd puppies. The majority of breeders do not make money from whelping litters. Raising a quality litter costs money, but raising a litter where things can & do go wrong costs much more.

Realistically here are some of the costs associated with whelping a litter:

Basic Breeding Decision Testing

- Hip & Elbow X-rays
- Breed Survey

Pre-Breeding Expenses

- Progesterone Testing
- Vaccination
- Worming

Insemination Methods

- Normal
- Stud Fee
- Transportation of Bitch to Stud - Flight costs if stud dog is interstate

Or if you drive the bitch interstate –

- Fuel costs
- Accommodation costs

If using Artificial Insemination

- Stud fee plus costs of arranging for collection of semen & implantation
- Frozen or chilled semen
- Cost of container for frozen semen
- Shipping semen
- Semen collection
- Implant Semen

Post Breeding Expense

- Ultrasound to detect if bitch is in whelp
- Additional food & supplements - the bitch could need up to 3 times the usual amount an adult dog is fed

Whelping Expenses

- Whelping box
- Whelping box bedding
- Cleaning, laundering & other supplies
Supplies in this category are items including but not limited to: Bottles, Weaning Formula, Disinfectants, Detergent, Washing Bedding, Towels, etc. - from whelping until the pups leave.

Post whelping expenses

The Post Whelping expenses are items that are typical for both mother and pups for the German Shepherd Breed. Most of these expenses are based on the size of the litter. The expense amount shown is based on six puppies, an average size litter for the Breed

- Visit to the Vet for check-up mother & pups
- Oxytocin injection for the bitch
- Puppy worming 4 times each puppy over the 8 weeks
- Worming twice for the bitch
- Additional food once puppies weaned

Additional Puppy Expenses

- Vaccinations
- Tattoo
- Microchip
- Litter Registration
- Heartworm
- Miscellaneous Expenses
- Puppy Gift Pack (the Kazkiri puppy pack costs approx \$40 per puppy)
- Bag of puppy food for each purchaser
- Heated Whelping Box
- Heating - if a winter litter

Other Possible Expenses

- Emergency Caesarian
- Medication for bitch after Emergency Caesar
- Visiting the Vet & medication for the bitch for such things as mastitis
- Then of course there are the numerous phone calls to people who are interested in buying a puppy from the Breeder

These expenses are provided all goes well with the litter and you do not have the added costs of having to take puppies to the vet because of illness.

Some of the costs in raising a litter of 6 puppies:

- The Stud fee is usually comparable to the price of one puppy
- If the dam is surgically inseminated, the cost of shipping the semen & implanting the semen – the price of another puppy or more
- Neonatal deaths – possibly one per litter

- Vaccinations, worming, dam's health check, tattooing, registration, microchips, extra food for dam & pups – the price of another puppy
- Emergency Caesar – the price of another puppy
- What price does a breeder add to the cost of raising this litter for lack of sleep for first few weeks of the puppies lives, eight weeks of daily care & love, cleaning of the whelping box, whelping room & puppy house?
- Breeder support for the life of the puppy – “Priceless”
- Then of course you have kept a puppy, so in reality you have 5 puppies for sale

Yes I am making a fortune breeding puppies!

Raising a litter is a “labour of love”. If you are breeding puppies for any other reason, don't breed, because you will never make the fortune you thought you would!