

May I introduce to you: **Malou de la Vallée des Maix**.

Sired by Eros des Jardins de Damalis (father) and Janis du Domaine de Sursaint (mother), Malou was born on June 21th, 2016 in a litter of 6 puppies, 3 males and 3 females.



Malou left for Petit Lancy after 8 weeks, a suburb of Geneva, where she came into a family with two small children. Soon the new owner realised that a dog in the house had a great impact on the family and after 3 months they decided they wanted to find another home for Malou. The problem was not in Malou, but in the family.

Malou was posted on Facebook by an organization and there I come into the story. I saw the ad and shared it on my Facebook page, seeking contact with people I knew that were looking for a Picardy Sheepdog. But at that time no one was interested. I then checked with AAA Berger Picard whether they knew the dog and descent, since only the name was reported without affix or prefix. AAA Berger Picard is not involved in the adoption, but willing to help me find out a few things, as also some Picard friends in France and Switzerland. And so we learned the name of the affix of the breeder and the name of the owner.

It soon became clear that Malou needed quickly to be rehomed, the sooner the better. At our request, a health survey was done for transport to the Netherlands, the result: she was healthy overall, eyes free so far to see, well built, but there was something in her vulva, which looked like a penis bone. The vet describes it this way: « Appendice péniforme au niveau de la vulve. Remplace clitoris (dur, probablement cartilage) », translated, it means: « Peniform appendix in the vulva. Replaces clitoris (hard, probably cartilage) ».

Possibly a penis bone and may not be suitable for breeding, was the conclusion of her veterinarian.



And she had a bend at the tip of their tail: a kinked tail.

Still, I decided to pick her up and take her to my home, since I am not a breeder and certainly not with a female with a genetic abnormality. But mostly because I liked her very much

So I drove on Monday December 19th at 7 pm to Geneva and picked her up, had full cooperation from the owners, no problem, and around half past seven at night drove toward my friends in France to stay there. Around quarter past nine I arrived there with a super brave Malou, who had not given one beep. She was sleeping quietly in her crate.

She made no difficulties to meet my friends and their two Picards, open and free without any reserve. That night she slept with me in my bed.

The trip back to the Netherlands went without any problems, she met Friques and JJ and the introduction went smoothly. Both men go their own way with her, but both love her. She has found her place in my house, as if she had always been here. Only the language is sometimes a barrier.

Then there is the problem of the deviation of her vulva. So right on Wednesday, I made an appointment with my veterinarian, he took a blood sample to examine the DNA and chromosomes to see what she had, XX or XY. But unfortunately that research is not possible for dogs in the Netherlands, Germany or Belgium. So then we had to wait for surgery. The vulva was examined by three different vets in both Wageningen and in Sleeuwijk and they came all to the same conclusion: This was a genetic disorder; she had a penis bone sitting in her vulva. Her father and mother may carry the gene, making Malou suffer carrying male and female sexual organs. However, it could also be a mistake of nature.

But one thing was without doubt: Malou was a pseudo-hermaphrodite or an ambivalent Picard.

Looking on the internet I came across this article on the English Cocker Spaniel site:

Hermaphroditism

What is hermaphroditism? Hermaphroditism (inter sexuality) is a condition in which the external genital organs after birth are not clear male or female. True hermaphrodites: there are both male and female external and internal sex organs (this is very rare). Pseudo-hermaphrodites, there are both male and female external genitalia, but the internal reproductive organs (= gonads) are either male (testes) or female (ovaries). Popularly called also called ambivalence. Or a dog has feminine characteristics, or a bitch has male characteristics. So it is possible that a female in her vulva can have a very small penis bone, or a dog is monorchide and a uterus. Also included is a hermaphrodite dog sometimes his penis in the wrong place and facing backwards instead of forwards. On the Internet a lot to think about this complicated derogation under the term: XX Sexual Reversal (sufferers have no Y chromosome, but they develop testicular tissue), but also when you're on Persistent Mullerian Duct Syndrome (in a normal dog grows including a uterus, externally there are absolutely no exceptions to note) you will come to know a lot. Hermafrodite comes to inter alia at: American and English Cocker Spaniels German Shorthaired Pointer weimaraner Beagle Kerry Blue Terrier Pug West Highland White Terrier Basset hound Dobermann viszla Soft-coated Wheaten Terrier The following article written trying to explain what is hermaphroditism, how it arises and the consequences for a dog can be. How to prevent it and what you can expect as the owner of a hermaphrodite. Thanks to Mrs. Vicky-Meyers of the Baker Institute in America for writing this article. Visit her website full of information:

http://bakerinstitute.vet.cornell.edu/research/meyers_wallen/inherited.html.

Heredity

Hermaphroditism is probably hereditary. Both parents must be carriers to have come with their children expressed. This is called an autosomal recessive inheritance. Multiple genes play a role. When Persistent Mullerian Duct Syndrome, there is no anti-mullerian hormone during fetal sex differentiation. Besides male internal reproductive organs can also be found fallopian tubes and uterus. Often this is accompanied by cryptorchidism and impaired spermatogenesis. A male with PMDS with research to uncover, not a bitch. This is called gender limited. One- or two-sided cryptorchidism (not descended from any two testicles in the scrotum) is common in dogs with PMDS. Because the vas deferens fused with the uterine horns, the testicles pass difficult the inguinal canal. the uterus may become inflamed due to the connection with the urinary tract. Chronic uterine and bladder infection keeps coming back after treatment, because antibiotics do not reach the stagnant urine in the womb. In about half of the cases, the first years there has been no noticeable inflammation. However, these males are often infertile (infertile) and they have later risk of testicular tumor.

the mutant gene found in the Miniature Schnauzer and may, by means DNA tests examine whether the dog is free, carrier or sufferer.

Research

Research to find this out in a suspected case: first confirm the sex chromosomes (XX or XY), then see if there is an Sry gene is present (what must ensure that is it look like a dog). Then examine whether there testicles, fallopian tubes, or both, are present at the same time. Finally, one can carry out research on the internal and external genital organs. PMDS is to discover a scan or ultrasound.

Save the aid of preferably all DNA can be located so that the genes in the future, which are responsible for the errors.

Additional note: in the Netherlands and Germany, the sex chromosomes research is impossible in dogs, which is by Kortenoord, veterinary practice Wageningen checked. Also on an ultrasound does not show anything.

What to do?

Hermaphroditism is to do nothing, except to keep the damage limited. It is advisable to neuter the dogs. Breeders also would be wise to exclude carriers from breeding.

It has never been known before whether hermaphroditism also occurs in the Picard. But not all breeders are familiar with it or willing to come out telling it. The breeder of Malou also was not familiar with it and she will not put her bitch for breeding again, she has been sterilized after an infection.

I went looking for specialists in this area, although there are very few as this problem is rare. But I came to Maarten Kappen and Walter Strikkers, both of them previously had a case like Malou. I chose Walter Strikkers in Sleeuwijk, to continue, as he has previously done this operation. Because Malou had pain in her vulva, we planned the operation at short notice. Depending on what one would encounter inside, a decision would be made for what would be removed. Also, an X-ray of the tail would also be taken, as there is a hook at the end. It was further agreed that it was OK for me to take as many pictures as possible, so that I could add them to this article.

Malou was operated on January 11, a very serious operation. I could watch through a glass window and follow everything.

First pre morphine to make her ready for surgery, then the infusion was introduced and the anaesthetic administered. Oxygen hose was attached and Malou was tied to the table. Mr. Strikkers first made an incision of about 3 cm into the abdomen to see what the genitals were. It turned out that in place of Malou's uterus were 2 testicles.



No uterus, no ovaries present. Malou was not just a she but a he.

I could then watch them do surgery and Mr. Strikkers regularly told me what was going on. After the testicles were removed, they turned Malou to remove the penis bone. This difficult endeavour was done with expertise, the vet having to make a big incision to remove the bone. The urethra was luckily in the right place and ended in the vulva. The penis bone appeared potentially to be a complete penis with erectile tissue; his length was about 4.5 cm.



The entire operation lasted about 2.5 hours.

Malou was sutured and an X-ray of the tail was made, this proved it to be a kinked tail. There's an immature vertebral transverse between two vertebrae. Normally there is a growth plate at both ends, the picture is good to see that first epiphysis is about the length of the spine.



Possible consequences of this operation: temporary or permanent incontinence, increased risk UTI (urinary tract infection).

Up to date (mid-February), Malou suffers from dripping after she has urinated, she wees a lot and often. Specially (and fine) is that she has no leakage when she sleeps. Moreover, she is regularly checked for UTI (urinary tract infection).

We (Mr. Strikkers and I) talked a bit about the heredity factor for either disorders, or sometimes a combination of both disorders. However, too little is known to say for 100% that it is genetically determined, but it also cannot be said 100% that it is not genetically determined. But surely no breeding should be done with these abnormalities. In both cases, serious abnormalities in organs can be passed on to the next generations.

It may be a mistake of nature, but because so few cases are known, there is very little research done into this domain.

Breeders do not even declare it or have this in mind, they do not see it.

That is why I have chosen to make this public and I will send this article to all the Berger Picard associations in the hope that they will publish it and make known within the breed.

Malou is a pseudo-hermaphrodite, on the outside no dog, on the inside no bitch, with her it was clear. But it will express itself differently: with a uterus without ovaries, ovaries but no uterus, cryptorchid males with a vulva, males with a uterus, remember it, it is not always visible on the outside

Malou has undergone all this bravely; she has a fantastic character, sweet and affectionate. And I love her just the way she is. I'm very glad I have her picked up and want to thank all those (everyone knows who I mean) who supported me in this and helped, in France and Switzerland!

Meanwhile, I have asked the question on Facebook if there were more dogs in the Picard breed who have a similar problem and this proves the case. There are several dogs in our breed with the ambiguity, so I want to ask everyone who knows that his or her dog is affected, to indicate this, so that we can determine which lines are carriers.

It is not to condemn breeders or to criticize, but to gain insight into how often and how much it occurs.

In France there is a veterinarian who would like to know more about this.

You can do this by email to amastenbroek@planet.nl

Thank you
Anneke Mastenbroek
The Netherlands