Short Communication

The determination of growth performance and some morphological characteristics effective on development curves of German Shepherd puppies during the suckling period

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Abstract

This study was carried out to establish the body weight, survival rate and some body measurements in German Shepherd puppies during the suckling period. The Puppies were each weighed every seven days, and measured at ten different body sites every fourteen the day until weaning. The mean live weight of each puppy was measured as 776 g in the 1st week, 1750 g in the 4th week and 2614 g in the 8th week. The survival rate for the puppies was calculated at 95.2% and 83%, respectively at the end of the 4th and 8th week. Some of the body measurements of the puppies at the age when they were removed from suckling (52nd day) such as head length, head girth, body length, shoulder height, ear length, chest girth, rump height, front wrist girth, tail length and back wrist girth were found to be 14.76, 24.03, 22.97, 25.16, 5.93, 30.64, 24.16, 6.62, 15.51 and 5.99 cm, respectively.

Key words: German shepherd puppies, growth, body measurements, weaning age.

Introduction

The German Shepherd Dog is medium sized, slightly elongated, strong and well muscled. The bones are dry and the structure firm. Height at the withers is 60-65 cm for males and 55-60 cm for bitches. Length of torso exceeds height at the withers by 10-17% (Anonymous 2008).

Most puppies live together with the mother and their siblings for the first eight weeks of their lives. During this time, the puppy starts to develop some of its adult behaviour (Scott and Fuller 1998, Case 1999). A better understanding of growth curves for dog breeding may aid in estimating mature weight at a young age, thus allowing earlier breeding and training decisions to be made and increasing genetic change per year (Helmink et al. 2000). The number of dog breeder establishments that are registered and systematic in Turkey is quite limited. This study aims to reveal the growth performance, survival rate and some body characteristics of the German Shepherd puppies during the suckling period.

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