

# PROGESTERONE TESTING CHART

0.1 to 1.0 breed in 7 days (recommended retesting in 5 days)  
1.0 to 2.0 breed in 5 days  
2.0 to 3.0 breed in 4 days  
3.0 to 4.0 breed in 3 days  
4.0 to 8.0 breed in 2 days  
8.0 to 11.0 breed that day or the next day for a natural breeding  
12.0 to 15.0 breed that day for a natural breeding  
15.0 - 18.0 breed that day for an implant

In order to test the progesterone of a Rottweiler female, you have to understand their estrous cycle. In the beginning of the cycle you'll notice blood dripping and swelling of the vulva. Males begin to become attracted to the female at this time as well. This phase is called proestrus. The progesterone levels are still very low at this phase, but do show a very small rise off normal. Females cannot become impregnated during this phase as their eggs haven't dropped. If you try to breed a female in this phase, she's not likely to be receptive to breeding, and if you do manage to get her bred, the sperm won't have any eggs to fertilize just yet. The reason I mention this is because I can't tell you how many times I've seen people trying to breed too soon, too early and then asking afterwards what's wrong with their dogs because they wouldn't breed.

The second phase is the true season as we know it and it's called the estrus phase. During this phase, the female will begin mating behavior including what we call flagging where they present their rear in the air and move their tail or tail stub to the side and they seek out males at this stage. The progesterone will rise to a 5 during this phase and at a 5 the eggs are released, but are not fertile for two days more after she reaches a 5. When the progesterone reaches an 8 to a 10 is the best time for a natural breeding, then skip a day in-between, and breed one more time. I like to test the progesterone one more time on the last day of breeding to be sure the progesterone was actually high enough for it to have taken.

The semen is said to be in very good shape for at least 48 hours, thus there is no valid reason to breed every day. Every other day when breeding is sufficient. Sperm can actually live inside the female up to 12 days, but that would be considered extreme. The average sperm life once inseminated into the female is usually two to five days.

For a fresh chilled insemination, the timing needs to be even more finely tuned, and you would wait until the progesterone is in the low teens to inseminate the female. And in the instance of frozen implants, you would try to get the progesterone even higher in the teens like between 15 to 18 before doing a transcervical implant or an intrauterine implant.

The third phase is diestrus and the progesterone levels will go higher still during this phase whether or not the female was impregnated or not. The progesterone levels must remain high in order for the female to remain pregnant if she indeed is.

Anestrus is the period of time between heat cycles and it's during this time that progesterone levels are back to normal..

Usually when a regular very normal female is in season, she is usually ready for a natural breeding around her 9th to 14th day, but normal for one female can be very far away from what is normal for another. Never rely on what you've seen your other females do in estimating what the present one will do. Always begin testing somewhat earlier than normal when you aren't sure how or when a female ovulates.

We run what are called progesterone tests, or progesterone assays. The blood progesterone levels are somewhat accurate and can be very useful in determining when to take the female to the male. I have found that there is a very noticeable difference in the results from one lab to another, and it's better to just stay with one lab and get used to what their results mean. We have two labs here where I live, Anatech and Idexx. We have the blood drawn at the vet and they send it to one or the other labs and we get the results the next morning. Once we had them send it to both labs at the same time and the results were several numbers different. Therefore, these tests are a guideline, not to be considered as 100% accurate.

We do not recommend in-house progesterone tests or the smears that veterinarians can run in their offices and give you the results in just a few minutes. Those are the least accurate.

Please only breed dogs that are worthy of being bred and who are health tested and certified and if the stud owner asks you to get a progesterone test or two done on your female, you should be willing to go have them done.