

In my GDB genealogy research, I've learned how important it is to know the whelp date and dam's name (sire too, if possible). GDB dogs are easier than pups from other breeders since all pups in a GDB litter have names beginning with the same letter of the alphabet. But it's a mistake to assume that pups which appear to be close in age and have names beginning with the same letter are from the same litter. GDB does try to assign letters in alphabetical order. You can see the general pattern if you take the time. But there are a variety of exceptions. Letters are assigned before a litter is born. GDB knows when each female was bred and assumes a gestation period of 62 days. However, nature often unpredictable and some litters arrive "out of alphabetical order" for their assigned letter. Also, GDB tries not to assign the same letter twice to a female breeder's litters. Female breeders are only active for about 5-6 years (or less) before they are retired, so this isn't difficult. Alanis, dam of our "M" pups had "C" "G", "M" and "Z" litters. (The "Z" pups are still with raisers, including one just cc'd in our group.) Males can be used at stud so long as they are producing sperm. They are frequently partnered with several females while on campus for "work". I don't think they factor too much in the alphabet assignments, although could be considered. The size of a litter is also a factor. Pregnant females undergo at least two ultrasounds. So, GDB knows the approximate number of pups expected. So, they wouldn't assign "X", for example, to a projected large litter. In fact, "X", "Y" and a few others aren't used too frequently, whereas "M", "T", "P" and others are used more frequently, but still in alphabetical order. Usually the birth dates of unrelated pups with same initial letter are close to a month or longer apart. But this is confusing to raisers to whom the pups may look about the same age. This happened to me when I was raising a "B" pup and another "B" transferred into our group. They weren't related. I recently made an error in assuming another transfer dog in a Seattle group was in one litter when it turned out he was in another born a month earlier. The raiser receiving the transferred pup wasn't informed of his birth date or even his correct age. Both pups were too young to have been included in a Fun Day Littermate Book. Puppy names aren't used again so long as the dog is "active" as a puppy, breeder or guide. However, when a pup is retired or cc'd, sometimes the name is reused almost immediately. It's not unusual to find two pups with the same name in the same Fun Day Littermate Book. You can't assume that recalled pups with the same first initial are related when you look at phase lists. If you're checking for littermates, look at the ID number on the list.