

## Where Now Brown Dog?

*Author, Phil Wright*

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A few years back while attending the Vizsla Club of America Fall Field Trial at the Killdeer Plains Wildlife Refuge in Ohio, I listened with considerable skepticism while the editor of HUNTING DOG magazine, a magazine that I enjoy very much incidentally, told us that he could very clearly see the day when there would be two strains of Vizslas, exactly as there are two strains of Pointers, Setters (White & Red) etc. I felt like getting up and saying it wouldn't happen with our breed because their true heritage as a household hunting companion was the heart of their ownership appeal. How wrong can a person be? How naïve can one be? In the span of a few short years I have come to see the emergence of some very real signs of difference within the breed.

It is one of life's facts that anything which is beautiful as well as useful will soon become coveted for its beauty and that those who so covet will soon outnumber those who treasure its utility. In my opinion the Vizsla is on that road.

Lest anyone get the impression that I am suggesting that the Vizsla is on the road to extinction, let me hasten to make some observations. In my opinion the advancement of the qualities of the Vizsla as a field dog have far outstripped the improvements in the breed as show dogs. There are very good reasons why this is so. In the field the dog has to be judged by the quality of its performance and there is a sharp upturn in this feature. In the show ring the dog is judged in some measure by the reputation of the person holding the lead to hide its faults and show off its good qualities. If the dog is a reasonable specimen at all it is a cinch for a "championship", whatever that is worth. I will refrain from comment on the actual judging for I have seen good judging so rarely that I feel I have limited observation to generalize from.

I have recently come back from a visit to Hungary and a conducted tour of Vizsla owners. I did not go to a dog show and hope to see some Vizslas. Instead I went to the President and the Secretary of the Hungarian Hunting Society and asked to be shown Vizslas, period. I was fortunate enough to see a hunting training session, the top winning show Vizsla and a goodly number of dogs which are both shown and hunted extensively. There is not a shadow of doubt in my mind that the Vizsla in Hungary is

away from the real type of the breed. Tall dogs, straight shoulders, poor feet, funny gaits and rosy red color are becoming common in the shows. They couldn't hack it in the field.

It may be just a voice in the wilderness but I urge all of you to prevent the separation within our breed. We have the breeding stock to do it, but if we don't look we won't find it in time.

*About the Author – Phil Wright is Professor and Acting Director of the Scholl of Agricultural Economics and Extension Education at the University of Guelph. He has been a Vizsla Owner for eleven years and a serious breeder for nine years. He has been fortunate in that one of his early litters produced the first Best In Show Vizsla in the USA, Canada, and Mexico. At the same time dogs from his kennel have won more field trials placements than those from all other Canadian breeders combined. This can be credited to the very fine people who have obtained their dogs from him and whom he sincerely appreciates. The emphasis at Napkelte Kennels is on complete honesty with the buyer and complete objectivity in breeding. With a bit of luck, which we all need, there can be help but be a payoff in quality Vizslas.*



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