

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

Last week's article began with a story about Bella, a stray dog that gave birth at our home 26 years ago. It all had a happy ending. This article will start with a story about Gloria, a stray dog that came to the Northwoods Humane Society from the Sawyer County Pound, several months ago. Gloria was an emaciated, pregnant German Sheppard.

Gloria went to a super foster home. Bonnie, the mother and her husband have three children under the age of 10, two dogs and a cat. They have a warm and inviting home and are 'super fosters' that embrace animals in need. Each animal that leaves their home has been loved and socialized.

Gloria gave birth to ten puppies in their home and were cared for, along with Gloria until it was time to return to the shelter. All puppies have been adopted. Pre adoptions were done, vet checks accomplished, meet and greets were successful and a week ago all ten puppies went to their new homes spayed or neutered, age appropriate vaccinations, vet checked and fecal checked. Gloria has also found her forever home.

Most of us don't expect to have a dog that is pregnant but as the saying goes 'you never know!' The following was taken from "Dogs for Dummies".

Most dogs are natural whelpers and may not need help with birthing the puppies. But emergencies can happen. The mama dog gives birth, cleans her puppies, and begins feeding them. But what if that doesn't happen?

Puppies have to be freed from their amniotic sacs within 30 seconds or so and you need to help them breathe on their own. Clean the fluid from their mouths and noses by supporting their heads and swing them between your legs – stop sharply to start the breathing. You can also remove the fluid with a bulb syringe. Rub the puppy with a clean towel and put her on a nipple. Above all, keep the puppies warm.

If the mother doesn't sever the umbilical cord, you may need to do that too: Tie it off an inch from the puppy with a thread soaked in alcohol and then snip with clean scissors. Dab the end with an antibiotic. Mama dog should take over now.

However if that doesn't happen, it will be time for an emergency visit to a vet if: She fails to enter labor 24 to 36 hours after her temperature dips to 99 degrees. She's in labor and more than four hours lapse with no puppy being born, especially if a dark green fluid passes. She seems very uncomfortable and is panting heavily. A puppy may get stuck while being delivered. She has a puppy and 30 minutes pass without another puppy being born yet she's having strong contractions. If she doesn't expel an afterbirth, or placenta for each puppy. Retained afterbirths can trigger infections. If in doubt about anything call your vet. She may need more help than you can give; including a cesarean section.

If everything goes well, clean the mother up with Betadine while she cleans up the nest – eating the afterbirths is a normal part of the process.

An important after-birth problem to look out for: If your nursing mom becomes restless, agitated and trembling, call the vet and tell them you are on the way. She may need calcium treatments for a condition called eclampsia.

I have a dear friend who breeds fabulous labs. When it is time for birthing of a litter, she is on it 24/7. No games of scrabble, no glass of wine and no Packer parties. It is all about the dogs.