

## YANNI AND HER FIFTEEN PUPPIES!

"Yanni" is a beautiful German Shepherd, imported from Australia as a puppy by her very committed owners Tracy and Geoff. They decided to breed from her for the first time this year. The dog that they selected to breed her with lives in Hamilton so we did multiple progesterone blood tests before she went down there, to make sure she was at the perfect stage of her cycle to conceive.

Things didn't go quite to plan when she met her new "boyfriend" so the vets in Hamilton used Artificial Insemination (AI) to get her pregnant.

Michelle scanned her here at Mill Road 28 days later and everyone was very excited to see that she was definitely pregnant. Everything proceeded normally and then towards the end of her 64 day gestation we decided to take an x-ray to see how many puppies she was going to have. She was huge at this stage and very ready to have her babies! Everyone had a shock when we saw at least thirteen puppies on the x-ray!! Tracy and Geoff were going to be busy!!

Four days later Yanni was not very well and was brought in for a check. We ultra sounded the puppies and their heart rates were low so we were concerned that they were distressed. In consultation with her owners we decided that Yanni should have a caesarean immediately.

We all swung into action, as many hands were needed. She was rapidly prepared for surgery and put under general anaesthetic. Debbie performed the surgery with Nurse Monica assisting and 5 nurses and vets on stand-by to look after the puppies once they were born. An incision was made in her uterus and all the puppies were removed. And they just kept coming! In the end 15 puppies were born in about 25 minutes! Once they were born they were handed to one of the waiting nurses and rubbed vigorously and mucous removed from their noses and mouths. They were kept well stimulated until they were breathing well and making some noise. Then they were kept warm to wait for Mum to wake up. It was all action for an hour. Yanni's uterus was then sewn up and her abdomen sewn closed. She was then given a few minutes to start to wake up. The anaesthetic we use is very short acting so shortly after surgery she was beginning to lift her head. We then started introducing her to her many puppies. It was important that they all had their first drink of colostrum as they get much of their initial immunity from this. About 2 hours after surgery Yanni and her new brood went home with Tracy and Geoff.

Fifteen puppies have certainly been a challenge but they are four weeks old now and all doing really well. It has been a big commitment for the family as they have been supplement feeding the puppies, as Yanni cannot produce enough milk to feed them all; which involved two hourly feedings at the beginning! Well done to the whole family.

We look forward to meeting all the pups again at their vaccinations and hopefully seeing some of them throughout their lives.

