

Why is the ZTP the Breed Suitability Test of Choice for Rottweilers?

Herding/Droving or the ZTP? The answer is clear, and for good reasons..... ZTP!

By Laurie Boutzetis – Seeuferhause Rottweilers (<http://www.seeuferhauserottweilers.com.au/>)

One of the joys and benefits of being involved with Rottweilers has been the friendships and professional relationships which I have established with people from across the world. It gives me an opportunity to learn from people who live in cultures and environments different to ours while we share the common love of the Rottweiler.

One of these friends is Kiene (Catherine) Zandbergen from the Ter Waele Kennel in Holland. Ter Waele was established in 1985, however Rottweilers were present in the family since 1954. In addition to Rottweilers Ter Waele also breeds & shows horses.



Kiene has the philosophy and also practices that Rottweilers should be an “all round” breed and subscribes to the ADRK philosophy that “work & conformation” make for the “all round” dog.

Over the years I have had many conversations with Kiene surrounding the Rottweiler, and many aspects of the breed including bloodlines, individual dogs, breeding test and of course “zucht books”. These are the books printed every year by the ADRK which detail all breedings, titles achieved etc. by Rottweilers of the ADRK, and Kiene who is an avid collector has helped me to establish and improve my collection.

One such conversation was a discussion and exchange of ideas surrounding the current breed suitability test of the ADRK; the ZTP and the Rottweiler’s original task, that of being the “drover” or “herding” dog.

I am seeking a deeper understanding of why the original work practice of the breed ceased being the “breed suitability test” for the breed over 100 years ago.... I have had similar discussions with other experienced breeders and judges and the intention was to collate all the input into one article. However, given that Kiene invested time and effort to articulate her thoughts on paper, it deserves to be published as a stand-alone piece of work.

One thing that I have come to realize in my time involved with dogs is that there is no absolute and nothing stays the same. While Herding is an awesome activity and sport for your Rottweiler, to Kiene’s point, modern day herding trials do not represent the work activity of the droving / herding which the breed used to carry out in previous centuries. Similarly, the sport of IGP is somewhat different to the original activity of “schutzhund”.

To varying degrees (in both examples) elements remain however as an overall activity it is not the same.

One other person that I had this similar conversation based in Belgium is Rottweiler Breed Specialist judge and IFR President Mr Dirk Vandecasteele.

Not to steal Kiene’s thunder but the commentary that Dirk provided ties in well with Kiene’s thoughts and lends insight as to why the ZTP is the breed suitability test of choice for the Rottweiler:

Why ZtP?

The Breed standard states that the Rottweiler is a “**diensthund**” (=security/service/police dog)

The ZtP-routines allow to test the presence of the drives needed for this work in a socially acceptable manner. The breed was originally a cow driver and in my opinion the show judge needs to judge the conformation of the dog in that context, incl. the trot.

But mentally, given that we do not use the Rottweiler as a cattle driver anymore nor have the programs and/or the means to select him on this ground, the ZtP-program will test and select him as close as possible to his original characteristics / traits that beside being a cattle driver also made him very suitable as a “diensthund”.

The standard states the breed to be a “diensthund” ... so this is part of his definition and the ZtP allows to test those traits.”

I do hope this information provides the missing links for the audience as to why a breed originally developed as herder / drover is now selected for breeding on its abilities related to that of a service / police dog.

Breeders, please take note and understand the need for the ZTP. And, as an extension to this please understand the need and importance of participating in any, and all forms of working / training / trialing – **the Rottweiler is a working breed!**

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Kiene & Dirk for their time and effort in providing this response to our conversation. I really appreciate the insights and am thankful for the continued education that these connections provide.

Please enjoy the article!

Thoughts on Breed Suitability Tests

By Kiene Zandbergen – Ter Waele Rottweilers (<https://www.terwaele.nl/>)

A ZTP (Zuchttauglichkeits Prüfung) is totally different than a herding test. According to my personal point of view you cannot compare these tests.

In the past, even long before our beloved breed got its official name and before it was registered as a breed the ancestors of our dogs were used for driving cattle. That was necessary in those days as cattle was often collected from different towns and walked to slaughter places & or new owners.

This type of work is not seen in the today herding tests / trials when our breed does participate. In the past they had to walk several hours per day. To guard the cattle and to protect the owner.

“The working capacity & willingness was the most important selection tool.”

After many years the requirements for dogs to drive cattle disappeared. Cattle was slaughtered locally and often brought by truck to slaughterhouses. That was the reason that many of the ancestors of our breed almost disappeared.

There was no work for the dogs anymore and most people did not keep dogs / animals as pets. Human & animal had to work for their living and to earn their food

The good qualities as a guard dog were recognized and known and slowly the ancestor of your breed changed from a cattle dog into a police / guard dog. In the Swiss Alps the ancestors stayed there and became, the Bernese Mountain dog, Appenzeller, Grosse Schweizer & Entlebucher.

Again, it was the farmer and the butcher who saved the ancestors of our breed as they recognized the qualities to guard.

Herding these days is totally different than in the past. Of course, it is a great sport to do with your dog. In several countries, many times special herding breeds e.g. the Border Collies, Australian Cattle Dog etc. etc. and are being used to herd the sheep and or cattle and to protect the herd.

The type of dog for his work does vary a lot, as in many countries a totally different type of dog is required, based on the work and climate where the dog is living. The most important requirements for a dog to be able to guard a herd is that the dog can fulfill the specific task which is required.

The ZtP has as purpose that dogs which are used in a breeding program are within the ADRK Standard. This is the official Standard of our breed.

There is no different standard for a working- or show dog in our breed.

There is one breed standard and this one has to be followed and it is the breed standard by the ADRK in Germany. (Allgemeiner Deutscher Rottweiler Klub).

The ZtP does contain a Conformation part. This means that the dog is being measured height, length, circumference of the chest, Eye colour & shape/size of the eyes must be within the standard. Also, a correct coat which does include also an undercoat, correct and a complete dentition which must be a scissors bite. Proper weight. Dogs who are too skinny or too fat can be excused from the ZTP. Correct movement.

Photos below are of some of the instruments utilized to complete the measuring process of the ZTP



ADRK eye chart



ADRK Head Measuring device



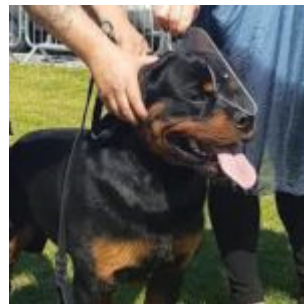
Tape measure for chest

No overdone or too small dogs should be allowed in the breeding program. Special the length of the muzzle is these days for some dogs is a problem. Many of the muzzles are becoming too short.

Not enough length of the muzzle does / can give problems in many ways. A too short muzzle causes problem as there is not enough place to have the teeth placed correctly, not able to breathe normally, especially when the dog has to perform.



Measuring the depth of chest



Measuring the skull-muzzle ratio



Measuring the height

The above photos demonstrate some of the measuring sequences which are completed as part of the ZTP. Measuring the dog also compliments the social part of the ZTP test, and the dog's ability to withstand the process without reaction.

The social part of the ZTP also important. Too sharp or dogs who are too afraid or who cannot be measured or cannot stand it to be amongst people cannot pass the ZTP. Before somebody can enter a dog for a ZTP the dog must fulfill the BH exam with a good result.



Practising Scanning for Microchip with crowd watching on

This is an exam / test in which the dog must be able to heel and perform several items which are required. Heeling on leash and without it, sit, down, laying down without a leash when another dog is performing.

A critical component of the BH exam is the “gun test”, all dogs must be gun sure during their exam. This is conducted by the trial secretary firing 2 shots from a starter pistol at the judge request during the early phase of the heeling exercise, while the other dog is in an “off lead” stay exercise. Both dogs must show indifference to the noise of the gun shots.

In Germany and several other countries, a dog must have an official X-ray result available of hips & elbows. Also, a DNA profile has to be known from an official approved Laboratory and a JLPP test result. Results must be known and send in together with the entry form to enter the dog for a ZTP. Without these results it is not possible to enter the dog at a ZTP.

This basic training and exam (BH) are required as a start for all further exams with the dog. It Can be Tracking, Obedience, IGP, KNPV, Mondioring etc. etc.



Rottweiler completing “Hold & Bark” exercise

The defense part of the ZTP is the last part of the test. If a dog fails for the defense part, the chance might be available that the dog can be entered again at a ZTP after 3 or 6 months. It is the judge who does make this decision. A dog who cannot pass the conformation part, E.g. incorrect bite or missing teeth, incorrect coat etc. is not approved for breeding either.

A ZTP does give a broader view & information of the specific dog compared to a herding test. A dog can be good in Herding or other official dog sport activities as IGP, Agility, etc. But to select breeding stock on the results of herding and or work capacities and no proper confirmation examination is asking for problems.

Several aspects which are extremely important as health screenings as which only can be tested by X-rays and Laboratory activities are necessary and a must

A Herding test / trial, combined with a report of a conformation judge and the official health screenings should be able to approve a dog for breeding. Specially for the dog owners who do not want to be involved in part C of the IGP program.

Breeders / Fanciers of our beloved breed has to see the Rottweiler as a complete dog. A dog who can perform at the working field and showing. That is the goal breeders should follow. To split a breed into a working- & a show dog can & will be a disaster. Other breeds did show this already.

Let us try to save our Rottweiler as a complete dog who is bred within the standard of the ADRK (Allgemeiner Deutscher Rottweiler Klub).