

# ***I ASKED FOR MILK, YOU BROUGHT ME CHOCOLATE MILK!***

*by Steve Wolfson*



A discussion began between some enthusiasts concerning the premise of whether or not an extra tooth in the Rottweiler jaw was faulty. Since the standard takes no position on extra teeth, the guidance is ambiguous; most did not think it was a problem. Nonetheless, it is a worthwhile argument basic to the structure and functionality of the upper and lower jaws needing further detail.

The standard specifies, “**Teeth, 42 in number (20 upper, 22 lower), strong, correctly placed, meeting in a scissors bite.**” Often, an additional tooth is visible on many Rottweilers. The area having the most notoriety for the additional tooth is the P1; it can be present on both upper left and upper right, lower left and lower right jaws. Occasionally, extra teeth are visible in opposing positions. This is observable as extra P1’s, right and left, upper or lower jaw. The reason for this anomaly is most probably of genetic origin, since the morphology of the teeth is strongly inherited. However, it does occur with frequency in many bloodlines. So why does this matter?

Since the Rottweiler is a working dog, it is important that the teeth have correct alignment for their function as cutters. Therefore, the problem occurring when an additional tooth is present is that it exerts pressure on the other teeth, altering the alignment of the whole jaw. Because this pressure is constant, the extra tooth forces the other teeth out of correct alignment. This is analogous to the same pressure humans have that causes crooked teeth, resulting in a visit to the Orthodontist. The amount of pressure exerted on the teeth will determine the amount of misalignment. The Rottweiler jaw is no exception to this rule. The same forces that work on human teeth are at work for dogs as well.

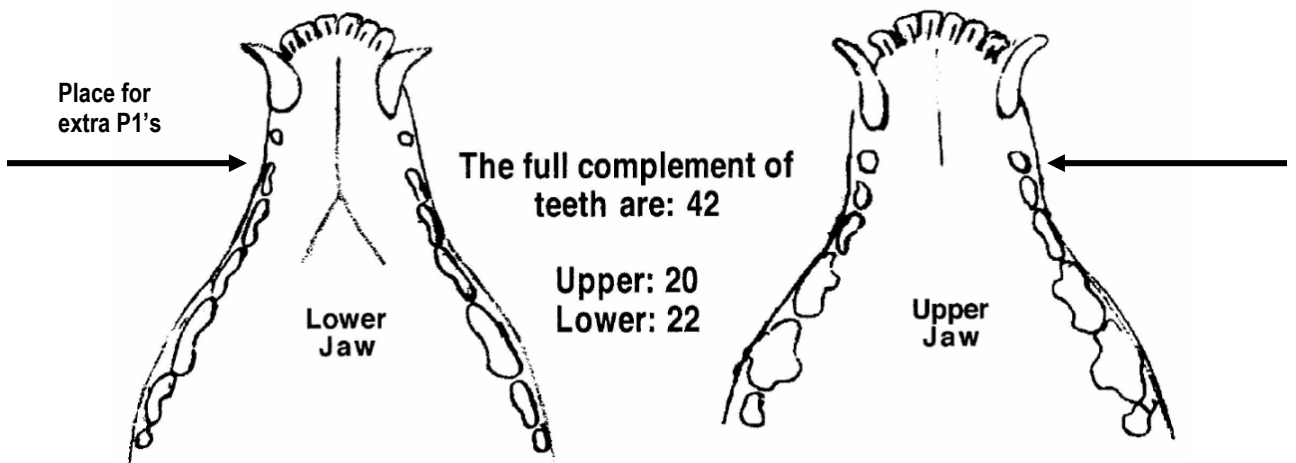
The standard acknowledges this, which is why it says, “**42 strong, correctly placed.**” Since the teeth’s function is compromised when misalignments occur, caution dictates that we take notice of the anomalies and not summarily dismiss them.

Some may argue this discussion is trite. On the contrary, it is important for two reasons. First, and most important, when we breed our dogs. Secondly, we must adhere to the standard when we show our dogs. When breeding Rottweilers, consideration for the dentition of the potential breeding partners must be factored in to prevent faulty dentition in the progeny. To use or not to use a specific dog with extra teeth is a decision the breeder must make.

In the show ring, especially the European venue, the addition of an extra or two extra teeth is always noted in the critique as a matter of detail. Because an extra tooth mildly impedes the Rottweiler’s teeth as a functional tool, an extra tooth is not penalized. However, there are limits to the seriousness of this malocclusion. How many extra teeth constitute a serious fault, two, three?

This issue is also a factor when judging the exhibits in the show ring. For example, two exhibits possess excellent type and correct Rottweiler gait. Both are of good quality; head type, body type gait etc, yet one possesses two extra teeth. The judge must refer to the standard at this point. The standard specifies 42 teeth, not 44. Therefore, the choice should be made in favor of the dog that has the correct amount of teeth. Agreed, a scenario like this may never happen, yet it is possible. Being cognitive of Rottweiler dentition is always to the benefit of the breed.

Below is a schematic of the Rottweiler jaw showing the place most likely to have extra teeth.



Place for extra P1's, side view

