



Dura-Whelp Whelping Pen

Every time I buy something for my dogs, I always want the most bang for my buck, just like everyone else. The problem is how do you get through all the marketing hype? If you look at the price of a new e-collar it is easy to spend from \$100 to \$500, a bark collar runs from \$35 to \$100. That is a good chunk of change in my book, and I can't afford to spend that kind of money unless I'm sure I'm getting the best buy possible.

As a breeder who has a litter or two every year, and trains from four to eight dogs each spring and summer, I go through

more equipment than the person with one or two dogs at home. Starting with this issue I will give you the benefits of both good and bad fortune. While I have found products that I love, I have also gone through a bunch that, well, just didn't live up to the hype.

I will limit my reviews to products that I have used for at least one year, and that have stood up to every day use and, in some cases abuse, during every day training and hunting. All the products will have something to do with dogs, dog training, or hunting gear that met or exceeded my expectations.

Because I presently have a litter on the ground, and I have it in use now, the first thing I will review is the Dura-Whelp whelping pen. This is a box to whelp your puppies in. I have used many different boxes for this over the years and while some have worked adequately, some didn't make it through one litter. Some were homemade and elaborate; some were store-bought and expensive. Most were heavy and awkward and couldn't be moved by one person. I would use a new one thinking that this was THE ONE only to find out that it wasn't.

Well, I have found my last whelping box, the Dura-Whelp by Breeder Base. This box is made out of corrugated plastic, which is similar to corrugated cardboard in looks, but that is where the similarities end. Since it's made out of plastic, it is far easier to clean than any pen I've used before. With a nice smooth surface, all that is needed is a quick spray with a cleaner, and a wipe-down with a cloth; just two or three minutes and you're done. Because the smooth plastic does not adsorb water or urine, it is easy to keep germ-free.

One of the great things about this system is the ease of set-up and take-down. Once you have put it together, you can throw the directions away – it's that easy. Take-down is the same and it all folds back up to fit in the original shipping box for storage, and takes up very little room while being stored. It is also very lightweight and can be moved by one person without help, even after it is set up.



The pen has a puppy saver in it that works well and is also made out of plastic. The pen also has a door that slides in when needed. I cut my door in half to make it easier for the dam to get in and out of the pen, when the pups get bigger I slide the other half in.

The unit comes in four sizes. I have an extra-large and it works well. I bought mine used from a friend who was not going to have puppies again, but if I were to buy a new one I think a large would be a better size; mine is a bit big.

At about four weeks of age, the pups can start getting out of it, and then I move them to the outside kennel. Clean up for the year entails taking it outside and bleaching it and giving it a good rinse with the hose.

I also bought a Therma-Whelp 250-watt ceramic heat emitter and stand from the same company; it puts out heat without light and works great. You can adjust the heat the pups get by raising or lowering the height of the ceramic heater with the adjustable stand. Both are worth the money.

The price of a large Dura-Whelp is just under \$200. The Therma-Whelp with stand is \$70. I would highly recommend both to anyone who is going to have a litter. If it saves one pup, it more than pays for itself. If you are planning on having more than one litter, then it should be a no-brainer. I have whelped six litters in mine and it still looks brand new.

You can contact Breeders Base at 1-800-998-3331 or take a look at their web page at www.breederbase.com.

