

MODERN TIMES FAZENDA FILAS WITH MICROCHIPS

by
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Dr. Geraldo Barbosa implanting a microchip

During my stay in Belo Horizonte I visited as usually the vet and fila breeder Geraldo Barbosa.

Geraldo told about his arrangement with Theo Hudson, the owner of the Arugua kennel to travel to the sitio (small fazenda) near Conselheiro Lafayette where the Arugua filas are living to implant some microchips on his dogs. I was invited to go with them if I wanted. Of course I did and there is nothing that I like more than filas on fazendas, especially when they live in freedom.

Second half of the afternoon we were in Theo's car, picking up the microchips at the house of the Unifila president, going to the highway from Belo to Rio de Janeiro where Theo opened up the carburator till we arrived because I needed some daylight for my pictures. A small protection angel was sitting on top of the car during that race on the 4 lane highway that had no central reserve and a lot of traffic, especially big dirty trucks.

We drove by Congonhas city and from far I could see the famous church with the Alejadinho statues. No time to see them unfortunately.

We were continuing in the direction of Conselheiro Lafayette, this place and area was visited many times in the past by Dr. Paulo Santos Cruz. He took several dogs from nearby fazendas to incorporate them in his breeding program; we remember the famous Timbo and Tamoio da Parnapuan. The dogs that he got from fazendas always received a name beginning with the letter T, and got their initial inscription with the Parnapual kennel name.

This happened 50 – 60 years ago. It's history, I like it and I like to remember things that happened in a place I am visiting.



We left the highway and changed the dirt of the road for the green of the Minas hills, we passed a small village, a sleepy place with three roads and a church like there are so many in the interior, and fortunately managed to arrive at the sitio still daylight, just in time to be able to take decent pictures.

I had seen most of the dogs that we were going to meet on the Unifila video of the show at the Fazenda da Jaguará in august 2007. The very small Arugua pups were the winners in their class, as well as the mother. One of those pups – Cigana – was waiting for us at the stair that led to the house of Rodrigo, the foreman. The pup from the video had grown out into a nice half year old girl.

Her mother, the brindle female (nickname Sara) that was best female in the Unifila show, was on a chain in front of her wooden dog house next to the

house of Rodrigo and his wife. They received us with a delicious cake and coffee while Theo took the male out of the kennel. The male was really sharp and Theo needed all his forces to keep him under control.



*pictures: the female Sara in her doghouse and
the male Aporá do Arugua
preceding page: Cigana do Arugua*

We walked in the direction of the main house where Theo's father lives with two fawn females. The youngest one – Atán – had noticed something and came full speed and barking towards us, I had to react very quickly to make a picture of her while moving that fast. Once she noticed her own people among the small group she slowed down and walked with us to the main house. Filas who live in freedom have a different behavior than the ones that are kept in kennels. They defend but will not attack when the owner gives the command to be calm.



Atán do Aragua

In the terrace of the main house I noticed a very nice ten years old female of interesting bloodline, named “Ronda”.

This bitch is the only specimen with a very big part of “Porto Alegre” blood in her veins. Her ancestors lived and worked on a big fazenda in the East of Minas Gerais and were discovered by Antonio Carlos Linhares Borges who went there to buy Campolina horses and who published pictures of “Rambo”, “Princesa” and “Xolo” da Porto Alegre (the name of the big fazenda where horses were bred as well as Nelore cows) in his book. These filas were selected for working and were treated in a hard way by the capataz. In the eighties Antonio Carlos convinced the owners to do a

registration of some specimens by the Club of Minas Fila Breeders. One pup came to the hands of Theo Hudson because of family and friendship relations with the people of the Porto Alegre Fazenda. The filas on the fazenda became extinct because of a lack of interest. So the only fila left with this interesting blood is the old female Ronda. Ronda is the mother of the A en B litter of Arugua.



Ronda and her daughter Atán



Ronda

Dr. Geraldo came to this area in order to implant microchips in some pups. Not all the pups live on the sitio any more because of serious fights between the half year old filas. Two of them have been placed in a provisional kennel

in the house of a man who works for Theo once in a while and who lives in the humble, simple rural village nearby. First of all we went to see the pups in the village, one of them a nice brindle of the Arugua C litter named Canastra and a sandcolour youngster named Toro do Caramona. Geraldo did his job and we went back to the sitio where also Cigana got her microchip.



simple rural village

In the big kitchen of the main house Geraldo and the capataz Rodrigo were occupied with the microchip paperwork while the rest of the group enjoyed typical sweets, coffee, wine and Minas cheese. The cheese was not touched by our friend Geraldo the vet because he wrongly does not trust any Minas cheese because of tuberculoses cows. Of course the rest of the group made a lot of fun about it and enjoyed the cheese in spite of Geraldo's doubts.

We spent some nice hours talking about all kinds of subjects fila and country life related. Theo praised his capataz Rodrigo. This young man is very good in dealing with dogs and horses, read books about horse diseases, listens to what the vet teaches him and takes advantage of this knowledge.

A very interesting fact is the so called "Monday morning diseases" like a colic in horses or a stomach torsion in dogs. This is caused because of a double ration of food given during the weekend because the farm hand uses to be free on Sunday. It would be better to leave the animal one day without food than an exaggerated quantity.



Canastra do Arugua



Toro do Caramona

Theo's father has been living in the area for about forty years but his roots are in Para de Minas, west of Belo Horizonte. He remembers filas in that region in the old times but instead of talking about fila he uses the word

“cabeçudo” (big head). With his son Theo he went to buy cattle and they saw many times filas controlling cows by holding them by the nose.



vet doing the microchip paperwork in the kitchen

Later in the evening we went back to Belo Horizonte and the visit to the sitio had been a pleasant experience. The conversation was interesting, I had seen some nice dogs, and I had seen filas living in freedom like the old fazenda filas while modern times entered traditional country life. The techniques of microchip, DNA control, hip and elbow x rays can make a healthy and honest stock of our old breed.



the owners of the sitio

