

Choosing A Breeder

What to look for in Good/Responsible Breeders

- Is eager to share detailed breed information and grabs every opportunity to educate.
- Believes there are no "stupid" questions.
- Explains total breed care.
- Talks about training and development.
- Explains genetic defects in the breed.
- Questions the buyers ability to care for the dog.
- Will ask you a lot of questions.
- Will expect you to ask a lot of questions.
- Will try to determine if their breed is right for you, and may steer you in another direction if they think their breed is not right for you.
- Will try to determine if a puppy is right for you and may suggest an older or rescue dog.
- Will require you to have a fully fenced yard.
- Provides advice, feedback, and other help to people who have purchased a puppy from him/her or anyone.
- Are familiar with their line for several generations.
- Is knowledgeable about the mating and whelping of dogs in general, so as to minimize the chances of injury or death to the breeding dogs.
- Tell you about their dogs faults as well as strengths.
- Help you select a puppy that has a temperament that's compatible with you and your handling skills.
- Correctly socializes their pups and otherwise do everything to insure that their guarantees are meaningful.
- Will offer to refund your money or give you a replacement puppy if your puppy develops health problems.
- Considers temperament important.
- Supplies shot records, pedigrees, care information.
- Is willing to let you see the Dam and any other relatives available and tell you about their dogs' siblings.
- Cares about each and every pup.
- Maintains sanitary, clean quarters for the dogs.
- Tests all breeding stock and will let you see the test results and certificates.
- Will provide you with pedigrees.
- Are active in showing/obedience/hunting/agility, etc.

- Will want to keep tabs on you and your dog for the dog's life.
- Has spent a number of years studying and learning about their breed.
- Is active in one or more breed clubs or similar groups.
- Uses non-breeding (spay/neuter) contracts to prevent the casual breeding of their puppies.
- Any animal used for breeding is proven in some way to have the abilities and other characteristics essential to the breed.
- Keeps at least one puppy in each litter for his/her breeding program (otherwise, what was the purpose of the breeding?).
- Encourages all puppy owners to test their puppies for various health problems and report them back to the breeder so that the breeder has a broad as well as a deep knowledge of what is in his/her lines.
- Do not sell their puppies on-line, through pet stores, or advertise in the newspaper.

The very best breeders are second or third generation breeders who love dogs in general; may have owned different breeds before settling on the one to breed; have worked/shown/competed w/their dogs; raise their puppies in the house instead of kennels or kennel buildings; like people and are willing to answer all sorts of questions. Genuinely care about their puppies and want you to keep them up to date on their progress and health. If you choose to import a dog you may not, in fact probably will not, get a guarantee, even from the best, most responsible breeders.

A responsible breeder is one who always puts the best interests of the breed and of individual dogs first, above any consideration of profit, trendiness, or personal ambition. A responsible breeder does not produce a litter just to have pups to sell or just because a bitch happened to come into season. He/she produces a litter only after careful consideration of the physical qualities and temperament of the proposed parents, their individual strengths and weaknesses, how their pedigrees (ancestors) relate, and what the proposed breeding would contribute to the improvement of the breed. This is often a difficult and time-consuming process; therefore, it is not surprising to find that a responsible breeder considers the puppies as his/her "kids" and wants only the best homes for them.

You will know you have found a responsible breeder when the breeder makes you prove you are qualified to own one of their puppies. If a breeder doesn't ask you any questions (Is your yard fenced - why do you want this breed - how many dogs have you owned in your life - at what ages did they die, and how did they die - have you ever gotten rid of a dog & why - what do you know about raising and training dogs) but only asks to see your checkbook, run don't walk away. If the breeder makes you feel like you are trying to adopt one of their kids, you have found a responsible breeder. If a breeder will sell to you without giving you the third degree, **run** don't walk away. A breeder who sells carefully will have bred the litter carefully. A breeder who sells to anyone who walks in probably bred the litter about as casually.

And a breeder who demands that you sign a contract requiring that you return the puppy to them, if at any time, at any age, for any reason you decide not to keep the dog, is a responsible breeder. A responsible breeder will always be willing to take back one of their dogs - they feel responsible for every puppy they sell, for that dog's entire life.