

Choosing a Dog Breeder

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If you are planning to purchase a purebred puppy after doing all your research on the breed you have chosen, the next step is to find a responsible, reputable breeder. What do you look for? What questions do you ask, and what situations should you avoid?

A good breeder knows the history of your chosen breed, and also has full and complete history of his/her own dogs. You should be able to see the mother (if not the father also). You should see clean, healthy pups, in a clean environment. A reputable breeder will be able to show you proof that the mother and father have been tested for genetic problems; Dysplasia, BAER (for deafness), CERF, (eyes), and Brucella, (a canine venereal disease) in addition to any other genetic problems common to the type of dog you want. The breeder should ask YOU a lot of questions about your family, your lifestyle and your current pets. A good breeder will truly care what type of home his puppies go into, and he should be willing to take the puppy back if it doesn't work out for you.

What type of breeder should you avoid? Your first clue will be his newspaper ad. If the ad says "Wishbone, Skip, Lassie, Lady, Pongo," or any other name of a dog made famous by movies or television, chances are that you would be dealing with a Back-Yard-Breeder (BYB), looking to make a fast buck, or worse, a puppy mill capitalizing on the fame of these cute little dogs. Remember, this is not a "status symbol" of the latest fad. Another thing in the ad to watch for is "ready to go at 6 weeks." The time between 6 and 10 weeks is the most important time for the mother dog to teach that puppy its manners. Leaving the mother too soon will result in countless behavior/aggression problems that YOU will have to deal with.

A good breeder would NEVER let a puppy go before at least 8 weeks. In most states, selling a puppy before it is 8 weeks old is illegal.

Anyone who makes blanket statements about the breed such as "all of them are good with kids and cats", anyone who can't or won't show you the mother, anyone who doesn't know the history of the dog breed you have chosen, **ONLY WANTS YOUR MONEY**. Run, do not walk, away from this type of breeder. Do your research so YOU can quiz them on how much they know.

Remember, when you choose any pet, you should be willing to make a commitment for that animal's lifetime. In the case of smaller breeds that lifetime is easily 15 years. Do your homework, and your research, to find out if this type of dog is really right for you. A little knowledge is not ALWAYS a dangerous thing!