

## RESPONSIBLE BREEDER VS A PUPPY RIGHT NOW

A reputable breeder with **available** puppies can be tough to find, depending on the breed you are interested in. But you want a puppy NOW! What do you do?

### How To FIND a Responsible Breeder

- contact local and national breed clubs.
- contact the regional purebred rescue group for the breed in which you are interested.
- attend a dog show or other dog related event and talk to the participants.
- ask your veterinarian for referrals.

### How to SPOT a Responsible Breeder

A responsible breeder does NOT sell their puppies to just anyone with cash in hand! Many unsuspecting people buy puppies from people who seem to be responsible breeders, but are not. Too often, the result is a puppy in poor health or with temperament problems that may only surface after time.

A responsible breeder is someone who:

- breeds for their love and devotion to their chosen breed of dogs.
- does not breed dogs to make money or so children can "experience the miracle of birth."
- only breeds one or two types of dogs and usually only breeds a litter if they intend on keeping one of the pups. They are breeding to further improve the breed in general and their breeding program in particular, **not just to produce puppies for pet buyers.**
- can explain in detail the potential genetic problems inherent in the breed and is willing and able to provide documentation from organizations such as the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) that the puppy's parents and grandparents have been screened for these genetic problems.
- can explain the reasoning behind breeding a particular dog to a particular bitch. They should be attempting to reach perfection as defined by the breed's standard. In the attempt to reach this goal with the resulting puppies, they should be able to explain the good points of each dog and what points they are trying to improve. If, when asked about the breed standard, the breeder looks at you with a blank look on their face or tells you why the breed standard doesn't matter... RUN!
- **does not breed a high volume of puppies.**
- usually participates in some sort of dog-related events such as dog shows (conformation), obedience, agility, schutzhund, sled dog racing, herding, field trials, lure coursing, earth dog trials, etc. They do something with their dogs.
- usually belongs to at least one dog club (all-breed club, obedience club, breed club, etc.).
- will tell you the good points AND the bad points of the breed. They want their puppies in the best home possible and will want to be sure you are fully aware of what to expect before you buy.
- is willing and able to give you references from previous puppy buyers. Those new to breeding should be able to give you references from other breeders of their breed or dog club members.
- will never sell puppies through a pet store or broker or any other way that does not allow for thoroughly meeting with and interviewing you to ensure that the puppy is a good match for your family and that you will provide a responsible lifelong home.
- will ask you many questions and may ask for references or to visit you at your home. The breeder is looking for the ideal situation for the puppy. They want the owner to be happy and not return the puppy because it was ill suited for their environment or life-style.
- can provide a pedigree of the puppies, not just a copy of the parents registration papers. A pedigree usually has at least three generations of the puppies' ancestors listed.
- usually insists that puppies sold as pets be spayed/neutered and placed on an AKC limited registration. (Limited registration makes the dog's offspring exempt from AKC registration.)
- believes in service after the sale. If a puppy buyer has any questions regarding grooming, feeding, or training, the breeder will be there long after the puppy is no longer a puppy.
- **will take back any dog of their breeding at any age.** Reputable breeders do not want to find out a dog they bred has been given up to an animal shelter or dumped by the roadside. They assume a lifetime responsibility for the canine lives they have put on this earth.

Is it worth the wait to get your next family member from a responsible breeder, instead of purchasing from a puppy mill, pet store, or backyard breeder? Absolutely.