

# CHOOSING A REPUTABLE BREEDER

Presented by the  
Minnesota Purebred Dog Breeders Association (MPDBA)  
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You have decided that a Purebred dog is in your near future and have decided on the breed you want. Obviously, this purchase should receive thoughtful consideration. This is not a loaf of bread you are purchasing; this little puppy will be a member of your family for a decade and more. Choosing a good, reputable breeder is essential. Since it is almost impossible for YOU to know what any of these cute little pups will grow into physically and emotionally, you must rely entirely upon the person from whom you are purchasing the pup. There are three options open to you in choosing this person.

1. **PET SHOP or DEALER** -- the Worst Choice Possible! The parents are rarely screened for genetic problems and puppies are poorly raised in these situations. They are thought of as merchandise - remember the loaf of bread? - to be sold for a high profit. This high profit is possible because little has been put into the care of these pups. Pet shops rely heavily impulse buying, via the “doggy in the window” which is no way to choose an addition to the family.

2. **BACKYARD BREEDER** - also a Poor Choice. This is the person who owns a “purebred” pet and thinks it would be fun to have puppies, or maybe that this would be a great experience for the kids. Even worse, perhaps it is being done for money. Usually this breeder knows little about grooming and care, and still less of the breed history or the American Kennel Club (AKC) standard much less how their dogs conform to it. Again, backyard breeders do not obtain regular examinations by veterinarians on any of the possible problems with their dogs, and do not x-ray hips. They are not aware of common breed problems, so cannot guarantee anything.

3. **HOBBY BREEDER** - The Very Best Choice. The serious and dedicated hobby breeder regards their dogs as just that - a HOBBY. They do not expect a profit. When they breed a dog for the pleasure and thrill of producing the very finest specimens possible, rather than for profit, the result is SUPERIOR. These breeders acknowledge responsibility for each and every puppy produced and stand behind every dog they have bred.

So, your choice should be the HOBBY BREEDER. The question is: How does one recognize the serious, dedicated hobby breeder? All three of the above breeders sell puppies that are AKC registerable; this is not an assurance of quality or dedication to the breed. Below are guidelines that you should use when selecting the breeder you purchase your purebred dog from. Do not be afraid to ask breeders about meeting these requirements. It is your right, and you can be assured the dedicated breeder will respond positively and with pride.

Your breeder should:

1. **Belong to their own breed's** local club, if there is one, or their national breed club; a local all-breed club or obedience or other performance club; and MPDBA. Why? Participation in clubs indicates a depth of involvement with dogs. This breeder is exposed to other points of view, learns more about his breed, general dog care, modern breeding practices and other up to date information. He/she is breeding in accordance with the MPDBA Code of Ethics and their clubs ethics as well.

2. **Be involved in showing** their dog(s). This means that the breeder is not breeding in a vacuum. The breeder who does not show has no idea how good his dogs really are and is deprived of the opportunity to share information and ideas with others. The breeder who shows wants to prove how good their dogs are in competition and is putting his breeding program on the line. She is not relying on just a pedigree to indicate quality. Even though you do not want a Show dog, you deserve a pet that was the end result of a

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carefully planned litter, a pup which has received the same care and socialized as a potential champion. The breeder who is known by others and has a reputation to uphold will undoubtedly be as careful and honest in selling you a pet as she is in selling show dogs.

3. **Use a contract** including all conditions of sale. These must follow all provisions of the Minnesota Puppy Lemon Law, but usually contain much more. At a minimum this includes name of sire and dam, litter registration number, and a statement giving you a period of 10 days to allow you to have the pup examined by a veterinarian to determine the pups' state of health. Although the state requires a 1 year guarantee against genetic defects, members of MPDBA give a minimum of a 2 year (or more) guarantee.
4. Give a **written copy** of the veterinarian's health exam and vaccination records. Give you **written** instructions on feeding, training, care and grooming of your puppy plus information on future vaccinations required, other health care, and information about the breed.
5. Be able to show you **proof** that their breeding stock has been x-rayed and is clear of hip dysplasia, preferably with an Orthopedic Foundation of America (OFA) number. In addition, have eyes tested by a veterinary ophthalmologist (CERF), and have other genetic testing as appropriate to the breed. They also will be knowledgeable about any common problems in the breed.
6. Make it clear to you that their **responsibility** continues for the life of the dog. Many dedicated breeders will ask that the puppy be returned to them or placed with new owners who meet with their approval if ever, for any reason, you are unable to continue ownership.
7. **Ask questions** such as: What kind of dogs you have had in the past, and what happened to them  
Whether or not you have a fenced yard, or if the pup will be walked on a leash  
Whether or not you understand the negative as well as the positive aspects of dog ownership.
8. Be able to show you a **clean environment**, well socialized puppies, and a dam with a good temperament (happy and self assured) and a picture or information about the sire if he is not present. And, be willing to give you **references** - such as names of people who have purchased pups in the past or other breeders of the same breed.
9. **Require spaying or neutering** of pet quality puppies. Breeders spend a lot of time and effort planning breeding programs designed to improve the breed. They selectively carry on their programs with only the best quality available. Pet quality puppies should be loved and enjoyed as pets. Reputable breeders do not want their dogs being used just to "make puppies" or worse yet, to have their puppies end up in "puppy mills" where they will be mass produced. Therefore, breeders often withhold the AKC papers until the pets are sterilized to avoid the over-population problems.

If the breeder meets all the above guidelines, you are in good hands. If you find yourself with negative responses to many of these, think twice; discuss the situation with someone else. Please, don't be impulsive and **DO** ask questions. Keep in mind, chances are you will pay for quality and it is your responsibility to be sure you get it.

Where to look for these breeders? -- **ASK US!** We have a list of our members and of national breed clubs. Also, attending dog shows is an excellent way to see the breeds and talk to owners and breeders.