**Tips on How to Find a Reputable Dog Breeder**

A group of sheep in a cage

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Every responsible pet owner as well as people who care about the well-being of all dogs should make an effort, whenever it's possible, to adopt animals from shelters or only from reputable breeders.

But how to find a reputable dog breeder, and where to look? Here are some tips to make sure that your next puppy comes from a reputable breeder.

**Ask for References**

A good breeder will have plenty of great references and they won’t mind providing them to you.

**Ask a Vet for Referrals**

Vets see plenty of purebred dogs come through their practice and they are familiar with their veterinary history.

**Contact Local Breed-Specific Organizations**

Organizations like local hunting dog groups, gun dog associations, retriever clubs and others will be aware of local legitimate breeders known for producing healthy dogs.

**Contact the AKC**

The AKC maintains a database of breeders that you can reference before buying a puppy. Use caution when consulting this database, however, since any breeder can list with the AKC and checks on facilities are random spot checks, not mandatory.

**Ask Friends**

If you have friends who are familiar with particular breeds or who have a healthy dog of the breed you are looking for, ask them for a referral to their breeder.

**20 Signs of a Reputable Dog Breeder**

You know how to find a reputable dog breeder, but now you need to confirm that it's a legit operation. Here are 20 tips signs that the place is reputable and worth adopting from.

**1.** They encourage you to visit your new puppy multiple times prior to bringing them home.

**2.** The breeder request or requires that your whole family meet your puppy before you bring them home.

**3.** The dogs and puppies on site are healthy, bright-eyed, and have appropriate levels of energy.

**4.** They do not require that you use a specific veterinarian so long as you use a veterinarian.

**5.** Requires a puppy contract that includes a spay/neuter clause and a “return to breeder” clause, should you ever be unable to care for the puppy.

**6.** The breeder has a waiting list for their puppies.

**7.** They are unwilling to ship their puppies or sell them sight unseen.

**8.** They can provide health clearance certification for both parents.

**9.** A health guarantee is provided with all of their puppies.

**10.** They breed only a limited number of times per year (1 litter per bitch per year.)

**11.** The breeder will not breed a single bitch more than four times.

**12.** They will not breed a bitch under 12 months old.

**13.** They can provide full genealogy information for the parents of the puppies.

**14.** The living quarters of the dogs on site are clean and sanitary.

**15.** The dogs on site are clean, well-groomed without mats in their fur, or urine, or feces stains on their feet/legs/belly.

**16.** The puppies look healthy and are curious, and eager to investigate you and their surroundings.

**17.** The parents (at least one parent) is on site and is healthy, and has a good temperament.

**18.** Often takes part in breed-specific organizations or canine activities like agility or flyball.

**19.** They have plenty of knowledge of the breed, and are eager and willing to share that knowledge with you.

**20.** Asks you questions about you, your family, why you want a puppy, and what you are looking for in a puppy.

**20 Signs of a Disreputable Dog Breeder**

The above 20 signs are a good indication of and a roadmap on how to find a reputable dog breeder. Here are 20 more giveaways of a disreputable dog breeder that you should watch out for.

**1.** They will not allow you to visit their dogs/puppies before you purchase.

**2.** When you visit, the area where the dogs are kept smells strongly of urine or feces.

**3.** When you visit, the puppies have urine or feces matted on their feet/fur.

**4.** They will not or cannot provide health clearances for the puppies’ parents.

**5.** The puppies have a discharge of the eyes, nose, or mouth.

**6.** The puppies are lethargic and show little signs of playfulness or curiosity.

**7.** Puppies are available instantly without a waiting list.

**8.** The puppies’ parents are not on site when you visit.

**9.** The puppies all appear shy and all are reluctant to approach you.

**10.** They are unable to provide genealogy for their dogs.

**11.** They are willing to sell puppies on a full ownership license without a spay/neuter contract.

**12.** The puppies and/or parent dogs shy away from the breeder.

**13.** The staff are not knowledgeable of the breed.

**14.** They not only breed purebred dogs, but they also breed designer dogs.

**15.** They breed their bitches repeatedly throughout the year.

**16.** They continue breeding their dogs into old age rather than retiring them after a few years.

**17.** The dogs and/or puppies do not fit the breed standard.

**18.** They allow you to bring home your puppy before 8-12 weeks old.

**19.** They refuse to provide the puppy’s papers printed with the official AKC logo.

**20.** They seem to have plenty of puppies available year-round.

**What to Expect from a Reputable Breeder**

When visiting a reputable breeder to purchase your next puppy, you should expect to be asked a number of questions about you, your family, your habits, your activities, your experience, and your intentions with your new puppy.

These questions are to make sure that you are prepared to provide a good home for your new dog but also that you are matched up with a puppy that will adjust well to your lifestyle.

Some of the questions you can expect to hear from a good breeder include:

* Why do you want a puppy?
* Have you ever had a puppy before and are you familiar with introducing a new puppy to your home?
* Are you willing and financially able to provide the best veterinary care for your new puppy?
* Do you agree to spay or neuter your puppy and provide proof of spaying or neutering once the puppy is old enough to undergo the procedure?
* Do you have children? If so, how old are they?
* Do you plan to take your puppy to obedience classes and train them well?
* What will you do with your puppy when you leave town or go on vacation?
* Do you plan to let your puppy live indoors or will they be an “outdoor dog”?
* Do you have a fenced yard? If not, how do you plan on exercising your new puppy?
* Have you had pets previously or do you currently have pets at home?
* Do you have a veterinary reference (if you have had pets previously)?
* Do you lead an active lifestyle, or would you describe yourself as being more sedentary?
* Will your puppy serve a specific purpose in your home or family? Will they be trained for service work, search and rescue work, alert work, etc.?
* Will you provide your puppy with daily exercise?
* Do you have experience with the breed? What type of experience?
* Do you own your home? If so, does your homeowner's association have any breed specific regulations?
* Do you rent your home? If so can you provide the name and number of your landlord so that they can confirm that you are permitted to have pets?
* Can you provide personal references to vouch for your character and ability to care for animals?
* Have you ever had to surrender a pet in the past, if so, why?
* Under what other circumstances would you surrender your pet?
* What are you looking for in your puppy as far as their personality?