

Responsible Breeders vs. Backyard Breeders

Responsible Breeder	Backyard Breeder
"Into" Dogs (shows, training, clubs, etc.)	Not "into" dogs (has "pets" around the house)
Belongs to dog clubs and organizations	Is not involved in the "dog world"
Proves quality of dogs and suitability for breeding by competing for titles and certificates in conformation, obedience, agility, field trialing, Schutzhund, herding, tracking, earthdog trials, etc.	Quality of dogs is almost always substandard, however, he does not test his dogs in shows or trials (Dogs are just pets or "breeding machines")
Pups' pedigrees are filled with dogs who have obtained show titles/working certificates; never breeds dogs without "papers"	Pedigrees mostly a list of pets bred by backyard breeders; pups may not even have "papers"; may be mongrels (Cockapoos, etc.)
Supports rescue groups; knows his actions inevitably play some part in pet overpopulation and euthanasia (one of every four dogs in shelters is purebred). Even with all his efforts to stem over- population, he knows "cracks" will lead to canine deaths	Honestly believes that because he places/sells all his pups, he does not contribute in any way to the needless slaughter of millions of dogs per year in shelters (Does not see his role in his pups making pups and them making more pups and so on)
Knowledgeable in every facet of breed, including that of health issues/defects; researches genetics when choosing mates	Not particularly educated about breed, often not aware of his own breed's genetic defects; does not consider mate's genetics
Knowledgeable about house breaking, training, socializing, breeding, health; constantly reads dog-related materials	Has own ideas which may not coincide with professionals' opinions; won't bother to read any of the hundreds of dog books available
Can and will help and educate puppy buyers re these issues	Says "Goodbye" and "Good luck"
Willing to give you his references	Has no references
Knows his puppies' ancestry	Knows nothing about the other dogs on puppies' pedigrees
Follows up on puppies' well-being; collects health information affecting his dogs	Does not concern himself with the puppies' well-being or how puppies' health affects his breeding "plan"
Breeds to improve his own dogs, his bloodlines and the breed	Breeds just to breed or make money or see his "great dog" procreate
Rarely breeds as he does not use dog breeding as a business and strives for quality, not quantity	Breeds regularly if for money or if puppy mill; if for ego, breeds once in awhile, or "just once" before neutering or spaying
Rarely repeats a breeding	Often repeats breedings, mainly those that are cheap and convenient.
Breeds only dogs which meet breed standard	Dogs used for breeding rarely meet breed

	standard
Breeds only dogs with stable temperaments	Breeds shy/aggressive dogs with poor temperaments
Breeds only dogs over 2 years old, and a limited number of times	Breeds dogs at almost any age, and any number of times
Mate choice could be anywhere in the country (almost never breeds his own males to his own females)	Mate choice is that which is convenient, cheap, local (very often owns both sire and dam)
Does all genetic testing and will provide proof; does not breed animals with genetic defects or which are carriers of defects	Does no genetic testing; ignorantly breeds defective animals or those which are carriers, thus, perpetuating disease in breed
Puppies are sold from waiting list created before breeding even takes place	Puppies are sold after birth in the local newspaper, first-come, first-served
Pet-quality pups generally cost \$500-600+ (show-quality costs more)	All pups are pet-quality and are relatively cheap, usually \$200-\$400
Puppies are sold with health guarantees	Puppies are sold with no guarantee
Puppies are sold with contracts	No contracts; does not care what you do with puppies
Requires pups back if new homes don't work out	Says "Find them good homes"
Dogs on property are friendly, socialized, trained	Dogs on property may be aggressive or shy, and untrained
Does not own more dogs than he has room, time or money for; Dogs are groomed, exercised, healthy, happy	Puppy mills are overloaded, "warehoused" dogs are not groomed or exercised, don't look healthy or happy
Will show you pups' parents if available, or if not, will have pictures	Might have to "lock up" pups' aggressive or shy parents (dogs that should never have been bred)
Raises puppies indoors	Raises puppies outdoors
Stays home to care for puppies	Dam and pups are alone for long hours
Feeds only premium dog food	Feeds cheap, grocery store dog food (containing 4D meat/chemicals)
Visitors remove shoes and wash hands to prevent spread of parvovirus	Has no understanding and takes no precautions to prevent puppy-killer disease
Keeps pups with mom and litter a minimum of 49 days to ensure sibling socialization and important lessons from pups' mother	Doesn't know leaving litter earlier can cause lifelong temperament problems or staying too long can hurt bonding with humans
Socializes pups by systematically handling them and exposing them to various noises, children and other animals before sending them to new homes	Does not understand or want to be troubled with any kind of training; just tries to keep puppies quiet and contained until sold
Tests pups to match their temperaments and drives with buyers' personalities and lifestyles	Knows nothing about puppy-testing or matching puppies with buyers; allows

	buyers to pick the "cutest" one
Can honestly evaluate pups' quality	Says all pups are high quality
Never sells to "impulse" buyers	Is not concerned about buyers being prepared for pups
Never sells two pups at the same time to a novice	Would consider this killing two birds with one sale
Interviews prospective buyers, checks home and references, refuses to sell to substandard homes	Sells first-come, first-served to whomever has the cash; does not find out which homes are substandard
Wants to meet whole family; won't sell if children are abusive	Does not consider anything past obtaining the funds
Sells only to buyers with disposable income (AKC reports it costs \$1327 per year to properly care for a dog)	Is not concerned whether or not buyers can afford to properly care for pups
Waits for buyers who offer lifelong homes (Knows that only 30 percent of all dogs stay in one home throughout their lives)	Does not reject high-risk buyers: (renters, young people, those with poor track records, low income, other pets, dogs kept outdoors)
Understands dogs are "pack" animals; sells pets only to buyers wanting to make pup an indoor dog and part of the family	Doesn't care if pups live as outdoor dogs or chained dogs, being unhappy or anxious being isolated and separated from "packs"
Sells only to buyers who make pup's safety a priority	Does not consider pups' best interests
Encourages or requires buyers to spay/neuter pet-quality pups	Encourages buyers to breed, regardless of quality
Encourages buyers to train pups; refers to good trainer	Shows no concern for pups after sale; knows no trainers
Makes sure buyers understand pup's considerable need for time, attention, exercise and training	Does not provide even his own dogs with enough time, attention, exercise or training
<u>Responsible Breeders</u> <u>Improve the Breed</u>	<u>Backyard Breeders</u> <u>Damage the Breed</u>

Use this guide to obtain a quality puppy from a responsible breeder.

And be aware that dogs are not "things." They are living creatures who, by no choice of their own, are totally dependent upon us - and are at our mercy - for their very survival, not to mention quality of life. As pack animals, their mental health is dependent upon being with their pack. That may be other animals, or it may be us. It is very cruel to leave a dog alone all day. Dogs need a lot of attention. They need regular, systematic aerobic exercise for at least 20-30 minutes, at least 3-4 times a week, just to be healthy. Few dogs get the exercise they need for good physical and mental health. Lack of exercise is the number one reason, (then lack of training), that dogs become mischievous and burdensome, and are then blamed, then dumped, and

too often, killed. ("A tired dog is a good dog.") Having a yard is not sufficient. Dogs do not exercise themselves unless chasing something along the fence line, and that, in and of itself, is a problem. To make good pets, they need training. And most importantly, to be safe pets, they need early socialization. Lack of socialization the first 4-6 months of a dog's life creates shy dogs, which too-often become fear-biters, which, along with those who were simply born with poor temperaments, are responsible for the majority of the 4.7 million dog bites annually. (Sixty percent of victims are children; Half of all kids 12 and under have been bitten by a dog; Every day more than 900 people are hospitalized with dog bites; Every year 25 people are killed by dogs.)

If you can not be a responsible dog owner, please do not get a dog.

And please don't breed out of greed or ego or for any reason other than to improve the breed (i.e., to make the puppies better than their parents). Most purebred dogs, and of course, all mixed-breed dogs, should not be bred. The majority of dogs have some defect (in structure, temperament, health) that should not be perpetuated. Dogs used for breeding should be free of all defects - that's the definition of quality. ("Papers" mean nothing; They are simply, and nothing more than, birth certificates. Plenty of dogs have "papers," but are so poorly bred they actually look like mutts.) And no human should ever breed any dog without veterinary/laboratory testing and pedigree research to be sure that dog is free of (and not a carrier of) genetic defects.

Failure to test/search for inheritable health problems is the number one mark of a backyard breeder. It is also the most damaging to canines, and the most heartbreaking to puppy-buyers, who end up with yet another generation of poor-quality dogs who too often develop expensive, early health problems and often die prematurely.

We have a severe pet-overpopulation crisis in the US. We slaughter thousands of beautiful, vital, healthy dogs every single day. (Twenty-five percent of shelter dogs are purebred.) Every puppy produced by a backyard breeder and placed in a home takes the place of one killed in a shelter because no one adopted it. And every puppy produced by a backyard breeder can make more puppies, and those puppies can make more puppies and so on. (And of course, backyard breeders, through their encouragement and the dispersal of misinformation, have a knack for turning uneducated buyers into yet more backyard breeders.) There just are not enough homes (not to mention "good" homes) available for all these puppies. No matter how hard one tries, only 30 percent of all dogs (and their pups and their pups and so on) live their entire lives in the home to which they went after weaning. Seventy percent will be given away or abandoned or dumped along the way for one reason or another. (Common excuses are, "We didn't have time for him," "He was too much trouble," "He kept jumping on us," "He bit my child," "We couldn't afford him," "We had to move." None of these were good homes to begin with. The buyers failed to socialize or train, or they lacked time, money or commitment. Again, there just are not enough "good" homes for all the puppies born.) Why not leave breeding dogs to those with

the ability and desire and quality animals to do so at a "professional" level?

If everyone bred only dogs with excellent conformation, and stable, correct temperaments, working titles and clean health, we would have top-quality dogs in this country. Get your dog evaluated by judges and trainers. If he meets breed standard, and is healthy, and has the correct temperament and drives, show him, work him, and get him titled. If you feel you have what it takes to be a "professional" breeder, educate yourself, and with enough experience in dogs, maybe you, too, could make a positive contribution to your breed. But if your dog's only credentials are that it is a great pet, then love it, socialize it, train it, exercise it, give it the best in feed, comfort and veterinary care, but for it's own good (including better health - ask your vet!), and for the sake of puppy-buyers, society, and all canines, get it spayed or neutered.

Resist the Greed; Don't Support Backyard Breeders, and Certainly Don't Become One.