



What to Ask a Breeder

While the Nova Scotia SPCA encourages adoption as a humane and responsible alternative to purchasing pets, the Society recognizes that pet owners may have a particular breed of dog that they prefer. We encourage those interested in a specific breed to consider the many breed-specific rescues in the province that can help match adopters to lifetime companions. The Nova Scotia SPCA also supports acquiring pets from reputable breeders who take responsibility for their animals for their entire lives, educate and screen potential new owners, and provide follow-up support after purchase or adoption. You should expect a breeder to ask you a lot of questions about your home and your reasons for getting a puppy. The breeder should be able to provide advice on feeding, exercise, obedience training and grooming. If the breeder is only interested in selling, you should walk away. If you are considering buying a purebred dog, you should read the specific advice provided by the Canadian Kennel Club at www.ckc.ca under CKC Resources.

It's important to note that you cannot assume a breeder is a good breeder just because they are a member of the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) or their dogs are CKC-registered, or assume they are not a good breeder just because they are not a member of CKC or their dogs are not CKC-registered. Most responsible breeders, however, are members of CKC and register their dogs with CKC.

It is important to ask your own questions and do your own research before purchasing a pure-bred dog. If you are considering purchasing a dog from a breeder, ask the breeder the following questions before making a decision to acquire a pet from them. **Appropriate responses that a reputable breeder would provide are found after each question.**

- ❃ Can I see the living conditions of the puppies and the parents? ► Yes.
- ❃ How often is the mother dog bred each year?
► Once a year or less.
- ❃ How many times has the mother dog been bred?
► Six times or less.
- ❃ How old is the mother dog? ► Eight years old or less.
- ❃ Do you breed many litters of puppies a year?
► No. Most reputable breeders will only have one or two litters a year so they can focus on producing healthy, happy puppies.
- ❃ Do you breed other dogs?
► No. If they breed many types of dogs, they may be operating a puppy mill.
- ❃ Where do you get your male and female dogs for breeding? ► Provide name of source.
- ❃ Why did you breed the litter?
► They should not say it is for financial reasons.
- ❃ May I talk to someone who has one of your puppies from an earlier litter? ► Yes.
- ❃ Do you require a non-breeding contract? ► Yes.
- ❃ What kind of socialization do the animals have? ► The puppies are provided with opportunities to socialize and play and are not kept in kennels all the time.
- ❃ What age will the puppies be ready to leave their mother? ► Seven weeks or older.
- ❃ What veterinarian do you use? ► Provide name of veterinarian.
- ❃ Do you have vet records for your animals?
► Yes. Also, you should only accept originals of the records with the vet's signature.
- ❃ Are they up to date on their vaccinations?
► Yes.
- ❃ Will you take the puppy back and refund my money within 72 hours if my vet says the puppy isn't healthy? ► Yes
- ❃ Do you offer any health guarantees? ► Yes. Reputable breeders usually offer guarantees against genetic problems such as hip dysplasia.
- ❃ Do you have a life-time guaranteed return policy? ► Yes.

If you have concerns about the conditions in which dogs are being kept or you suspect someone is operating a puppy mill, contact the Nova Scotia SPCA at 1-888-703-7722 or animals@spcans.ca.