

WHERE TO LOOK FOR YOUR NEW PUPPY

Breeders Terminology

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This is purely a subjective approach to helping the newcomer understand the differences in facilities that may be encountered while searching for their next family pet, or their first show prospect. The numbers are also purely subjective and are intended as a guideline, not an absolute proof. There are always exceptions to every rule. Every rule except never say never or always. Let the buyer be informed. Doesn't that sound better than, "Let the buyer beware?"

BACK YARD BREEDER

The BYB is disliked for many reasons. The number one reason is that they are responsible for the development of many health problems seen in common pet animals of all breeds. It gives the dedicated breeder as well as the breed in general a bad reputation. This type of person has a registered dog and thinks it would be fun, or profitable to have a litter of puppies. Perhaps they want the children to enjoy the miracle of birth firsthand. Without thought to genetic problems, eye problems, hip, thyroid, skin, inherited epilepsy. The list goes on and on. They find someone else with an opposite sex of the same breed. Obviously the only qualification necessary and they have a litter. From this hastily produced litter they then sell (if they are lucky) the puppies without imparting any knowledge on the care the little guy will need. (Often because they themselves do not know.) They do not explain the breed's good or bad points and when these buyers have questions and problems, they receive no help at all from the people who took their money and closed the door. Without guidance with their new charge, problems often develop and often result in owner-turn in at the local Humane Society. Abandoned or just neglected in a small dog run in the back yard, allowed to run the neighborhood, or tied to a tree. If you couldn't tell, I have little patience with this type of person.

HOBBY BREEDERS

The Hobby Breeder is perhaps the kind of breeder that is encountered most often on Collie web sites. A family that houses between three and seven dogs of either sex and has one or two litters every so often. This is a well-planned event and treated with much reverence. Their dogs are mostly kept in the house and are part of their family. They do not pursue the AKC breed ring on a weekly basis, but do go on occasion and take great pride in their wins and accomplishments in all venues of AKC/UKC competition. There is so much more than just the conformation ring. Obedience, herding, coursing, agility, therapy dogs, the list is endless. You will often find an outstanding show-prospect puppy from this type of home as they do strive to produce the best based on their knowledge. When looking for your pet, you can ask a few questions and request copies of the pedigrees and any genetic test results of the dogs being bred. It is easy to spot the difference from a Back-Yard Breeder (BYB) and a Hobby Breeder based on the answers to a few well-worded questions.

SHOW KENNEL

Another type of breeder you will see is a show kennel. A show kennel usually houses somewhere between 10 and 30 dogs at one time. This is the breeder who seriously hits the breed ring almost every weekend, hires handlers to go when they can't, and seriously advertises and campaigns their dogs to completion of numerous AKC awards. The difference here is usually the amount of knowledge and the amount of time devoted to their dogs. A show kennel breeder can quote the standard forwards and backward upon request...run down family lines at will. They can recall wins from the past and be able to equate those wins to the present as a comparison. They can discuss the current genetic problems that exist in their breed today and yesterday. They take great pride and care in the quality of the health of their breeding stock as well as in the looks. The Show Kennel Breeder as the Hobby Breeder, is deserving of your respect and your acknowledgement of their vast knowledge and willingness to help newcomers get started. This is also an excellent place to begin your search for your new puppy. Out of every litter produced for show quality, only a few of each litter will be deemed extraordinary enough to be placed in a show home, or kept as a show prospect. The others from that litter will be offered (hopefully on a spay-neuter agreement) to families that meet the qualifications of the breeder. You will get a

lovely puppy that will be healthy and you can be proud to share with your friends and family. You will also get their phone number with a willing listener should difficulties arise.

SHOW MILL

This is a relatively new term that has come into being in the last few years. When looking at this, one must remember back to a time when easy access to lines, or families of dogs was different that it is today. There was virtually no, or little domestic air-access, trains were used to ship from one area to another, and during that time, Collies were kept in a few big families (dog families, not people families) in great quantities. It was not unusual for a big kennel to house upwards of 50-100 dogs in any one location. These kennels hired kennel assistants, groomers, live-in guardians of their show dogs and breeding stock. Most of today's show dogs can be traced to one of these big Collie families. These big breeders set the type and the standard for the breeders of today. Inbreeding, outcrossing, and linebreeding to achieve their own stamp or look to the standard as they saw it. This type of achievement did require multiple families and multiple generations kept available to them through their learning periods. There were fewer regional shows as there is today. There were gatherings of the royalty to present their stock and compete against one another for the prizes. Also, there were virtually no zoning or governmental regulations during this time period. No organizations to stop the breeding or housing of purebred dogs. How times have changed. Now, everywhere we look we are being hounded (pardon the pun) by organizations and government to police ourselves in our breeding practices and in some areas, mass production of AKC registered puppies is becoming an American problem that we are all paying for. If things are continued to progress without intervention of the breeders, we will see multiple governmental restrictions on owning unaltered pets. That is if we are allowed to house pets at all! Today, there are people, who in the name of the betterment of our breed, continue to house over 50-100 dogs for their breeding programs and flood the market with oft-times less than quality animals, oh yes, they are all sold as show-quality with unlimited virtue. This is the show miller. Yes, they might at times show their produce, but without full-time help it is impossible to care for that many dogs by oneself. These are dogs, not cattle or sheep. They need family attention and lots of love. Anyone who is housing and/or breeding that many dogs is not benefiting the breed, or the sport of purebred dogs as a whole. Their puppies do not get the individual attention given by the show or hobby breeders. The puppies lack the socialization and bonding necessary for them to learn to love the people who inhabit their world. Without this all-important bonding processing being learned as a puppy, the dog is often a social outcast upon maturity showing a variety of personality problems. Ask question when you go shopping. Don't be blinded by a kind person, or their seemingly impressive vocabulary.

PUPPY MILL

This type of establishment is even worse. At a puppy mill one can expect to find atrocious housing condition and poor nutrition of the breeding stock. Often these dogs are kept in small cages or pens and bred constantly to produce very unhealthy and unhappy puppies. These puppies are then sold wholesale to auction houses, web sites spouting several different breeds available, and pet stores where they are resold as valuable purebred AKC puppies at great costs to unsuspecting buyers. When the productive years are over, or health problem come to light, the non-productive stock is disposed of. Often inhumanely, always unfairly. This is the type of situation we hear about on the news, in many articles written in Time Magazine and other quality publications, and is the absolute bottom-of-the-barrel for ethics and kindness to our loyal companions.

PUREBRED RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS

An excellent source for a family addition. Many devoted people donate their time and money to rehome unwanted dogs with their only reward being the smile on the faces of the new families and the wagging tails as their charges finally get to go home. These dogs are usually older and have often had traumatic experiences that they may carry with them forever. A rescued dog can be a great find, but one must be careful and listen to the advice of the rescue people in regarding what to expect from this particular dog. Most all rescue people have the experience to rehab the most difficult personality problems and are willing to explain what can be expected of the new dog.