

Dog Breeder - Dog Buyer Responsibilities

Reprinted from: The Bull Terrier

Quarterly, Spring 1992

A dog is an innocent, trusting creature. If we honor that trust, our actions in all things pertaining to the dog will be honorable. Buyers and breeders alike should examine their consciences before, during and after acquisition of a dog.

BUYER CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Buy a dog for the right reason. Be it "show quality" or "pet quality," the dog should be a companion and family member. Evaluate your purpose for purchasing this dog. Is your purchase realistic? Attend several dog shows speak with several breeders to educate yourself about the breed and various "type looks." Ask questions about such genetic faults as hip dysplasia, eye and kidney problems, bad bites, etc., looking at the pedigree while doing so.
2. Evaluate your lifestyle realistically. Are you willing to dedicate yourself to this animal's welfare? Do you have adequate fencing? Will the pet be a financial burden? Do you have the time for teaching, discipline and health care?
3. Commit to keeping this dog for its lifetime. Are you willing to work to overcome the ups and downs of dog ownership? Are you renting? Sometimes owning a dog and renting a house may pose a problem. Be sure your future plans and desired living arrangements won't force you to part with your pet.
4. When buying, if you are uncomfortable with anything about the breeder from whom you are buying or about the puppy itself, STOP. DO NOT BUY IT!
5. Involve the entire family in training methods of acceptable behavior.
6. Do not allow your dog to roam freely through your neighborhood.
7. Spay/neuter your dog as agreed upon in your purchase contract or if you choose not to breed your "show quality" dog.
8. If you can't keep your dog, make every effort to return it to the breeder and/or work together to find a good replacement home in which both the new owner and the dog will be happy.
9. Commit a lifetime of care for your pet. If you decide to undertake a breeding program, commit to the improvement of the breed.
10. If and when a breeding program is implemented, contact your breeder for direction and advice. Be sure your "show quality" puppy measures up to the standard as an adult.

BREEDER OBLIGATIONS:

1. Breed always with the thought of improving the breed. The ideal dog should be your goal.
2. Be honest about your breeding stock. Disclose genetic and potential faults.
3. Breed only as many litters as you can reasonably find good homes for. A good rule of thumb is to have homes for half a litter before the breeding takes place. Be prepared to keep extras lovingly until appropriate homes can be found. Do not rely on the stud's owner to provide you with buyers.
4. Screen prospective buyers carefully. Refuse a sale if it is not in the best interest of the dog. Evaluate the purchaser's "animal history" and reason for wanting a puppy.
5. Be honest with purchaser about "life with puppy" and breed specific traits.
6. Educate the buyer about the breed, litter or a particular puppy.
7. Give each new puppy owner a "puppy package." Include: purchase contract, pedigree with your name, address and phone number, registration papers, articles pertaining to the breed, articles about puppy care, raising and training, list of breed-specific books, list of breed/all breed organizations, feeding and care instructions, and immunization and worming records.
8. Be prepared, have a plan for the dependent child buying a puppy. Be sure you check the parent's thoughts about it. Will they be supportive and willing to take over when the child goes off to camp?
9. Keep yourself informed about your puppy's development in their new homes.
10. Require "pet quality" puppies to be altered and do your best to enforce this agreement. You may also register the "pet quality" puppies yourself with AKC's Limited Registration papers.
11. Make your contracts with buyers fair and ethical. Remember, the welfare of the dog is most important.
12. Be available for consultation and provide help with problems which arise throughout the dog's life.
13. Take back the unwanted dog. There is no room? If you were offered the PERFECT dog, you would find the room.
14. Be gracious to the newcomer be he or she a visitor, club member, novice exhibitor or one who is "crazy about" his/her new dog.

Moral responsibility and ethical behavior should be utmost in every decision concerning the dog. Booth breeders and buyers who keep this thought in their hearts will have a successful and gratifying relationship with each other and the dog.