



Breeding Companion Animals

Position:

Calgary Humane Society supports responsible breeding of domesticated animals.

A breeder is “responsible” when he/she is concerned about the welfare of each animal and ensures they all have homes to go to. The points below detail the standards responsible breeders should maintain.

Responsible breeders:

- Breed for the purpose of betterment of the breed, and therefore breed animals with positive temperaments (i.e., safe around humans), a good health history, and with proper consideration of genetic tendencies in the animal’s family pedigree.
- Register their animals with the appropriate organization.
- Find responsible homes for each animal. Some responsible breeders will not allow their animals to breed until they have a waiting list for the offspring. If a home cannot be found for an animal, the breeder will keep the animal and be responsible for its care.
- Interview each potential client, as he/she wants to know about the person that is purchasing his/her animals.
- Record and provide clients with information about the animal’s pedigree. Clients should also be able to meet at least one of the parents.
- Are willing to tour clients through the location and facilities where the animals are being raised.
- Show clients health certificates and complete records of veterinary visits.
- Contract to take the animal back if there is a medical or behavioural problem, or if the client is no longer able to care for the animal.
- Encourage spaying/neutering of any animal that will not be needed to continue the genetic line through future breeding.

Irresponsible or Substandard Breeders

There are a variety of types of irresponsible breeders and the CHS strongly opposes the practices of the following:

- Backyard Breeder: A backyard breeder breeds an animal for financial gain and not for the purpose of betterment of the breed, with little or no thought regarding the consequences for or the well-being of the animals. Backyard breeders usually breed animals without proper regard for pedigree, proper planning for future homes,



Calgary Humane Society

spay/neuter planning for offspring, and/or little knowledge of proper rearing techniques.

- Puppy Mill: “A puppy mill is a breeding operation in which dogs are repeatedly bred for financial gain and are kept in substandard conditions” (Ontario SPCA, as cited in No Puppy Mills Canada, 2001).
- Accidental Breeder: An accidental breeder is someone that has not had his/her animal spayed/neutered and an unplanned breeding occurs as a result. Many animals end up in shelters as a result of such accidents. Failure to control animal breeding is connected with other forms of neglect.
- Other: A breeder that registers his/her animals may be considered “irresponsible” if he/she does not follow the guidelines set out above in the Responsible Breeder section.

Rationale:

- Irresponsible breeders are largely responsible for the pet overpopulation problem in many communities.
- Irresponsible breeders often breed animals even though they are too young, too old, or not in suitable health for breeding.
- Documented problems of puppy mills include over-breeding, inbreeding, minimal or no veterinary care, poor quality of food and shelter, lack of socialization with humans, overcrowded cages, and the killing of unwanted animals.
- Some puppies that come from puppy mills may have genetic diseases or health problems that are a result of poor breeding practices and will not show up until weeks, months or even years later.
- Irresponsible breeders focus on quick profits and thus deprive their animals of needed veterinary care and vaccinations. As a result, these substandard breeding operations can become contaminated with diseases such as parvo and become a threat to the health of other animals in the community.
- Irresponsible breeders lack concern and/or knowledge about genetics, temperament and health of their breeding animals. As a result, the animals they breed are much more likely to have health or temperament issues and their breeding actually contributes to a decline of the breed.
- Irresponsible breeders sell to anyone who has the cash and offer no warranty or return program. Thus, many of these animals are left abandoned or surrendered, contributing to high volumes of homeless animals at shelters and animal control facilities.

References:

1. Canadian Kennel Club (n.d.). Buying a Puppy/ Making the Right Choice/ The Golden Rules: Finding a reputable breeder. Retrieved October 12, 2003 from <http://www.ckc.ca/default-refresh.asp>.



Calgary Humane Society

2. The Humane Society of the United States (2004). Buying a Puppy. Retrieved October 12, 2004 from <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11757>.
3. The Humane Society of the United States (2004). Get the facts on puppy mills. Retrieved October 12, 2004 from <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11797>.
4. No Puppy Mills Canada (2001). The Back Yard Breeder. Retrieved October 13, 2004 from http://www.nopupmillsCanada.ca/back_yard_breeders.htm.
5. No Puppy Mills Canada (2001). What is a Puppy Mill? Retrieved October 13, 2004 from http://www.nopupmillsCanada.ca/what_is_a_puppy_mill.htm.

Notes:

- According to the Animal Pedigree Act, an animal cannot legally be considered a “purebred” unless it has registration papers. These papers should be included, free of charge, with the adoption or purchase.
- Although registration papers show the animal’s lineage, there are no guarantees as to accuracy of the statements.