

Ten Things People Believe About Responsible Dog Breeders (That Simply Are Not True)

#1. Breeders “only do it for the money” False! Many breeders are not actually making any money, but rather lose a lot of money on breeding. Between show fees, genetic tests, supplies, time spent and taken off work raising puppies, and the myriad other costs (food, vet care, toys, etc) that comes with dog breeding, you would be hard pressed to find anyone rolling in funds even if they do have several litters a year. Not to mention the amount of time and energy that goes into raising puppies, cleaning crates/kennels, bringing the adults to shows or competitions, screening prospective owners...

#2. Dog breeding is easy. False! Learning how to read pedigrees and interpret the data, breeders have to learn genetics. They need to make the acquaintances with other breeders to have access to the dogs they need. Do the necessary genetic tests on their breeding stock. Once they are ready to breed, to track their bitch’s cycle and carefully tend to their dogs while they breed. Once they have a breeding set up the whelping box, attend vet appointments for x-rays to make sure they have a good idea of how many puppies to expect. Then there is the whelping process. Once the puppies are born you have to raise the litter, socialize, groom, clean up, wean. Etc.

#3 Bitches are “bred repeatedly”. False! Healthy dogs produce healthy puppies. Anyone wanting to produce healthy puppies’ needs to start with healthy breeding stock. Even for a breeder that puts a greater emphasis on profit, there is absolutely no benefit in cutting corners when it comes to the dog’s health.

#4 Breeders dump their old dogs. False! The fate of old studs and brood bitches varies from breeder to breeder- some prefer to keep their retired dogs, others prefer to rehome them so the dog gets individual attention that they wouldn’t have at a breeder’s house.

#5 Breeders kill or dump imperfect puppies. False! A breeder might have to make this decision because a puppy was born with a disability and technology had not allowed for caring for such an ill puppy. However, when a breeder decides to place puppies from their litter, they are making a decision on which puppies will be sold to new families. Litters of puppies in shelters come from owners whose dogs accidentally bred and the owner had no idea what to do with the puppies. Unless a breeder’s dogs were confiscated, you won’t find litters of puppies from a breeder in a shelter.

#6. All dogs from breeders are inbred. False! Most breeders stay away from inbreeding and won’t even consider it. They don’t want to deal with the potential damage that can result from a single error in calculation. So no, not all dogs from a breeder are inbred and you can pretty easily determine whether the litter you are purchasing a dog from is inbred by looking at the dog’s pedigree. If you see the same name multiple times in the dog’s lineage, it’s time to start asking the breeder questions about how inbred the litter will be. In general, this is not something most puppy buyers need to be concerned about, but it is definitely good to at least learn what to

look for. Also, do not assume that just because a line is inbred that the line is unhealthy. A breeder who knows what they are doing will have a better understanding of the potential drawbacks to inbreeding and will inform their puppy buyers of these drawbacks. Breeders who practice inbreeding are few and far between. At most, you'll probably come across line breeding, which is a completely different concept and does not pose the same risk as inbreeding.

#7. Breeders hate mixed breeds. False! The problem is there is some amount of bias towards mixed breeds because breeders of purebreds might view mixed breeds as the result of irresponsible breeding practices. The assumption is that anyone producing mixed breeds is not keeping track of their lines and therefore has a greater chance of producing unhealthy offspring. If you hear a breeder say they hate mixed breeds, they are probably talking about the methods with which they believe people use to arrive at producing mixes and not the actual dogs themselves.

#8. Rescue dogs and breeder dogs are interchangeable. False! Hundreds of thousands of people successfully get a rescue dog every year. This kind of situation offers prospective owners with the same benefit of experience and guidance that one might get from a breeder. If you want a pet and are comfortable with not knowing the history of the dog you are getting, a dog from a rescue or shelter is a fine choice. If, on the other hand, you are looking for a dog to do a particular type of work, especially if that work depends on a particular instinct, you are better off going to a breeder. A breeder would be able to offer these people the benefit of knowing the working history, ability, and style of the litter's parents, and provide information for the potential for health issues down the line. Breeders also offer more support than a high capacity animal control facility might.

#9. Breeders are responsible for overpopulation. False! The word "overpopulation" is used to indicate that the population of a species has exceeded the carrying capacity of the environment that it depends on. This isn't the case. With 23 million people adding a dog to their household every year, 6-8 million dogs ending up in a shelter, and, the science overwhelmingly points to the fact that the problem is not overpopulation. 23 million people can house THREE TIMES the amount of dogs that are actually ending up in shelters.

#10. Dogs don't need breeders. False! Dogs are special because they developed to live around humans over a very long period of time. Selective breeding has come a long way, to develop all varieties of breeds and crossbreeds with particular talents. Sled dogs pull sleds, stock dogs herd livestock, hunting dogs hunt, and in turn their owners provide them with food, shelter, and medical care. We have continued an ancient symbiotic relationship and facing the prospect of giving that up now because a few misinformed people believe that dogs don't need dog breeders is tragic.

Breeders spend countless sleepless nights watching a whelping bitch, who wake up at two to four hour intervals to feed and rotate puppies, who spend all of their free time researching pedigrees, screening puppy applications, learning socialization methods, and working to improve their breeding program.

Dog breeders are the reason we have dogs, and we should never forget that!!!