

## **Puppy Buyers Guide**

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## **GET A QUALITY PUPPY**

**How do puppy buyers determine if they are getting a quality puppy?**

**Where do quality puppies come from?**

**An excellent way to evaluate the quality of a puppy is to look at the source – where did that puppy come from? The usual options are as follows:**

### **o Pet Shop, Broker or Commercial Kennel**

These outlets rely on impulse buying. Puppies are bred and raised as a cash crop. Little time is given to socialization; little thought is given to planning mating, and little money is spent on quality food, and health testing. These puppies get off to a very poor start.

### **o Backyard Breeders and Internet Puppy Farms**

There is a saying that you can always find something cheaper and you will get what pay for. These people breed to recoup the cost of the dog or because they thought they would make some nice pocket money. They know the cost of the dogs and price theirs at or just below what quality breeder would charge. No health testing is done of the parents, and generally these dogs are not certified clear of hip dysplasia or patellar luxation, and they may not be tested for PHPT. The same is true for stock from the pet shop, broker or commercial kennel.

### **o Quality Hobby Breeder**

The very best choice a quality puppy is the quality hobby breeder. Here, breeding is a serious labor of love. A quality puppy is the result of the careful planning and selection of the breeders dogs over many generations and often many decades. In these breeding programs the characteristics and temperaments of the puppy's ancestors are known to the breeder. Animals being bred undergo careful evaluation and medical screening. These breeders strive to produce a pet that epitomizes the breed standard – the blue print for what a Keeshond should be. These puppies are carefully socialized and bonded to humans from birth. A well socialized, people oriented puppy is the outcome of positive contact with humans from the first days of life. **A quality puppy comes from a quality breeder.**

*“A Quality Puppy is Worth the Wait”*

# HOW TO IDENTIFY A QUALITY BREEDER

## A quality breeder will

- Not deal with you through a middleman, broker or a pet store
- Sells directly to you and will not allow for resale through a third party
- Is happy to show you mother of the litter. Occasionally, however, a breeder may have a puppy from a bitch that he or she has bred and sold or one from a stud dog he/she owns, in which case the mother may not be present.
- Breeds only the best dogs. This is why most dogs in his/her breeding program are champions and/or puppies are champion sired. A champion is a dog that has proven itself to be an outstanding specimen of the breed in both temperament and structure, thereby worthy of being bred.
- Has their dog that used for breeding certified clear of hip dysplasia by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) or Penn/Hip. The breeder will provide copies of their dog's hip evaluation. The sire and dam are also listed on the OFA website under Keeshond, their registered name.
- Can provide with certification that dam and sire have been check for patellar luxation, (slipping knee caps).
- Can provide you with information that sire and dam have been tested for PHPT or are clear by descent.
- Only sells puppies under contract.
- Requires as a condition of sale that all animals not part of a responsible breeding program are spayed or neutered once they are mature.
- Asks many questions about you and your lifestyle to determine if a Keeshond is a suitable pet for you.
- Will provide written material to guide you in caring for your puppy.
- Is always available to help with questions and problems that may arise.
- Are concerned about the future of the puppies they breed, and acknowledge responsibility for and stand behind every puppy they produce.
- Is concerned about the future of the breed and is a member of the Keeshond Club of America and/or a local Keeshond club. KCA is dedicated to the protection and well being of the breed and all members have agreed to abide by its Code of Ethics.
- Is a hobby breeder who may have only one or two litters a year so you may have to wait for your puppy.

## WORKING WITH A QUALITY BREEDER

Now that you understand the need to buy a puppy from a reputable breeder, how do you take the next step and what should you expect? Since this is probably the first time that you are doing this here are some tips on what to expect from the Keeshond breeders you contact.

- **A Hobby Not a Business**

The breeding of Keeshonden is a hobby for quality breeders. We participate in many dog related activities like dog clubs, shows, obedience and agility trials and educational events. Most of us also have jobs, families, and yes, other interests. There is no staff and expenses mount more quickly than puppy income. When you are looking for a puppy don't forget what time zone you are in and time your call not to interrupt dinner or sleep. Have patience when your email or voicemail is not answered as quickly as you want. Send another message if you are not sure the first one arrived. If you are asked to call at another time understand that breeders have to juggle things just like you do. Check the breeders list for preferred contact methods and you will have a more productive experience.

### **Ethics**

Every member of the Keeshond Club of America (KCA), is bound by the club's Code of Ethics. You should expect that they live up to this code, without any excuses. You should expect that financial matters are handled carefully, and that terms of deposits and payments are clear. You should expect that any referral they give you to another breeder is to another reputable breeder.

### **Professionalism**

This is a hobby however, breeders do take their work with dogs seriously and you should expect professionalism on their part. Here are some expectations that you should have:

#### **Expect to be interviewed**

Placing a puppy is making a match. A breeder wants to match your interests, expectations and capabilities to both the breed characteristics and their individual puppy's needs. The best way for them to do this is by interview. Everyone does this differently. Some use a questionnaire, some use the phone and/or email, others prefer in person meetings, most use a combination of these.

#### **Expect a contract**

Every reputable Keeshond breeder has some form of written agreement with their buyers. You should make sure you understand the contract. Discuss any questions you have with the breeder and be sure it contains everything that you have been promised. The contract should protect your interests as well as those of the Breeder. Contracts regarding dogs have been enforced in court so takes your seriously. Contracts of reputable breeds will have a clause that says if you can no longer keep your dog the breeder should be notified immediately.

#### **Expect to receive paperwork**

The KCA Code of Ethics lists what breeders must provide. Many breeders provide sheets with additional information on grooming, training, feeding

and care. Read these items carefully it is important information.

### **Expect a wait**

Hobby breeders are not breeding every other week. They usually have one to two litters per year. Female dogs only come into season every six months. You may be asked to call back in a few months or you may be put on a waiting list. When the litter arrives you may find that there are a limited number of puppies available for placement, so your first choice of gender may not be possible. If you are flexible your chances of getting a puppy will increase. You may luck out and happen upon an available puppy but it is not unusual to wait 6 months to a year for a puppy.

### **Expect courtesy and respect**

If you have done your homework and you take your search seriously, you should be met with courtesy and respect by the breeders you contact.

## **KNOWLEDGE**

Your individual research in the library and on the internet, along with your conversations with other Keeshond breeders has provided you with a lot of information about the breed. We appreciate and applaud you for putting in this effort. Knowledgeable and dedicated owners go to the top of the list with breeders. They are looking for people who want to know more about the breed and are ready to learn. The research you have done is only the first step; you should expect to learn a LOT from your breeder. Even the newest breeder has seen more Keeshonden than a long time single dog owner, veterinarian, or the author of a piece on how to select a breed. A reputable breeder will have a large national and perhaps international network of other breeders to tap into for insights and information. Don't be surprised if your breeder's answers contradict some of what you have heard or read. Most importantly, plan on asking a lot of questions and you should expect your breeder to answer them.

## **SUPPORT**

Breeders are concerned about their puppies for their entire lives. They are prepared to be a resource for you long after you take your puppy home. They want to hear all the good things, and see your pictures, but they really want to hear problems. Especially in regard to behavior and health, so they can help you. This may mean that some breeders will only place a puppy close to home. As one breeder put it, "Buying a puppy from me has both the advantages and disadvantages of a long, long friendship."

In summary, every breeder has different ways of handling their breeding and puppy placement. Provided they meet the KCA Code of Ethics, the details of contracts, interviewing styles, sales arrangements, breeding, care, and

socialization will vary from breeder to breeder. So, just like you and your puppy should be a good match – you and your breeder should be one too!

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## BUYER BEWARE!

### **The best rule of thumb ...**

Whenever possible meet the breeder and SEE the mother and SEE the conditions under which the puppy has been raised.

### **Beware of .....**

- 1. Internet Sites** – Some excellent breeders have internet sites, but beware of those that have multiple breeds, always have puppies for sale, are not members of a breed club, and do not do the health testing recommended by the national breed club.
- 2. The term “champion lines”.** The presence of a few champions in a pedigree does not mean much since most Keeshonden born in the United States has at least a few champions in the family tree. (Pedigrees of puppies from quality breeders are usually filled with champions and very often one or both of the parents are themselves champions.)
- 3. Sellers who claim to be selling the litter for a friend** or relative. Commercial breeders frequently send litter lots of pups on consignment to middlemen who, in turn, sell them from their homes.
- 4. Anyone selling pups who only identify him or herself by a first name;** one who is unwilling to give the registered names and AKC numbers of the sire and dam, one who is unwilling to provide the name and address of the breeders of the puppies or will provide them only after purchase.
- 5. Sellers who do not offer AKC puppies, but claim their puppies are with another registry.** Many of these “alternative registries” were started to avoid the DNA testing required by AKC.
- 6. Sellers who do not have a copy of the puppy’s pedigree for your inspection prior to buying the puppy.**

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**To locate a Reputable Breeder visit [www.Keeshond.org](http://www.Keeshond.org)**

