

Buyer Beware

When searching for a reputable breeder for the first time (or if it's been a long time since you looked for a breeder) we offer you the following tips.

1. How long has the breeder been breeding? This is a question you want to ask. There really is no right or wrong answer but the answer needs to be one you are comfortable with.
2. Does the breeder do all the health clearances? Currently for Labradors this is **Hip and Elbow x-ray** and rated through OFA or Penn Hip, **Progressive Retinal Atrophy, Exercise Induced Collapse, Centronuclear Myopathy, Retinal Dysplasia, Cardiac exam, Annual Eye Exams** with a board certified Ophthalmologist, and **Hereditary Nasal Parakeratosis**. You want to see the certificates for each test on both parents or at least all on one parent. You can research the names of the tests online and find out more information.
3. Does the breeder temperament test the pups? Do they place pups according to the results or do they take the easy way out and let the buyer pick their pup based on the order of deposits placed? I know it's great to think you can pick out your pup based on whatever you have been told works best, but a good breeder spends time playing with their pups every day. They take the time to temperament test their pups so that you and the pup have the least amount of adjustments to make. (A family with young children wants a very forgiving pup, an active family wants a pup that can keep up, and a pup to be an office greeter wants a smart pup that takes commands well).
4. Does this breeder breed for health, temperament and type?
5. Labradors come in 3 colors only. Black, Chocolate and Yellow. There is no such thing as a rare color.
6. Can you visit the property and see the dogs and where they are kept? This is very important. A breeder may have a section blocked off due to a sick dog but would you be able to come back and see that dog and that area?
7. Do you like how the breeder interacts with their dogs? Are the dogs crazy? Are the dogs intimidated or scared? Do they act normal? Do they appear well fed and cared for? Are their eyes runny and goopy? Are their coats dull and sparse?
8. Does the breeder seem to be knowledgeable about the breed? Where the breed came from? How it was formed? The health concerns? Food? Daily care? Medical concerns? Do they have contact with people that have bought pups in the past from them?
9. What health issues has the breeder produced in the past? A breeder that says they have no health issues at all in their lines is either lying or they don't keep in touch with the people that buy their pups. When dealing with genetics there is no getting away from what genetics can sometimes produce.
10. How does the breeder go about looking for a male to breed to their female? Do they know what to look for in a male or are they just breeding to the nearest male that is the same breed?
11. Does the breeder understand how this breed is supposed to function? If it's a sporting dog does the breeder understand how important structure is to the dog so that it can function correctly for its life or do they just breed to dogs they like?

Do you, as a puppy buyer, know the breed standard for the breed you are looking for (assuming that you are looking for a purebred)? Pick the breed that you feel will fit in your lifestyle best and search online for the national club of that breed. If you're looking for Labradors you want to find the National Labrador Retriever Club and read the breed standard that describes what the breed is supposed to look and act like.

Be prepared with proper information. There are a lot of scams and a lot of people out there just trying to make money off their dogs. Don't believe everything you read but read everything you can find. The national club for your breed is the best place to start and then enjoy your search. Remember, all pups are cute and any breeder can deeply love their dogs but if they don't do health clearances prior to breeding it's not really where you want to purchase your pup.