

What is a hobby breeder?

Hobby breeders are committed custodians of their chosen breed, and their goal is to further a particular bloodline or purpose, such as service and support dogs, carefully selected breeding stock, and quality companions. Responsible breeders generally do not produce a lot of puppies, and breed for the paramount reason of keeping quality animals to continue a particular lineage.

Careful and responsible hobby breeders spend thousands of dollars on testing for genetic diseases, X-rays to detect bone and joint problems, and tests like echocardiograms to detect heart abnormalities. Dogs that are found to have any of a number of defects are not used for breeding, and instead are neutered / spayed and placed in loving homes. Many of these dogs can lead long and productive lives as someone's pet, even if they should not be used for breeding.

Breeding purebred dogs responsibly is a heartbreak hobby, and only undertaken successfully by those whose love for their breed and commitment to its quality far outweigh the setbacks and disappointments inherent in this hobby. Certainly, it is a non-profit hobby, as all of the expenses associated with raising and screening breeding stock and nurturing quality puppies generally far exceed any proceeds from the sale of puppies.

Good breeders believe that they are responsible for a dog's life from the day they decide to breed and throughout a dog's days. Responsible breeders use a contract, whether placing or selling a puppy or adult dog, stating that if at any time in the dog's life the owners can no longer keep it, it must be returned to the breeder as a first option. Responsible breeders will stand behind the health and fitness of the dogs they produce and strive to only produce healthy puppies that will be a tribute to their breed and provide service and companionship for years to come.

Hobby breeders fully support the closing of "puppy mills" and all unscrupulous breeding practices where people mass-produce puppies, usually in terrible and inhumane conditions, for the sole purpose of profit. These facilities usually contain dogs of a number of breeds and the dogs are bred as often as possible so as to maximize the production of substandard, and often very unhealthy, puppies.

Demand for quality dogs is high in California, and most hobby breeders have waiting lists because they do not breed their dogs often. The general practice is to breed only after all DNA, X-ray, and other clearances have been obtained, usually after the age of two years. In addition to testing, responsible hobby breeders consider "type, temperament, and soundness" in their breeding stock, and screen for dogs that exhibit the strongest and most desirable attributes of the written AKC standard for their breed.