

# A Good Breeder

## A Questionable Breeder

Tips to help you identify kennels you should perhaps avoid, Red Flags to warn you and little things that bear closer scrutiny

### **Why they Breed**

#### Havanese

- breed because they love Havanese
- breed to preserve the Havanese breed for the future
- breed to improve the breed
- breed quality not quantity
- breed for quantity
- breed Havanese because they are becoming popular
- breed for supply and demand
- breed two or more of the “popular” or up and coming breeds
- will tell you Havanese are “perfect” for you regardless of your family , circumstances or plans.

#### Puppy Availability

- breeds sparingly
- may only have a few litters per year
- generally has a waiting list
- Commercial breeders have many litters in a year, always have puppies available and you can pick and choose which ever puppy you like
- Many litters each year may indicate a love of money rather than the breed.

- If they don't have what you want at contact, they may offer you a different dog perhaps even a different breed
- Always seem to have puppies available or upcoming regardless of when you contact them
- Cater to impulse
- - often will offer you a puppy that you can have NOW

How many different breeds do they breed?

- specialize in 1 or 2 breeds
- perhaps 3 or 4 breeds for very knowledgeable and well established breeder
- very knowledgeable about their chosen breed(s)
- a backyard breeder may only have 1 breed
- most commercial establishments breed 3 – 10 breeds of dogs
- - some puppy mills breed 20 or more types of dogs
- More than 3 breeds may indicate a more Commercial breeding operation.
- It is difficult enough to learn the intricacies of one breed, let alone many breeds
- a commercial breeder may have general dog information in a brochure format or only know basic that apply to any breed of dog
- May also breed cross bred dogs and mixed breed dogs

### **Membership**

- generally a member of one or more clubs such as
  - National Breed Club
  - Canadian Kennel Club
  - Regional Association
- Usually are members of more than one club

- Are active in the clubs they do belong to
- rarely a member or if so , it is in name only and rarely participate in club activities
- Some Commercial breeders do have a membership to the Canadian Kennel Club as it lends them an air of respectability, and allows them advertising avenues.
- Commercial breeders are rarely involved in Breed clubs, National Clubs and regional Clubs.
- if a member , it is in name only and rarely participate in club activities

### **Activities**

- may train and compete in one or more activities such as
  - Showing
  - Obedience
  - Agility
  - Pet Therapy
- Rarely involved in any canine activities
- Commercial breeders rarely take the time or expense of training, competing and campaigning their dogs

### **Pictures and Stories**

- Will have many pictures and stories to share with you about their dogs
- Usually have albums full of pictures
- Regale you with all sorts of stories about silly antics and special moments
- Often no photos available
- May promise photos but never have them available
- Commercial breeders may only have one or two photos.

- These may be bad photos taken in haste
- Alternately they may have one or two professional photos to show or perhaps a brochure. These lend an air of credibility and are meant to impress.

### Housing

- Dogs are part of the family
- Dogs live in kennels
- Rarely in the house
- some large reputable breeders do have a kennel building which houses their dogs. They usually spend many hours each day in the kennel with the dogs. Kennel is clean, roomy , airy, well maintained and temperature controlled
- a commercial kennel area can be a shed or barn. Conditions may be overcrowded and unsanitary – dogs may be cared for by employed caretakers not by the breeder - dogs spend most or all of their time in the kennel

### Registration

- all their breeding dogs are registered with the Canadian Kennel Club
- all puppies will be registered and come with registration papers
- no additional charge for registration papers
- puppies may or may not be registered
- Commercial operations may have many dogs, not all of them registered and not all of them purebred
- Often call it “papers” rather than Registration
- Will tell you that papers don’t matter if you are getting a “pet”
- Commercial breeders may sell puppies with the option of with or without registration papers
- May charge a higher price for “with papers” – \* this is illegal and against the Animal Pedigree Act

- Promised Papers often “get lost” , are delayed or never arrive
- May have mixed breed or cross bred dogs passed off as Havanese without papers
- Registration may be with unofficial organizations

### **Breeding Dogs**

- may have many dogs

#### Titles

- Usually have title(s) on one or more of their dogs
- Rarely have titles on their breeding dogs
- Rarely spend the time, effort and money to do so
- Occasionally a commercial breeder will have one of their dogs shown to a Championship title to help give themselves an air of credibility

#### Pedigree

- Always have extensive ,multi generation pedigrees on all their dogs
- Happy to discuss pedigree information
- Pedigrees are questionable
- Commercial breeders often do not have pedigree information or are unwilling to spend the time talking about it
- A commercial breeder often refers to dogs by call name only They may occasionally talk about parents but rarely about grandparents or great grandparents. Or they will say the Breedlines is “good” or a dog is “nice”

#### Genetic Testing

- keeps up to date with genetic issues in the breed
- does genetic screening on their breeding dogs
- Does eye exams yearly

- willing to share results of genetic testing
- doesn't care about genetic issues
- say they don't have any problems in "their" breedline.
- If they don't test, there is no way to know.
- Will "say" that their dogs are tested and fine but are not willing to show you information to support this.
- Be wary of contracts that specify that you owe puppies or entire litters back when your dog is bred. One puppy back may be legitimate, but numerous puppies back should be examined suspiciously. This pyramid is a way that commercial breeders advance their gains by using trusting unsuspecting owners. Such diversification helps to shield their shady operations. In exchange for a deemed "show quality" puppy at a cheaper price, they may expect back several puppies or even entire litters. In many cases the "show quality" puppy may not even be a good example of the breed, and should not be bred.

#### Information

- available for any questions you might have as your Havanese grows up
- leaves questions unanswered
- a commercial breeder does not want informed customers as they know they would not stand up to the scrutiny
- any future problems are always blamed on the owner

#### Time

- happy to spend time talking to you
- will answer all your questions
- available to you for the lifetime of the puppy
- take responsibility for every life they create
- no time or commitment to dogs they have breed or to new owners
- have no time to spend talking to you

- once they have your money, you are no longer important to them
- Is happy to share why they chose a specific pair of dogs to breed
- Breed sparingly
- Do not over breed a female or male
- do not breed a female before at least her second season or 18 months of age; and are sure to allow sufficient time for her to recover before breeding another litter
- Little if any thought is used in breeding. Any male and any female are used together
- female may be bred as early as first heat and may be bred at each one after that
- have no time to discuss this with you
- place emphasis on the puppy you can have rather than on the parents or background
- may only have one male and multiple females and use the same male for all of them whether the match is right or wrong
- avoid answering questions
- may respond defensively with the comment that “ if you don’t trust my breeding decisions, then maybe you should not get one of my puppies”
- commercial breeders do not want informed puppy buyers and will try to get rid of them
- this effectively stops further scrutiny but also leave the question unanswered

## **Type**

- can discuss with you
- coat type
- colour
- size and build

- aptitudes
- temperament
- willing to discuss which will be most suited to your family
- if their dogs are purebred, there is rarely any consistency in the dogs they breed.
- They may have all different sizes and builds
- cannot tell you the difference between types or tell you it doesn't matter
- will tell you that ALL Havanese are similar and that it does not make any difference
- usually avoid such questions

### **Visiting**

- happy to have visitors
- happy to let you see the dam and sire if possible
- do not encourage visitors
- sell may dogs by Ads in papers, internet and other means
- avoid personal contact
- discourage visitors to the kennels
- parents are a good indication of the temperament of the pups as adults
- seeing parents is also a good indication of how the dogs are cared for
- dogs from commercial breeders are often poorly cared for and will be unkempt and dirty and may be shy or scared or otherwise poorly tempered. Commercial breeders do not want you to see them so will actively discourage contact. Will place emphasis on puppies only.

### **Socializing**

- have a definite socializing program in place

- Will often “say” that puppies are socialized simply because it sounds good and as potential puppy buyers become more informed, it’s a question that is often asked.

#### Newspaper advertising

- often have a waiting list and have no need to advertise in the newspaper
- regularly advertise in newspapers
- advertise regularly
- may always seem to have an ad
- may have an ad in many newspapers in many areas at the same time
- may have a box number or email address only rather than a phone number

#### Website and Internet

- May have a webpage
- focus is on breed information not puppies
- may highlight their dogs and accomplishments
- may have a questionnaire to screen general inquiries
- Do not sell puppies from emails or internet inquiries alone
- Email and Internet Inquiries are used as a starting point for questions, phone calls and extensive contact.
- May have a website
- Minimal breed information
- Advertise puppies on websites
- Focus is on puppy availability not on breed
- Choose your own puppy

- Internet listing are usually just lists of available puppies with contact information or may have photos of puppies that you can pick or choose from .
- Transaction may be completed totally via Internet with never any personal contact with the breeder at all
- Rely on uninformed people
- cater and promote impulse puppy purchase

### **Questionnaire**

- will have a lengthy questionnaire for prospective owners
- stringent criteria for adopting a puppy
- will have many questions for you about family, lifestyle, goals and expectations to determine suitability
- know that Havanese may be wonderful family companions for many but that they are not suitable for everyone
- may have a questionnaire for basic information only
- Questionnaire is usually based on contact information only and puppy preferences such breed, sex and colour
- They may ask about other preferences but these may just be as a respectability front and little if any attention will be paid to them.

### **References**

- happy to provide references from the Club, from their Vet, from previous puppy owners.
- may or may not have references
- a line often used by Commercial breeders is to skirt around the issue and make the potential puppy buyer feel in the wrong with comments such as
  - If you don't trust me, then perhaps you should not get one of my puppies

## **Choosing a Puppy**

### **Getting your puppy**

- puppies will not go home prior to 8 weeks of age
- 10 to 12 weeks is very common
- puppies may go home as early as 6 weeks
- 7 to 8 weeks is average
- Commercial breeders want to get their stock moving as quickly as possible. As puppies grow, they need more care and attention, so they want to get rid of them as soon as possible.

### **Shipping**

- Often prefer personal pick up
- May ship carefully
- Takes precautions to ensure safe arrival
- Would rather ship
- discourage personal contact

### **Cost and Payment**

Average price is \$1200 to \$1500 for a Companion Dog

- often charge the same as reputable breeders
- may charge more for specific sex
- may charge more for certain colours

- may discount puppies that have genetic defects or that remain unsold to try to get rid of them

### Health Guarantee

- should have a basic health guarantee at the time of sale
- usually has a genetic health guarantee ( 2 years is average)
- guarantee is spelled out as well as what will be done in the case of a problem
- may have a health guarantee listed on their contract
- health guarantee is just listed as such
- has no details of what it covers or not
- has no details of what will be done in the case of a problem
- may indicate only unacceptable or unrealistic options
- rarely followed through on
- likely to blame owner for problem
- will not take responsibility for problems

### **Sales Contract**

- always has a sales contract
- specifies that it is a purebred Havanese and that it comes with registration papers
- financial matters, ownership transfer and breeding rights or restrictions are clearly spelled out
- for dogs sold as pets or companions – many breeders withhold registration papers will the pet is spayed or neutered as part of the contract
- Basic contract may be very short , only 1 or 2 paragraphs long
- Contract does not spell anything out