

Be an Informed Buyer

Some questions to ask when talking to breeders.

(Make copies of this as you contact breeders so that you can keep your records straight)

Breeder's name / Kennel name _____

Phone number _____ Pups available _____ Next litter due _____

Basic health clearances for breeding animals. OFA ratings come on a Certificate and the breeder should have it at hand

DAM Name _____	SIRE Name _____
AKC # _____	AKC # _____
Hip OFA # _____ Rated _____	Hip OFA # _____ Rated _____
Elbow OFA# _____ Rated _____	Elbow OFA# _____ Rated _____
Thyroid # _____ Cardiac # _____	Thyroid # _____ Cardiac # _____
Von Willebrand # _____ Eyes (CERF #) _____	Von Willebrand # _____ Eyes (CERF #) _____
DM Genetic # _____ CHIC # _____	DM Genetic # _____ CHIC # _____
DAM'S DAM _____	SIRE'S DAM _____
AKC # _____	AKC # _____
Hip OFA # _____ Rated _____	Hip OFA # _____ Rated _____
Elbow OFA# _____ Rated _____	Elbow OFA# _____ Rated _____
Thyroid # _____ Cardiac # _____	Thyroid # _____ Cardiac # _____
Von Willebrand # _____ Eyes (CERF #) _____	Von Willebrand # _____ Eyes (CERF #) _____
DM Genetic # _____ CHIC # _____	DM Genetic # _____ CHIC # _____
DAM'S SIRE _____	SIRE'S SIRE _____
AKC # _____	AKC # _____
Hip OFA # _____ Rated _____	Hip OFA # _____ Rated _____
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If you are confused by any of the questions; please consult the accompanying Bernese Mountain Dog Puppy Buyer Guide.

A lot of the information above can be found on BernerGarde at <http://www.bernergarde.org>.

Important questions to ask

- Are you a member of any dog clubs? (They should be at least a member of the local or national club)
- Do you show your dogs and what other titles do they have? (If not showing, then why are they breeding? For profit?)
- Do you require spaying/neutering? (This should be a major point with the breeder, one that you need to agree on)
- What health clearances/procedures do you require from puppy buyers? (Do they require hips/elbow x-rays or more)
- What guarantees are in the contract? May I review contract? (Understand contract & review prior to purchase)
- How old are the Mother and Father of this litter? (They should be old enough to have hip/elbow certifications)
- What do I have to do to reserve a puppy and do you need a deposit?
- If I place a deposit with you, will my deposit be returned if I decide not to get a puppy?

Reputable Breeder Checklist

- ✓ Puppies for sale are born on the premises - not shipped in.
- ✓ Breeder does not sell puppies to wholesalers, brokers or retail shops nor will a puppy ever be put in an auction.
- ✓ Breeder reviewed some of the problems some people have with the breed.
- ✓ Breeder promises to take the dog in (Not return your money) if you can't keep it, for the life of the dog.
- ✓ Breeder breeds puppies to support their own line. Breeder does not breed for profit.
- ✓ Breeder selects the puppies out of the litter best suited for you and your family.

Red Flags

- ✚ Sells what they claim is "show quality" but they never show themselves. Or says I am only breeding pets.
- ✚ Does not have verifiable health clearances on hips AND elbows of MOST of the dogs on the pups pedigree. If you are told "our vet said they are healthy" this is a BIG red flag.
- ✚ Sells without a contract.
- ✚ Puppies registered with other than AKC registry. (Getting a dog from Canada, then the CKC, Canadian Kennel Club is fine).
- ✚ Has a PayPal or credit card system set up for payment of puppy which only a commercial kennel would do.

Some critical points to consider!

Dogs are only listed by their call names.

WHY THIS IS BAD: Call names are simply the names that we use daily with our dogs. They are not unique. Every REGISTERED dog has a UNIQUE REGISTERED name. Using this registered name, you can check health clearances, health records, & titles on this dog through Bernergarde (www.bernergarde.org), OFA (www.offa.org), or AKC (www.akc.org).

Breeder charges more for females, for registered vs. non-registered, or for full vs. limited registration.

WHY THIS IS BAD: First you should not be charged more to have a registrable dog registered. This is simply unethical. If a breeder is selling a dog on limited registration, that means that the breeder feels that this dog should not be bred or shown in conformation. This judgment should not be overturned by an additional payment. And females cost the same to produce & raise as males.

Background information, such as pedigrees and health clearances are not available until AFTER you have paid a deposit.

WHY THIS IS BAD: Ethical breeders want you to have this information so that you can make an informed decision on whether this is the right litter for you. If a breeder is trying to conceal this information that usually means that there is a problem. This would include breeders who get angry when you ask for documentation of health clearances.

Breeder's only questions revolve around payment and s/he discourages you from coming to their kennel. Breeder requires non-refundable deposit.

WHY THIS IS BAD: Responsible breeders want to meet the whole family & make sure that breed & individual puppy are a good fit. You want to see whether the dogs are kept in a safe & clean environment & how the puppies are being socialized.

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Breeder sells puppies through third parties (brokers, dealers, retail shops, auctions.)

WHY THIS IS BAD: Responsible breeders want to make sure that their puppies are going to the right homes. Then they are available to the puppy's buyers if they have problems (training, health) to give support and advice. Responsible breeders will take back any puppies they produce for the life of the dog.