

A PUPPY BUYERS GUIDE

Reputable breeder: For a Bona fide breeder, go to Labrador Retriever Club of Queensland Inc. members who guarantee to sell only vaccinated (original vet certificate), wormed puppies. They will not let a puppy go to a home under 8 weeks of age and will supply diet charts and care instructions. Their prices will be commensurate with quality and it pays to go to a Labrador Club member who can fulfil these conditions. Most members' puppies are of a high standard and will be properly registered with the CCC(Q) (Canine Control Council of Queensland).

For the betterment of the Labrador Retriever breed it is now a mandatory requirement for breeders to have the parents of all litters whelped on or after 1st October 2003 radiographed and assessed for the diseases Hip & Elbow Dysplasia as a prerequisite to registration of any litter.

The end result of this requirement a far better chance of purchasing a sound and healthy puppy – but it is absolutely no guarantee.

Purchase Price: Everyone loves a bargain, but beware of the "cheap" puppy sold by 'backyard' breeders and puppies sold for high prices through Pet Shops that 'Look like a Labrador'. Puppies sold by reputable breeders may cost a little more in some cases. However, the dam will have been fed properly and puppies will have been wormed correctly, immunised temporarily and weaned with the necessary diet that is so important for growing puppies.

The cost of a puppy may vary depending on quality and the stud dog used for the litter. Obviously a high quality stud dog will have commanded a larger fee, but there are many young "up and coming" stud dogs that are available at lesser stud fees.

No puppy should leave the 'nest' before the age of 8 weeks at a minimum. Any puppy breeders who foist poor pups at an earlier age on the public are studying their pockets, not the welfare of the litter. If a puppy is sold less than 8 weeks of age it represents a serious breach of CCC(Q) Rules and Code of Ethics.

Registration: All litters should be registered with the controlling body of the State in which they were born. This organisation will supply the original Registered Pedigree document. The CCC(Q) maintains four registers. The 'General' and the 'Limited' registers are the two main registers used by breeders.

Dogs which are registered on the General Register are not subject to any limitation of eligibility in respect to activities conducted under the rules of the CCC(Q), such as Conformations shows, Retrieving Trials, Obedience Trials, Tracking Trials or being used for Breeding.

Dogs that are registered in the Limited Register may participate in events such as Obedience Trials, Agility Trials, Field Trials, Endurance Tests, Tracking Trials, (including Sweepstakes associated with such events), but are not to be entered into a Conformation Show, used in Breeding or be issued with an Export Certificate.

If you need to know more, ask the Breeder questions in regards to the puppy's registration to ensure you understand the details of the register. It pays to be aware of these things. However, if your puppy will be 'just a member of the family' it won't matter in the slightest what register your puppy is on.

Type: A good class of puppy should have a fairly broad head with medium ears hanging close to the head. Any sign of the ears sticking out or up indicate crossbred ancestry. The puppy's body should be short and solid with a dense coat and thick tail. Legs should be sturdy. The overall appearance should be of a chunky thick-coated (but not overweight) puppy, bursting with vitality. However as you can imagine puppies do sleep! And this sleep period is an important time for growing puppies.

To sum up: When choosing a puppy from a breeder ask questions, look around, meet the Sire and Dam (if possible) and spend some time with the litter. Remember your puppy will be a 'family member' for around 12 + years and won't be 'here today, gone tomorrow'. Ensure you are prepared for your new puppy's arrival at home i.e. bedding, bowls, health care equipment, food (as advised by the breeder) and an area for your puppy to play and exercise.

When taking your puppy home you should have from the breeder: instructions for feeding and general care, knowledge of worming done and preparation used, an immunization certificate for temporary needle (permanent needles needed at approximately 12 and 16 weeks).

Do not purchase a puppy if it has any of these signs:

- Thin bony body, pinched in face
- distended stomach
- starey coat (i.e. hair standing out instead of lying flat), or
- practically white gums.

These signs indicate that the puppy has not been wormed and you could be buying trouble. Additionally, Do not buy a puppy which has fleas, runny eyes, smelly ear canals, or whose surroundings are not absolutely clean.

We hope this information has been of some help to you in choosing a good, healthy puppy, and that you in turn will do all in your power to help keep up the high standard of our Labradors.

For more in depth information about Labrador Retrievers we strongly recommend that you purchase a copy of the LRCQ Inc handbook Labradors in Capricornia – visit the Club Merchandise page on the Lab Club website for more information.

