



Responsible Breeder 101

Life is better with pets! There are a variety of ways to find the perfect pet including from responsible breeders. Here are some helpful tips for finding a reputable breeder:

How do I get started?

1. Visit the breed selector on [purina.com](https://www.purina.com) to research your breed of choice
2. Go to the American Kennel Club website to search their breeder listings and refine your search by your location
3. Ask your veterinarian if they have any recommendations for your breed of choice
4. Ask friends and family where they purchased their dog or cat

I know the breed and I want and I found a breeder. What now?

1. Reach out and start a conversation
2. Ask about timing for current or future litters if you are interested in a puppy or kitten
3. Research the breeder's website and social media accounts for testimonials
4. Interview the breeder to find out if they are following the best practices below and that you are comfortable purchasing from them

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- Responsible breeders are experts in their breed and have a deep knowledge of the pedigrees of the pets they sell.
 - They can tell potential buyers about the temperament, health, and other characteristics unique to the breed as well as in regard to the puppy or kitten they are considering. They will provide documentation in regard to vaccinations given, further inoculation schedule, and deworming history. They also can provide health testing results on the sire and dam when applicable.
 - The breeder should allow potential owners to see the mother of the puppies or kittens.
 - Many breeders devote their entire lives to developing a breeding program that meets specific temperament, performance, structure and health standards. They screen breeding stock for heritable diseases and disclose any potential health issues to new owners. They also have a good knowledge of genetics, and they don't breed animals with known health concerns or aggressive temperaments.

- They ensure the puppies or kittens are kept clean, warm, fed, vetted and with the mother until weaned as well as starting extensive socialization at birth. They wait until at least 8 weeks of age (and often longer) to place the puppies and kittens in new homes.
- They make sure pet quality animals are sold on a limited registration (AKC registered dogs only), spay/neuter contract or are altered before placement (depending on the age of the animal).
- Breeders have an established process for providing enrichment and socialization for their puppies and kittens that allows each of them to receive individual attention and handling in a one on one setting.
- Be prepared to wait for a puppy or kitten. Reputable breeders will often have waitlist that depend on the popularity of the breed and because they are allowing for the appropriate time between litters.
- Many also breed pets, especially dogs, for specific purposes, such as hunting, search and rescue, therapy, and assistance for the disabled.
- Breeders carefully screen and counsel potential new owners to ensure that their dogs or cats are placed in good homes, and they follow-up after the purchase to provide guidance and support, as well as ask for updates on how the pet is doing in the home. They have a contract that states breeder's responsibilities, new owner's responsibilities, health guarantees and return policy.
 - They comply with all applicable laws regulating breeders in their jurisdiction and state in the contract that they will take the dog or cat back if it needs to be re-homed for any reason.
- They provide you with information on the pet's current diet and feeding instructions for a smooth transition into the home.
- Breeders can produce references from a past buyer and/or their veterinarian, if requested.
- Being a responsible breeder is truly a labor of love that comes with a significant cost to the breeder in order to provide the best quality care and to raise quality puppies and kittens.
- If you are looking for a purebred dog but would prefer to adopt through a rescue, check out these options:
 - Look into a breed specific rescue for your breed of choice
 - Visit www.petfinder.com and search for your breed of choice



petfinder.com

