

Breeding of Domesticated Animals

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the irresponsible breeding of domesticated animals.

Definition:

Responsible Breeder:

A breeder is “responsible” when he/she is concerned about the welfare of each animal and ensures that all offspring are placed in suitable homes. Responsible breeders:

- Breed for the purpose of betterment of the breed, and therefore breed animals with positive temperaments (i.e. safe around humans), a good health history, and proper consideration of genetic tendencies in an animal’s family pedigree.
- Register their animals with the appropriate organization.
- Find responsible homes for each animal. Some responsible breeders will not allow their animals to breed until they have a waiting list for the offspring. If a home cannot be found for an animal, the breeder will keep the animal and be responsible for its care.
- Interview each potential client, as he/she wants to know about the person that is purchasing his/her animals.
- Provide information about the animal’s pedigree. Clients should also be able to meet at least one of the parents.
- Show the location and facilities in which the animals are being raised.
- Show health certificates and records of veterinary visits.
- Offer to take the animal back if there is a medical or behavioural problem, or if the client is no longer able to care for the animal.
- Encourage spaying/neutering of any animal that will not be needed to continue the genetic line through future breeding.

Irresponsible Breeder:

- Backyard Breeder: A backyard breeder is a person that breeds animals for personal gain (i.e. to make money, to show children the “miracle of birth,” etc.), with little or no thought regarding the consequences for or the well-being of the animals or the betterment of the breed. Backyard breeders usually breed animals without proper regard for pedigree, proper planning for future homes and, spay/neuter procedures, planning for offspring, and/or little knowledge of proper rearing techniques.
- Puppy Mill: A puppy mill is a large-scale commercial dog breeding operation where profit is given priority over the humane treatment of the dogs.
- Accidental Breeder: An accidental breeder is someone that has not had his/her animal spayed/neutered and an unplanned breeding has occurred as a result.
- Other: A breeder that registers his/her animals may be considered “irresponsible” if he/she does not follow the guidelines set out above.

Rationale

- Irresponsible breeders often breed animals even though they are too young, too old, or not in suitable health for breeding.
- Documented problems of puppy mills include overbreeding, inbreeding, minimal veterinary care, poor quality food and shelter, lack of socialization with humans, overcrowded cages, and the killing of unwanted animals.
- Some puppies that come from puppy mills have genetic diseases or health problems that will not show up until years later, that are a result of poor breeding practices.
- Responsible breeders are concerned with genetics and health of their breeding animals. This increases the likelihood that animals with poor temperaments or health will not reproduce, therefore improving the breed.
- Responsible breeders choose their clients carefully and will take animals back if the client can no longer care for them. Theoretically, none of these animals should ever be left homeless or without care.

References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Criteria for Responsible Breeding." ASPCA position statement, New York, n.d.
2. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Puppy Mill FAQ." <http://www.aspca.org/fight-cruelty/puppy-mills/puppy-mill-faq> (2015)
3. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Companion Animal Mass Breeding Operations." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 2012.
4. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. "Commercial Dog and Cat Breeding." CVMA position statement, Ottawa, 2014.