

## Definitions

*Peggy Adamson*

If there were a caste system within the dog world, the breeders would be at the top, followed in descending order by puppy-raisers, design-a-doggers, backyard breeders, and puppy mills. The danger to the public is that any one can call themselves a 'breeder' without having done more than put two dogs together with resultant puppies. Education is the key. Hopefully, more and more people will stop and think about where and who they are getting a puppy and, more importantly, why.

**BREEDER:** Technically, any person who mates two dogs and causes the production of offspring is a *breeder*. In the respected world of dog ownership, a breeder is someone who breeds only when she breeds for the betterment of the breed and intends to keep one of the offspring. The betterment of the breed considers the entire standard and not just any one characteristic of the standard. The primary difference between puppy raisers and breeders is *"awareness of responsibility; responsibility to her breed, to her goals, to the dogs she has bred and to the dogs she hopes to breed. She also has a never-ending responsibility to the people who have bought her dogs, to the people who are about to buy her dogs and to the public image--not only of the dogs she has been producing but of the breed itself."*

A breeder is a creator; she works toward a goal of perfection in her mind's eye. She does not allow herself to be deterred by others' views or by what is currently popular; she doesn't breed to fill a market of what will sell. A breeder takes the time to mentor, to share her philosophy and help those who ask over the rough spots. She instills within those who have purchased her puppies a sense of belonging, a pride in ownership. Breeders are there to answer questions, to encourage training, to teach critical assessment before breeding. She takes responsibility for the dogs that she produces for the life of the dog, always willing to take them back if necessary. Breeders are not motivated by money or supplying a market. She does the necessary genetic testing and assures that the dogs she breeds are free of genetic problems. Breeders are those who have paid their dues, studied, learned, been mentored and now are also mentoring. A breeder will have earned and continue to earn the right to be respected. Even some of the 'big-name' *breeders* are not what should be considered as breeders and actually are puppy-raisers who no longer put the same amount of effort into thinking about the future of the breed.

**PUPPY RAISER:** Refers to any person who breeds without at least attempting to understand the genetics behind the two dogs being bred, think about what they desire the puppies from the combination to be like, have a clear cut plan (or at the very least **some** plan) for the future of the breed, hasn't considered all the possibilities concerning whelping, done the medical checks and at the very least the minimal health checks for hips, eyes and whatever else is recommended for their breed, and proven their stock in some way -- whether in the show, field, obedience, etc. realms. Puppy-raisers simply put two dogs of the same breed together and *hope* for the best.

**DESIGN-A-DOG:** Designer dogs can be designed as the latest fad, bred to fulfil a certain, encapsulated niche, without a plan for long-term development of a breed type. Breeding for any one trait is irresponsible breeding. This is just as true in the case of pure-breed breeders as it is in those who cross-breed. Any breeder that is *"only breeding to satisfy a need"* is failing her responsibility as a breeder which should be to breed only when she feels that it is to the **betterment of the breed**, and in the case of cross-breeds, it would be difficult to argue that she was breeding to any established standard and instead is breeding for a reason that is less than what most of us consider to be reasonable. Perhaps she wants the "fame" of having bred those competitive cross-breeds. Unlike the people who are at least cross-breeding to try to establish a new breed and taking the time to develop standards, aims, goals, and a plan, these dogs are being cross-bred without any such goal.

**BACKYARD BREEDER:** May also be referred to as a "whim breeder", this person is one who breeds without any forethought to *why* they should be breeding. These people often have reasons such as "wanting the children to see the miracle of life" or "everyone just loves Fifi (or Fido) and wants a puppy just like her/him" or even more frightening wants to "make a bit of money and recoup some of my cost in buying Fifi". Backyard breeders, even when they have only one dog and produce only one litter, are the equivalent and just as damaging to the breed as puppy mills. The difference is only the scale of the operation. For the most part backyard breeders will have done no medical checks and

**PUPPY MILL:** A business that mass-produces dogs for a profit with little or no regard for the health and well-being of the puppies and dogs. It is a facility where puppies are sold to brokers, pet stores or individuals without regard for the puppy. They usually have many breeding animals in many different breeds and often, but not always, substandard health, living and socialization conditions. Some well-known and "respected" breeders have fallen into the puppy mill trap by losing sight of the primary reason for breeding, which should be breeding only for the betterment of the breed. Production of puppies only because there is a market or one needs a bit extra money is still puppy-milling. Some breeders who have slipped to this level have well-known affixes or kennel names.

**UNETHICAL BREEDING:** Any person who breeds dogs with profit as the main motivation and without consideration for the health and well-being of the puppies is guilty of ethical crimes.

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