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GETTING A NEW PUPPY OR KITTEN? WHAT TO ASK A BREEDER...

I. BACKGROUND/ETHICS

- A. How long have you been breeding (this particular breed of cat/dog)?
 - 1. Where are you located?
 - 2. What is your facility like?
 - 3. What is your cleaning/disinfectant policy?
- B. How and why did you choose this breed?
- C. How do you choose your breeding pairs?
- D. How many animals do you have? (Less is better)
 - 1. How many litters per year?
 - 2. Do you follow the animals you adopt out?
 - 3. Do you take the animals back if it doesn't work out?
- E. Have you had to make any changes in male/female matches?
 - 1. Obstetric problems?
 - 2. Congenital problems?

II. HEALTH RELATED ISSUES

- A. Who is your regular veterinarian?
 - 1. What do the breeding animals get checked for?
 - a. Dogs:
 - 1) Brucellosis (blood test annually if active breeder)
 - 2) Breed specific
 - a) OFA – hip check for most breeds over 50 lbs.
 - b) Eyes – veterinary ophthalmologist
 - c) Intestinal parasites (deworming?)
 - d) External parasites (fleas, ear mites, mange)
 - b. Cats:
 - 1) Feline Leukemia Virus
 - 2) Feline Immunodeficiency Virus
 - 3) Intestinal parasites (deworming?)
 - 4) External parasites (fleas, ear mites, mange)
 - 2. Do you give a health guarantee or have a return policy?
(One should exist even though you may never use it!)
 - 3. What medical problems have been identified in the litters as they have matured?
(Dental disease, hormone imbalances, allergies, behavior disorders)
 - 4. Are new animals quarantined?
 - a. For how long?
 - b. Where are they kept?

GETTING A NEW PUPPY OR KITTEN? WHAT TO ASK A BREEDER (Continued)

B. Puppies and kittens

1. At what age are they weaned? Adopted out?
 - a. What diet is fed? Since what age?
 - b. Any supplements or table food given?
2. Are they examined by your veterinarian? At what ages?
3. Have any members of this litter been to the vet for anything other than a routine checkup?
 - a. Explain. What was the diagnosis?
 - b. Did they improve?
4. What vaccine(s) have they received and at what age?
5. Have they been dewormed? With what product(s)?
6. Have they been given any heartworm preventative medication?
 - a. Pups – time of year and location variation. Cats – Location dependent.
7. Breed specific questions FOR DOGS
 - a. Do you believe in ear cropping, tail docking, and dewclaw removal?
 - b. Who performs the procedure(s)? At what age?

III. MEETING THE BREEDER

A. Visiting the breeding facility

1. USE YOUR NOSE! How does it smell?
2. Is it clean?
3. Do the animals seem happy, friendly, well cared for?
4. Are puppies being housebroken? Are they crated?
5. Identify the quarantine area

B. Picking a puppy/kitten

1. Personality traits
 - a. Positive = outgoing, playful, curious
 - b. Potentially negative = shy, withdrawn, fearful, antisocial
 - c. Arrange to meet the mother and father of the litter
 - 1) Assess their personalities
 - 2) Do they look well kept?
2. Healthy at a glance
 - a. Size and weight compared to the others
 - b. Bright eyes, clear nose, alert
 - c. Healthy haircoat

C. Can your veterinarian be contacted by my veterinarian?

After asking these questions, we hope you will be able to determine whether your breeder is:

1. Open with their information
2. Honest
3. Trustworthy
4. Breeding for the love of the breed or to make a profit
5. Reasonable or strongly opinionated