

**BMDCA On Line Breeder Referral  
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## **Guidelines for Breeders Referred Through BMDCA Breeder Referral**

Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America Member-Breeders

Welcome to our Member Breeders Web site. Our member breeders invite you to learn about our wonderful dogs and determine if a Berner is the right dog for you. In order for you to obtain a well bred and healthy Berner it is very important that you take the time to read and understand the supplied information on our dogs (Breed Standard, Health issues and Health Clearances) and our Code of Conduct which details the agreement of members of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America (BMDCA) to abide by certain guidelines in order to produce Bernese Mountain Dogs with soundness, temperament, and the best health possible by having their dogs evaluated for Hip and Elbow problems, as well as for some of the following (among others): an Inherited Blood Clotting issue (vWD), heart problems (SAS), thyroid issues, and an eye problem (Retinal Degeneration). All breeders listing on this cite have agreed to provide Health Clearances for these known problems in order to reduce the probability of puppies having these known health issues, and they can be found in the open breed health database at [www.bernergarde.org](http://www.bernergarde.org) or the breeder will provide "hard copies" of the certifications to the On Line Breeder Referral Coordinator.

Our breeders want you to love and enjoy your new puppy and will want to ensure that you and a Berner will make a good home. These dogs are our "children" and we want them well cared for.

(We will need to provide links to the BMDCA.org information series on the Breed standard, health issues and COC in the spaces above)

What is a Good Breeder?

Perhaps as important as selecting a breed and a puppy from stock one finds suitable to one's taste, is an open and good rapport with the pup's breeder. Breeders should be willing to advise buyers about diet, obedience training, exercise management, and general breed information.

A breeder who is conscientious about developing a line of hearty dogs and happy owners of their happy puppies should be interested in the following:

- helping buyers ascertain whether the Bernese Mountain Dog is the best choice for them and their circumstances
- interviewing buyers about the potential home environment, including the number of family members and ages, daily family schedule, quarters for a large dog, and the buyer's willingness to cooperate with a recommended dietary, exercise and training program
- gauging the buyer's knowledge of dogs to assess at what level the breeder should begin educating and continue to educate
- obtaining the buyer's pledge to cooperate in progeny testing (assessing hip and elbow status and other traits as puppies mature), certifications, and record-keeping

**A reputable breeder** - Takes responsible care of all of his or her dogs (breeding stock & puppies), and provides a foundation of companionship, affection, interaction and attention, nutritious quality dog food and fresh, clean water, adequate shelter, immunization, proper vet care, parasite prevention/treatment, grooming, exercise, socialization. Screens potential owners thoroughly, and does not sell to those who are unsuitable. (A reputable breeder wants to know as much about you, your household, your schedule and your ability to properly care for a puppy (throughout its entire lifetime), as you want to know about the breeder's puppies. If you feel like you are being screened as if you were adopting a child, that's normal.)

- evaluating individual puppies for placement in optimal family situations NEVER sells puppies to puppy brokers, pet shops or puppy outlets of any kind.<sup>1\*\*</sup>

Every breeder whose name appears on the list distributed is a Member of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America (BMDCA); each breeder referred through the On Line BMDCA Breeder Referral Program agrees to the following:

Breeder will provide a written sales contract containing a statement as to the health of the puppy. The health of the puppy shall be guaranteed for a minimum of 72 hours and made with the understanding that the purchaser's veterinarian shall check the puppy within 72 hours and if the puppy is unfit for sale, the puppy may be returned for replacement or full refund. Additionally, the written contract should specify how the breeder will honor a refund or replacement which may be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances.

Breeder will provide copies of hip and elbow evaluations and current eye examinations of sire and dam, to puppy buyers prior to purchase. In the event that current eye and hip and elbow examinations are listed on the CERF, OFA or Berner-Garde ([www.bernergarde.org](http://www.bernergarde.org)) listings, providing a copy of these lists will be sufficient. It shall not be a requirement to have OFA and CERF forms, but breeder must provide proof in writing that hips were x-rayed and evaluated after the age of 2 years and eyes have been examined within the last 12 months. If the dam or sire is under the age of two (2) years, then preliminary hip and elbow evaluations from an acceptable certifying body must still be available (OFA, OVEm PennHIP, etc).

Breeder will provide a written recommendation as to feeding, general care, housebreaking, training, feeding, medical care, and grooming.

Breeder will be willing to take back a dog at any time in its life. However, if a dog falls into the hands of Bernese RESCUE and breeder is unable to physically take the dog back, breeder may offer support in other ways, i.e., financial or assistance in placement of dog. Breeder understands that failure to assist Bernese RESCUE in placements of his/her breeding, shall result in removal from BMDCA Breeder Referral List.

No puppy will be placed in a new home prior to 8 weeks of age.

Health records showing dates and types of immunizations and wormings shall be provided to all new buyers.

Registration papers for the puppy will be supplied to the new owner at the time of the sale, unless otherwise agreed to in writing. Contingencies in sales contract may include but not be limited to proof of spay or neutering and will be signed by the seller and the buyer. Also, a written minimum pedigree of at least 3 generations for the puppy sold will be provided either prior to or at the time of sale.

Courteous assistance should be given to potential puppy buyers when these inquiries are received through BMDCA Breeder Referral. You are representing BMDCA and quality Bernese Mountain Dogs. Educating the serious purchaser will ensure that puppies are placed into homes that will endure.

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<sup>1</sup> *Important Note: Many pet stores and puppy outlets tell prospective puppy buyers that their puppies come from reputable breeders, even though the large majority of these places actually get their puppies from puppy mills and commercial breeding facilities. The bottom line is: NO reputable breeder will ever sell their puppies to a pet store or puppy outlet, and NO pet store or puppy outlet will ever admit to getting their puppies from a puppy mill.*

## **Don't buy that doggie in the window!**

10 Reasons NOT to Buy a Puppy from a Pet Shop/Backyard Breeder/Puppy Mill/Internet puppyfinder website

### **1. Health.**

When you buy a puppy from a pet shop, you're spending a lot of money for a dog whose parents you know nothing about. Have both parents had their hips and elbows x-rayed for dysplasia? Have the parents been tested for PRA (Progressive Retinal Atrophy and inherited eye disorders), which causes blindness? Tests are expensive, but responsible breeders do them because their goal is to produce healthy pups. What's the pet shop's goal? If they say "healthy pups," ask them for proof.

### **2. That guarantee isn't worth what you think it is.**

Pet shops make a big deal about their "lifetime guarantees". But ask them what happens when you need thousands of dollars to correct crippling hip dysplasia in your six-month-old puppy. The guarantee requires you to give the puppy back so they can put it to sleep, which is cheaper for them. Then they give you another puppy, one who might also develop dysplasia. A guarantee like that is worse than no guarantee at all.

### **3. The AKC myth.**

Pet shops want you to think "AKC papers" equals healthy puppies. It doesn't. The only thing AKC registration means is that the breeder can claim that both parents are purebred and that both parents are AKC registered. The mother (dam) could be a truly awful example of the breed -- or worse, suffering from disease or illness -- and the puppies can still be registered. Don't believe it? Call the AKC at 919-233-9767 and ask them. A responsible breeder will of course register her puppies if the breed is one of the 150 or so recognized by the AKC, but that's only the beginning.

### **4. Good luck with housebreaking.**

The puppies you see in the pet-shop window have spent their lives in cages. They've never seen grass, or dirt, and they've certainly never seen carpeting. They've been forced to eliminate in the same place where they sleep and eat. A responsible breeder keeps the puppies very clean, and makes sure they have separate elimination areas. By the time they're ready to go home, well-bred puppies are often well on the way to being housebroken.

### **5. How about socialization?**

Imagine buying a puppy that has never been inside a house before! The doorbell, the vacuum cleaner, the dishwasher -- those things can be terrifying to a puppy who has never seen them. What about neighborhood kids, riding in the car, or just walking on a leash? A responsible breeder exposes her puppies to all kinds of new situations, and makes sure they are confident, happy puppies when they go off to their new homes.

Plus, when you go to a breeder you generally have more than one puppy from which to choose. A responsible breeder temperament-tests her puppies to find out which ones are outgoing or shy or dominant. Then she matches up owners to make sure that active puppies go to active homes, and that a calm quiet puppy ends up in a home that's just right for it. If you're going to spend all that money, it makes sense to look at several examples of the breed and then pick an experienced breeder who will help to select the a dog that's right for you.

### **6. What will that puppy look like when it grows up?**

When you buy a puppy from a responsible breeder, you can usually meet the mother and see pictures or video of the father (sire). You can discuss with the breeder the faults each parent possesses (maybe the mother has an over bite, or the father is a little taller than the standard). You can't predict exactly how the puppy will turn out, but you'll know what to expect, and you'll know that your purebred puppy will resemble his breed. Why spend so much money on a pet shop puppy without even knowing what the parents look like?

## **7. Price.**

For the money that pet shops want you to spend, you'd expect a lot more. Think about all the things responsible breeders do that pet stores don't: They choose the parents based on health and temperament issues; they pay for expensive tests to make sure both sire and dam are free from disease or illness in order to help minimize that the puppies will have any of those issues; they raise the puppies with an eye toward getting them housebroken and socialized; and they help make sure the right puppies go to the right homes. A responsible breeder never breeds just to make money, and their prices are usually lower than in pet shops. Save some money and get a better quality puppy at the same time.

## **8. What do you know about the breed?**

Pet shops can tell you a little about the breeds they sell. And they can point you to a rack of generic breed books. That's it. A responsible breeder will be a wealth of information about the breed you're interested in. She'll be able to tell you about unique breed characteristics, ways to get involved in activities your dog might be suited for, and most importantly, she knows what specific health issues to watch out for.

## **9. Do you want to support the puppy mills?**

How do you know most pet shop pups come from puppy mills? Because no responsible breeder would ever sell their puppies to a pet store, for two reasons:

- 1) Responsible breeders care about the puppies they produce, and want them to go to very carefully selected homes.
- 2) Keeping track of litters is an essential part of responsible breeding. If two puppies from a certain litter die from liver failure at a young age, the breeder knows there's a problem in the line and will not breed the parents again. What does that say about the breeders of pet shop pups?

## **10. What's that pedigree worth?**

Pet shops make a big deal out of their pedigrees, which is interesting because they just contain a bunch of names. Can the pet shop tell you how long the puppy's grandparents lived, and what they died of? How many of the parents littermates are still alive? How long do dogs in this pedigree usually live? A responsible breeder can answer all of those questions. You get not just a pedigree, but all of the important information behind the pedigree.

This list is a point of reference and a tool that can be used or referred to when communicating with a breeder. If there are things in here that you do not understand, read more about dogs, more about the breed, and more about choosing a breeder. The puppy you select will have a better chance of growing up to be a healthy Berner who can be a loving companion for many years, if you do your research first. There are plenty of puppies available, but finding the right one for you is up to YOU to find, recognize, and develop.

Just as you will have a great many questions for the breeder, don't be surprised if the breeder has as many questions about your suitability as the adopter of her puppy! As a matter of fact, if the breeder is willing to part with a puppy without checking into your ability to provide the proper home, beware! A good breeder should be very concerned that her pups will have the very best environment, and won't wind up running loose in the street, dumped at the SPCA, or returned to her because they got too big or just don't go with the color scheme anymore!

This list is a suggestion. Tailor it to suit your requirements. If health and longevity are of utmost importance to you, give more weight to that section. If temperament and obedience is more important, give additional weight to those issues. This is not intended to be a questionnaire for you to give a breeder to fill out. It is designed to give people who have never bought a dog a basis for evaluating different breeders. All breeders are not alike, and they will each emphasize different priorities in their breeding programs. What you will want to do is to find a breeder that you are comfortable with, someone who won't change her phone number after you buy the puppy. The breeder should want - or better yet require - feedback from you as the puppy grows. She should want to know of any problems or the lack of problems in order to continue to make the most informed breeding decisions.

### **The Breeder Checklist (adapted from Pat Long)**

#### **Health Issues:**

- Sire's hips x-rayed after the age of 18 months +2
- each hip certified excellent +2
- OR each PennHIP DI < .55 +2
- Dam's hips x-rayed after the age of 18 months +2
- each hip certified excellent +2
- OR each PennHIP DI < .55 +2
- Each parents' littermates' with CHD (max of -5) -1 each
- Each parents' littermates' hip status not known (max of 5) -1 each
- Sire's elbows x-rayed after the age of 18 months +2
- Each elbow certified normal +2
- Dam's elbows x-rayed after the age of 18 months +2
- Each elbow certified normal +2
- Each parent's littermate with ED (max of -5) -1 each
- Parents' littermates' elbow status not known (max of -5) -1 each
- Parent's eyes tested clear within the past year +2
- Either parent has produced a pup with PRA -5
- Each pup produced by dam and sire tested clear within the last year (max of +5) +1each
- (if any pup with PRA was produced, no addition here)
- Sire's thyroid tested normal +2
- Dam's thyroid tested normal +2
- Sire's heart tested normal +2
- Dam's heart tested normal +2

- If breeder knows age and cause of death of any of the 28 grandparents, great-grandparents, great-greats +1 each

*(Note: don't be scared by mention of specific health problems. All dogs have health problems in their pedigree. It is more important to know what the problems are, and whether the breeder knows what they are!)*

### **Contract and Guarantee:**

- Guarantee given +1

*(Note: look very carefully at any guarantee. For example, if the breeder will replace your pup if it develops hip problems, but you have to return it to the breeder, could you give up your 2 year old dog, or would you decide instead to get expensive surgery without any financial help?)*

- Contract available before sale +5
- any co-ownership costs & responsibilities clearly spelled out and reasonable for you both +5
- Deposit required before you have the contract -5
- Requires dog to be returned to her if you are unable to keep it, and spells out terms costs/refunds of the return +5
- Sells a bitch as a breeding bitch with puppy back requirement to anyone - whether they are knowledgeable about breeding issues or not! -5
- Does not urge you to breed a dog if you have no interest in a lifelong commitment to the dogs you might produce +5
- Won't sell a breeding potential dog unless you demonstrate knowledge, and have breeding goals that work well with hers +5
- Requires demonstration of breed knowledge, desire to learn more before breeding, and dedication to any pups produced before selling you a breeding potential pup +2
- Contract stipulates that dog will be assessed at 18 months or older before it is deemed suitable to breed +2
- If you want a show quality pup and are willing to pay for it, great! But if the breeder's contract requires you to complete the requirements for an AKC championship ("finish") the pup even if you don't wish to do so -5
- Companion pup sold with limited registration, only +2
- Companion pup sold with spay neuter requirement, only +2
- Companion pup sold with Ltd reg, and sp/n req, both +5
- Hip and elbow x-rays required by age of two +5

### **Breeder Knowledge:**

- Goes to shows regularly +2
- Has dogs that have finished (CH) +0
- Member of national or regional Berner club +1
- Holds or has held active club position +2
- Actively does obedience/draft/agility +2
- Knows and freely discusses breed health problems +5
- Openly discusses these problems are in her line, or in dogs she has lived with +5
- Pedigree not supplied before sale -10

- Questions you thoroughly on the things you have to offer a puppy and on qualities you hope to find in your pup +5
- You like her and get along - want her as your adopted mother! +10
- Information from her is free flowing, and you perceive her as a good mentor and educator +10
- Wants you to visit her home or kennel +2
- Dogs are all clean and well cared for +2
- Dogs are all indoor dogs and well behaved +2
- Claims every dog in the litter is a show dog -5
- Takes time to explain how she determines if a pup is show potential, breeding potential, and will discuss qualities of specific puppies with you if you ask +5

**Temperament:**

- Dam not shy (this is NOT the same as aloof) +5
- Sire not shy +5
- Dam not aggressive or nippy +5

*(Note: if the dam is pregnant or the pups are on the ground, this cannot always be determined)*

- Sire not aggressive or nippy +5
- Breeder thoroughly socializes puppies +5
- Sound and tactile stimulation +1
- Mental development, overcoming obstacles +1
- Exposure to other dogs +1
- Exposure to people +1
- Exposure to children +1

*(Note: add your own special requirements here)*

- Breeder won't release puppy before 7 weeks +5
- Breeder seems to have sound basis for, and recognizes differences in each pups temperament, has plans for helping pups with any problems to develop weaknesses into strengths +?

*(Note: you won't be able to judge how accurate the breeder is with this until you've had one of her pups for at least a year, so who knows? So get references, particularly for any pups she considered a difficult or challenging placement, or a pup placed with someone who wanted a different one, but took the one the breeder recommended instead)*

Add points for each reference that you contact and get good feedback from, extra points if the owner had a problem dog and still likes the breeder!

**Glossary:**

Open registry - repository of health test results, allows full access to the information.

Closed registry - allows breeders and owners to register results of health tests, but does not allow anyone to find out anything but good results.

Berner-Garde - Bernese Mountain Dog data repository used to track health trends and provides kin reports on request.

CERF - Canine Eye Registry Foundation - closed registry of eye tests.

OFA - Orthopedic Foundation for Animals, closed registry of hip and elbow results.

GDC - Genetic Disease Control, open registry of hip and elbow results, tumor registry, eye tests, as well as other health problems.

PennHIP - Penn Hip Improvement Program - closed registry of hip laxity measurements. Uses a DI (distraction index), a number from 0.0 - 1.00 with the lower the number the better the hip.

Breed health problems:

Cancer - mast cell, malignant histiocytosis, lymphoma, and others (some are hereditary, some are not)

Heart - SAS - sub-aortic stenosis - hereditary

PRA - progressive retinal atrophy, dogs become blind - hereditary

CHD - Canine Hip Dysplasia, malformation of hip joints - hereditary in part, and partly environmental

ED - Elbow Dysplasia, malformation of elbow joint, see above

OCD - osteochondritis dissecans, cartilage problem, see above

PSS - portosystemic shunt, blood does not flow to the liver properly, some forms may be hereditary  
glomerulonephritis - kidney does not develop properly - hereditary

allergies - food, skin, inhalent, topical, you name it - may be hereditary

AKC - American Kennel Club - registers dogs claimed to be purebred by a breeder. Not a guarantee of being either purebred or healthy.

CKC - Canadian Kennel Club - see above.

UKC - United Kennel Club - slightly different flavor of registry, with more emphasis on obedience competition.

CH - champion. A dog was said by several different judges to be the best non-champion dog at several different shows. Not a guarantee of anything.

CD - companion dog. First level of obedience titles, followed by CDX (companion dog excellent), UD (utility dog), UDX, OTCH (Obedience Trial Champion). Note, only 2 Berners to date have ever gotten a UDX!

NDD - novice draft dog. First level of carting titles, followed by DD.

TD - tracking dog. First level of tracking title, followed by TDX.

TT - temperament tested. Not an AKC recognized title, but allows the dog to be used for therapy work.

CGC - canine good citizen. Dog was tested for basic behavior and control. Well behaved in public. Maybe.

NA - novice agility.

HD - herding dog. Not a title yet recognized for Bernese Mountain Dogs.

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Listed below are the breeders who are members of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America (BMDCA). You may contact them directly, or you may contact the Breeder Referral Coordinator. The list below is ordered by states.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT YOUR LISTING AS IT SHOULD APPEAR: When a litter is "on the ground", submit the Litter Listing Form to me via email ([carolburke5@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carolburke5@sbcglobal.net)).

Breeder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Kennel Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Website (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

SIRE - Name of Sire: \_\_\_\_\_

DAM - Name of Dam: \_\_\_\_\_

Numer of Puppies: \_\_\_\_\_ Males: \_\_\_\_\_ Females: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Puppies Whelped: \_\_\_\_\_

Alabama [AL], Alaska [AK], Arizona [AZ], Arkansas [AR]  
California [CA], Colorado [CO], Connecticut [CT]  
Delaware [DE]  
Florida [FL]  
Georgia [GA]  
Hawaii [HI]  
Idaho [ID], Illinois [IL], Indiana [IN], Iowa [IA]  
Kansas [KS], Kentucky [KY]  
Louisiana [LA]  
Maine [ME], Maryland [MD], Massachusetts [MA], Michigan [MI], Minnesota [MN], Mississippi [MS],  
Missouri [MO], Montana [MT],  
Nebraska [NE], Nevada [NV], New Hampshire [NH], New Jersey [NJ], New Mexico [NM], New York [NY],  
North Carolina [NC], North Dakota [ND]  
Ohio [OH], Oklahoma [OK], Oregon [OR],  
Pennsylvania [PA]  
Rhode Island [RI]  
South Carolina [SC], South Dakota [SD]  
Tennessee [TN], Texas [TX],  
Utah [UT]  
Vermont [VT]  
Virginia [VA]  
Washington [WA], West Virginia [WV], Wisconsin [WI], Wyoming [WY]