The Kennel Union of Southern Africa (KUSA)

Getting a healthy puppy

Getting a new puppy has never been easier. You can find puppies wherever you look: in newspapers, on Facebook and on Gumtree. And sometimes all you need to get a fluffy bundle of joy is to pay first. No questions asked.

Buying cheap is expensive. It might end up costing more than you ever imagined to keep your new puppy in your life. While buying a KUSA registered puppy is no guarantee for success, you can tip the scale in your favour by doing your research.

Finding the right breeder

Pass the test

KUSA Members are encouraged to do health screening tests prior to breeding, but the responsibility remains with the buyer to attain as much information as possible about the health status of the parents of the litter. It's a good idea to get copies of the health test results for both parents prior to paying the deposit (if applicable).

Get it write

The Kennel Union has no legislative powers to adjudicate between parties in dispute over the purchase and sale of puppies. We strongly recommend that a written and signed purchase and sale agreement be entered into between the two parties.

Visit the kennel

Always insist on visiting the premises where the puppy was raised. Never accept to collect your puppy from a different location. If the puppy is flying to your location, try to get a friend or family to inspect the breeder prior to transporting the puppy. Be careful not to inadvertently support "puppy farmers".

Report, don't rescue

If you come across a breeder who makes you uncomfortable, please contact KUSA and the local SPCA to report the matter. Don't rescue the puppy by paying for the puppy because it will only serve to perpetuate the vicious cycle.

Check availability

Responsible breeders only breed when they are certain that they will be able to find good homes for all their puppies and thus it may be necessary to place your name on a waiting list and/or to pay a deposit. Beware of persons that have puppies available all year round and offer discounts.

Due diligence

Responsible breeders will ensure that

their puppies have been inoculated and dewormed by a registered veterinary professional. All KUSA registered dogs must be micro-chipped this is mandatory. As a puppy buyer, you should receive a vet booklet with the puppy's medical history from the breeder.

One registry

Ask to see the KUSA Certificate of Registration for the dam and sire, and the KUSA membership number for the breeder. Beware of breeders that offer registration with alternate or multiple registries. The Kennel Union is the only registry in South Africa that is recognised by the American, Canadian, United Kingdom, Australian, New Zealand & European Kennel Clubs. The Kennel Union will only register litters on the Breed Register if both parents are KUSA registered and will only accept show entries from dogs registered with the Kennel Union. The progeny of dogs registered with other registries are not eligible for registration on the Kennel Union Breed Register.

Ask

Reputable breeders will be happy to answer all of your questions and they might have a few questions for you too! Here's a quick list of questions that you should ask your breeder:

- Are both parents registered?
- What are the sizes of the puppy's parents?
- Can I meet the parents?
- Are both parents friendly to other dogs when outside the home?
- Are both parents calm, outgoing and confident at home and in public?
- Are both parents free of health issues like bad hips, shoulders, elbows, any cruciate ligament problems, skin problems or jaw malformations?
- Are both parents free of behavioural issues?
- Will the pups leave mom and the litter at 8 weeks old?
- Do you provide a contract?
- Will the pups be handled daily and exposed to noise, activity and kids?
- Will the pups be inoculated before they leave you?
- Have any of the puppies in the litter been sick?
- Will I be able to visit the litter regularly so I can get to know the pups and make a selection?
- Will there be any restrictions on the puppy's pedigree?
- Do you have a list of questions to ask me?

Getting a new puppy, whether its purebred or mixed, is a lifelong commitment, so make sure that you are ready to provide a loving home for the puppy for the rest of its life.

For more great tips on finding the perfect puppy, visit the KUSA website at www.kusa.co.za or follow us on Facebook at MyKUSA.