



Twenty Questions by Maggie Billiard

It is the wish of the breeder that the puppies he or she is caring for will ultimately find ideal homes presided over by caring, conscientious owners - two necessary characteristics for living through what are referred to as The Terrible Months. (DPOS Educational Materials. Set #9).

We can eliminate the breeders who are furnishing stock for pet shops, and even less desirable purposes. When it comes to the world of animals, human greed will win over compassion every time. So we are addressing ourselves to the caring breeder.

It is surprising to note that many breeders, both novice and experienced, focus all their attention on determining which dogs will produce the best possible offspring, yet will fail to concern themselves with the futures of these same offspring. Anyone who has been involved in the Animal Humane Movement is constantly besieged with requests to relocate dogs. In the majority of cases, the dogs should not have been purchased by the buyers in the first place.

Agreed, it takes a great deal of fortitude to turn away a sale, when a half dozen or so lively two-month-old Dobs are taking over the household. The breeder - if this is his or her first experience, must be recalling with disbelief his naivete of four or so months ago when he envisioned three or four at most, tiny replicas of the beloved family pet who was to mother them. What has happened to the friends who had professed to want one just like her? A desire which somehow seems to have evaporated into thin air. At this point, the breeder is secretly wishing he had heeded the voices of experience when they pointed out that Dobermans often have large litters, and one must be prepared to keep some of them indefinitely, city ordinances limit of three dogs per household notwithstanding.

It is from such unhappy situations and ensuing panic that most impulse purchases are made. Often the purchasers find themselves leaving the breeder's with a four-month-old puppy and a small sack of dog food, when it had been merely their intention to just look at the litter.

A study of the following questionnaire will serve to forewarn both the breeder and the purchaser of possible danger spots. True, if presented to prospective purchasers, it will in all probability discourage impulse buyers; but on the plus side, it will result in fewer Dobs being returned, given away, or worse, abandoned.



YES NO

1. Does everyone in the family really want a dog? _____
2. Are you prepared to provide adequate veterinary care, i.e., shots, heartworm tests, preventative medicine, parvovirus protection? _____
3. Do you have the time to spend with a dog to care for its physical and emotional needs? _____
4. Are you prepared to be responsible for a dog for the next ten to fifteen years'? _____
5. Are you prepared to take legal responsibility for a dog, i.e., excessive barking, biting, etc.? _____
6. Are you aware of the financial cost of upkeep for a dog? (Veterinary care, food, grooming, fencing, dog licenses, etc.) _____

If you have answered NO to any of the above questions , perhaps you should, reconsider whether or not to buy a dog.

If you have answered YES to all the above questions, please continue.

7. Do you work?_____If so, who will take care of the dog while you are way?_____Do you have a "safe" place the dog can stay while you are at work? _____
8. Do you have children?_____Do they know how to treat a dog? _____
9. Do you live in a house or apartment? _____
10. Who would be responsible for the dog's upkeep? _____
Feeding _____Grooming _____
11. Is the dog to live inside or out? _____
12. Do you have a fenced yard? _____
13. How will the dog obtain exercise? _____
How much exercise does the breed of dog you want, need? _____
14. Who will play with or give the dog attention? _____



15. Are you interested in a dog for obedience? _____
Show? _____ Guard? _____ Watch? _____ Companion? _____
16. Who will take care of the dog if you go out of town? _____
17. Do you plan on neutering the dog? _____
18. Do you plan to breed the dog? _____ If so, for what reason? _____
19. Are you aware of the needs and behavior of this dog as a puppy? _____ As an adult? _____
20. Are you prepared for the fact that this cute little puppy is going to grow up?

This questionnaire points out the stumbling blocks usually involved in unhappy relationships between animals and their owners. It will call attention to the fact that in unsatisfactory liaisons, the four-footed party is not always to blame.

In relation to these Twenty Questions, the culprits are twofold: the buyer who made the original decision to become a dog owner. In effect, he or she agreed to adapt to the responsibility of pet ownership, and the breeder who failed to point out what these responsibilities could involve.

There is only one question and answer that would absolve the breeder of this necessity - the question "Is this your first Dobe?" And the answer "I've had Dobs before."