

Our Responsibilities as Breeders of Merit

While the designation of “Breeder of Merit” sets you apart from other breeders, it also bears with it responsibilities as representatives of AKC breeders and the dog sport community.

You are required to ensure registration of all the puppies that you produce, while this supports registration revenues which is the base that supports all of AKC’s programs, it is also the first step in showing pride in an AKC purebred. Registered dogs can be counted to provide a truer number of homes that value owning a purebred dog. These statistics give AKC leverage in numbers for influencing legislation and combatting the messaging of the adopt don’t shop contingent.

Registration also is a step closer to engaging owners in AKC events and titles with their dogs. When we send our dogs off to new homes, we should be providing information on the extracurricular activities that owners and their families can enjoy with their dogs.

- Get a CGC and demonstrate that your dog has basic manners.
- Train your dog to do tricks and build a closer relationship with your dog (and show off for friends!).
- Earn titles in FIT dog while being active with your dog.
- Build on your dog’s joy of retrieving while earning Fetch titles.
- Train for Obedience and Rally for learning better communication between you and your dogs.
- Train in Agility. It’s fun for most dogs and people, and becomes an addiction for others. It builds confidence in dogs and teaches the handler how to use body language to guide the dog.
- Indulge your dog’s thrill of the chase for fun and fitness with Fast Cat.

Introduce them to sports designed to showcase breed and/or purpose. Arm them with information on clubs or local contacts that might just pique their curiosity to find out more.

- Conformation shows, BPUP, or matches. Provide a short calendar of events that they can attend in their area to see what it is all about.
- Hunting or Field trials – suggest clubs or mentors in their area that introduce them to what their dogs can do and show them how to bring out those skills in their dog.
- Coursing and CAT for hounds
- Scentwork is training that can be done at home
- Earthdog and Barnhunt for terriers, dachshunds and other dogs that like to play hide and seek

- Herding and Farm Dog.

All of these introduce owners to a community of people that enjoy their animals in an active and purposeful way. It can get kids out of the house and teach care and bonding with their canine friend.

Breeders of Merit are also required to complete the health testing that has been published on AKC's website as provided by the parent clubs

<https://www.akc.org/breeder-programs/breed-health-testing-requirements/>. This is required for both sire and dam of a litter. If you are breeding to an outside stud dog, ask for copies of testing or verify that the required testing is posted. Do not assume it has been completed.

We are stewards of our breeds and need to do our due diligence to ensure the health of future generations. Puppy shoppers expect that the health testing has been done when they contact a Breeder of Merit since that is a requirement. If you advertise on Marketplace, please be able to provide proof of that testing or risk suspension or expulsion from the program.

Club membership is also a requirement. Any AKC club is acceptable. Unless you are a member of a club, you cannot influence the governance of our sports or the continuity of the clubs that host the events.

Please put your status to good use, promote participation. This strengthens the sport overall, and on a personal level, new titled dogs can elevate your Breeder of Merit designation. From an economic perspective, more exhibitors allow clubs to spread the costs across a larger base of entries, keeping entries fees down for everyone.

Register. Make your buyers a part of the AKC family and help them understand what opportunities that opens for them. Enlighten them: while they may be there to purchase a couch buddy, there is so much more they can do. Don't forget to let them know that registration comes with 30 days of complementary pet insurance, except in states where it not allowed (CA, NY, OR and WA) so they are protected when they go to their new homes.

We thank you for being an active Breeder of Merit helping to preserve your purpose bred breed and the events in which you compete!