

[Finding A Labrador From A Reputable Breeder](#)

No doubt that when most people decide on getting a Labrador puppy, they have the best intentions to find one from a quality source and many factors play into the decisions such as the initial purchase price, what they want the Labrador for, such as a family pet, a hunting companion, etc.

The Labrador Retriever is the **MOST POPULAR** breed of dog in the **WORLD!** That means that you will have hundreds upon hundreds of people breeding Labradors for **ALL THE WRONG REASONS!** Yes, the most popular breed is polluted, so unhealthy, so over-bred that to find a real Labrador Retriever breeder that does everything for the **RIGHT REASONS** is going to be a like finding a needle in a haystack!!

I get emails weekly from people that have purchased a Labrador from various sources and want my opinion because "something is not normal" about the puppy in regard to looks, color or temperament or they feel the breeder is hiding something. Sometimes a Veterinarian or previous Ashland lab owner will refer them to me and many find me from my website. Got to tell ya, the stories, and the pictures. UGH! I am so saddened as to what has been done and is still be done to riun this beautiful breed! So I write this, in hopes that if you **WANT** a Labrador Retriever that **IS IN FACT** a Labrador from a reputable source, please take a few minutes to read below. I hope it will help you in your search and by all means steer you in the right direction.

For starters, Reputable Labrador Breeders **DO NOT** advertise in Newspapers, On Craigslist, On ANY "puppy for sale sites" Such as Nextdaypets, Puppyfind, etc. You will **NOT** find a well breed puppy in ANY pet shop, Flea Market or "up for Auction sites"!! The internet is a breeding ground for the **WORST** Labrador puppy mill and back yard breeder's sites!

Most reputable breeders will have a private website to showcase their dogs, tell about themselves, their history in the breed, why they breed, etc. A reputable breeder will also partake in some sort of Venue with their dogs. Here in the United States, dog venues are classified as Conformation shows, Field trials, Hunting Test, or other Performance Events such as Obedience, Agility, etc, through the American Kennel Club. These breeders show, test or trial their Labradors for many reasons. Bottom line, they are **DOING SOMETHING** with their dogs to prove the dog either meets the breed standards for which it was developed or has trainability in certain or several different areas. These venues are very costly and time consuming. Breeders that do not participate in any venue should be considered nothing more than a just a puppy producer. And if they rely on a friend to take their dog to **ONE** local show a year in hopes of posting a first place or **RESERVE** picture on their website, well then I would say you are no better off with a puppy from them, than one from the newspaper! Or if you see pictures of their dogs and they are "choked up" on a collar and held tightly and look sad, chances are the dog is not trained or socialized! Most if not all Reputable breeders will be a member of an

"Official AKC licensed Labrador Retriever Breed Club". You have the Parent Labrador Retriever Club and then you have several Licensed Regional Labrador Specialty clubs. These clubs serve a purpose to educate, to promote breed specific information, members must adhere to certain standards and by-laws and perform the required health testing on their dogs. The clubs also host various events such as shows, trails and matches and contribute to Labrador Retriever rescue and research.

Breeding Perquisites. Reputable breeders will make sure that BEFORE any dog is bred, they are correct in temperament, conformation, trainability and have passed ALL THE REQUIRED health clearances before breeding. Any adult Labrador must be PRE-SCREENED for Hip and Elbow Dysplasia through the OFA. Heart should be certified and free of TVD. Each should have EIC, CNM and PRA testing done and yearly Eye checks.

RED FLAGS:

- **"With no strings attached" In other words, puppy is for sale to first person to hand over cash.**
- **Any color other than Black, chocolate or yellow. Chocolates range in color from light brown to very dark brown. Yellows range in color from light cream to red.**
- **AVOID breeders advertising Charcoal, WHITE, Silver, Champagne, miniature, massive, etc.**
- **Puppies that are being sold under 8 weeks of age or a breeder that several puppies over 10 weeks of age that have not been spoken for is a very bad sign. General rule of thumb. Most reputable breeders will have pre-screened awaiting homes for their pups well in advance.**
- **Breeder wants to only ship you the puppy or meet you somewhere (road side) so you can pick up a puppy. RED FLAG! Most Reputable breeders want to meet you IN PERSON before they hand you a puppy. If you cannot go directly to their door. ASK WHY! If you are allowed on their property but not in their home....THINK!! What is inside they are hiding?**
- **They have SEVERAL different breeds. RUN!!!**
- **Dirty puppies. Obnoxious odors. Pups raised in wire cages or on dirt floors. Dirty food, water containers. Dogs on a chain. Dogs not trained or not allowed near you.**
- **Breeder does not participate in a breed specific venue with the AKC.**
- **Breeder does not have a certified pedigree of each dog they own so you can view it BEFORE you decide to purchase. After all, you want to make sure they are not inbred, such as Father to daughter or sister to brother and that the pedigree is a great combination of proven lines, not "Sir Chief of Devil Rat" the sire bred to "Miss Looney Toon of Poop Hill". Look for TITLES before a dog's name. The sire, dam or grandparents should have title Abbreviations BEFORE or AFTER the dogs registered name. Before titles such as CH. stands for Champion. FC. Before**

the name stands for Field Champion. Titles AFTER the name such as JH stand for "junior hunter", CD stands for "Companion, an obedience title". If NO titles appear in the first two generations, chances are you are dealing with dogs of lesser quality or perhaps worse.

- Breeder cannot provide Health clearance copies on the parents to the puppies.
- Breeder that ask YOU to breed the dog at your cost in the future and give them puppies back!
- Breeder does not offer any training, new puppy advice, food or medical information or do not have a general knowledge of what shots or deworming schedule the puppy needs before leaving.
- AKC Approved Breeder - RED FLAG - NO SUCH THING! AKC is a registry body. They do not recommend breeders or have any type of "Approval Rating" for breeders.
- CKC, IKC registries. FRAUD! Steer clear. These are generally unregistered, mix breed dogs that people pay to have a fake registration certificate issued to fool unsuspecting buyers into thinking the dogs are purebred.
- PAY PAL BUTTONS, "BUY NOW" Logo's....NEVER EVER FALL FOR THESE! You may never see your money again!
- ASK THE BREEDER WHO THEIR VET IS AND CALL THEM FOR A REFERENCE! Just ask their Veterinarian. "I am considering purchasing a puppy from your Client (name). Would you recommend them as a dedicated, professional breeder that has the best interest of their animals at heart?"

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A REPUTABLE BREEDER:

- They will ASK you lots of questions and/or require to complete a written application.
- They prescreen anyone interested in a future puppy to make sure that your home is right for one of their pups.
- They DO NOT push sales. Rather they tend to be more "aloof" and would rather pass up the wrong home rather than sale a puppy to anyone. Some may appear blunt. That is okay, they are NOT looking to sale or get rid of a puppy. Trust me...breeders KNOW if your serious or your just wasting their time! They are dedicated and will offer you tons of info and help but if you're just calling to ask "how much are your puppies", you might get the phone hung up on you.
- They ALLOW you to come into their home to pick up the puppy IN PERSON.
- They will in most cases require you to sign a written agreement saying you promise to take care of the puppy by providing proper shelter, training, food and vet care. They generally have a "take back clause" in this agreement should something happen and you can no longer keep

the dog. This way, they can either help rehome the dog or take him back until a new permanent home can be found.

- Their dogs are CLEAN, healthy and well cared for and are well behaved.
- You're allowed to see and interact with the parents (if both are on site). Many sires are out of state or owned by a different breeder so it is not always possible to see the sire at the same time/place.
- You will be asked to send future updates and pictures.
- A reputable breeder will always be there to support you and answer your questions for the life span of your dog.
- A reputable breeder WILL offer you references, will supply you with ALL health clearances of the parents, pedigrees, vet records, etc. They will send the puppy home with food, feeding directions, training info, toys, and other important info.
- Most will offer some form of written warranties. Some just cover general health at the time of sale, others will cover hereditary defects and yet others will offer warranties against breed specific issues. Not every breeder will warranty a puppy, but MOST need to give you a written (not their word) form saying that you can take said puppy to your vet within (xx days) for an exam and if puppy is found unhealthy can be returned or you can be compensated for any treatment cost.
- AKC breeder of Merit. Only means the breeders has more than 5 years in experience in the breed. Has earned titles on dogs they have breed and has agreed to do proper health testing but at this time the AKC does NOT follow up and make sure that health testing has been done SO CAUTION. AKC breeder of Merit status is merely a status! It does not indicate that that specific breeder is REPUTABLE OR RECOMMENDED!
- A Reputable breeder will offer suggestions on what to feed, supplements to use, grooming, training, etc. They will NOT require you to purchase a certain supplement or dog food in order for their warranties to remain in effect.