



## QUESTIONS FOR BUYERS TO ASK BREEDERS:

Please read the following and then click the button verifying that you understand your responsibility as a puppy buyer you will then be taken to the listings of breeders with puppies.

The breeders listing litters here have signed the ESC Breeder Requirements & Recommendations. Make careful inquiries before purchasing a pup from any breeder.

- **How are the pups exercised?** Are they allowed outside? Are they familiar with different surfaces? How have you introduced them to different experiences?
- **I've never owned an ES before. Can you help tell me if an ES would be right for my living situation, family, lifestyle, plans, etc.?** A good breeder will take the time to get to know you and your situation so they can judge the best fit of personality and energy level for you and your family.
- **What are the challenges associated with owning this breed?** English Shepherds do best in a home that knows how to provide good leadership and firm boundaries. As intelligent working dogs English Shepherds need to have physical and mental stimulation daily.
- **What can you tell me about your dog(s)?** What are their positive and negative traits? (Beware of the perfect dog!)
- **What made you choose this Sire and Dam for breeding?** Breeders should be able to explain their breeding reasons and goals.
- **How old are the sire and dam of this litter?** It is the recommendation of the ESC that a dog be a minimum of 2 years old before being bred. It takes time and maturity to evaluate of dog's temperament and working abilities. A dog isn't finished growing until 18-24 months of age. And further, OFA will not certify a dog's hip screening for hip dysplasia until the dog is 24 months old.
- **Can you help tell me if an ES would be right for my living situation, family, lifestyle, plans, etc.?** The type and temperament of the dog that is best for you situation is critical. There is a huge difference between a dog suited for suburban pet home and a working farm dog.
- **What are the challenges associated with owning this breed?** Because the English Shepherd is a working dog they may have more drive and energy than typical pet breeds. Discuss with the breeder what challenges you might see with your puppy.
- **How often do you breed?** How many litters has your dog had/sired? (Beware the breeder who breeds multiple yearly litters, repeatedly breeds on every heat or overuses their stud.)

- **What health screenings have you done on your dogs?** Results? (Look for things like OFA/PennHip scores, MDR1 status, CEA/PRA screening) Breeders should be able to give you a copy of the results of these tests. If the breeder refuses or only offers verbal evidence this is a huge red flag
- **Can you tell me about your dog's working traits and drive?** What kinds of activities have you done with her? (Depending on your own need, pick a pup from parents that demonstrate the skills/traits you want with preference given to actual experience vs. assessments. The [ESC working trait evaluation](#) can help in this regard).
- **Can you tell me what kinds of traits I might expect from these pups and in these lines that this pedigree contains?** (A breeder should definitely know the traits in their own dogs and most likely in the grandparents. Make sure claims of line traits are born out and based on personal experience, not conjecture)
- **Do you offer any kind of guarantee or ongoing support?** (Will the breeder take back a dog at any point or help to re-home it if the need arises? Will he remain accessible to help problem solve behaviors or network with others to help find answers he cannot provide? Is this spelled out clearly in a contract?)
- **How do you determine placement of pups?** (Beware of breeders who will make placement decisions based on color/sex/markings or who will make placements at a very early age as the character of a pup can take 6 weeks or longer to unfold.)
- **What do you feed you pups after weaning?** There is a huge variety and opinions on what to feed dogs from inexpensive dog food to premium dog food to raw diets.
- **When can pups leave for their new home?** (Pups should be at least 8 weeks of age before leaving. Up until that point they are learning important canine manners from their mother and litter mates. Pups without this foundation are often lacking in social skills and may demonstrate behavior problems later in life)
- **What do you do to socialize pups?** (Early socialization is **extremely** important. Pups should be exposed to a wide variety of people and experiences to insure a smooth transition into their new home. Failure to properly socialize puppies may result in future behavioral issues.
- **Where are the pups raised?** Again, socialization is extremely important. Pups raised with little to no human interaction may be extremely shy and fearful of humans.
- **Are you involved in any breed associations or breed rescue?** (Involvement in these groups often indicates a concern for the welfare and protection of the breed.)