

Do you think people should stop breeding animals?

Yes and no - certain people yes, all people no. If we spayed/neutered all dogs and cats, including the feral populations via trap, neuter and release programs - dogs and cats, which we know and love, would become extinct. That is an unrealistic, not to mention sad, alternative.

Responsible ownership and responsible breeding of purebred animals does not create pet overpopulation. In many countries throughout Europe, where animals are rarely spayed/neutered, there is minimal pet overpopulation. It helps that many of these countries have very strict breeding regulations and high taxes on dog ownership, which goes a long way towards encouraging folks to be responsible.

Irresponsible people, irresponsible breeding practices and greed is what creates pet overpopulation.

What types of things do you consider when you breed?

The purpose of responsible purebred breeding is to never do harm to a breed while leaving the breed better for future generations. So before I ever consider breeding, I am first proving my potential breeding stock. By proving I mean I attend American Kennel Club (AKC) conformation shows to have judges evaluate my dogs to see how they conform to the breed standard. Via this judging my dogs go on to earn their AKC Breed Championship title, thus validating my small breeding program.

Wikipedia defines Breed Standard as *"a set of guidelines which is used to ensure that the animals produced by a breeder or breeding facility conform to the specifics of the standardized breed."*

Breed standards are devised by breed associations or breed clubs, not by individuals, and are written to reflect the use or purpose of the species and breed of the animal. Breed standards help define the ideal animal of a breed and provide goals for breeders in improving stock. In essence a breed standard is a blueprint for an animal fit for the function it was bred - i.e. herding, tracking etc. "

I then prove my breeds function by showcasing my dogs in a variety of canine sports. By the time my dogs are bred, if they are bred and not all are (have only had three litters in over 20 years) they have multiple titles in a variety of venues. Add to that vigorous health screenings and clearances, all of which cost responsible breeders tens of thousands of dollars over the life of the dog. I then look for a mate, whom I feel will make positive conformation, health and temperament contributions to the ensuing offspring.

How much money do you spend, are the pets vaccinated?

Puppies leave my home at 10 weeks of age. They will have had their first set of vaccinations, will be microchipped, will be DNA tested for breed specific health issues, will have had their eyes examined by a Board Certified Ophthalmologist and will have specific feeding, vaccination, and socialization/training guidelines to help ensure the healthiest start with their new owner. Add to that a lifelong breed and behavior resource at their fingertips - namely me - if they want it.

Champion stud fees can run between \$800-\$1000 dollars. If the stud lives in another state, the cost to fly the bitch to him or fly the stud to the bitch can cost between \$500-\$1000 dollars. If that's not feasible, the costs of artificial insemination can easily run between \$500-\$1500 dollars which does NOT include the stud fee as noted above. The DNA health tests alone will be about \$150 per pup! Add everything together and we're looking at an expensive, albeit responsible, endeavor. Responsible breeders do NOT make money, the most we hope for is to not lose money or not lose a lot of money while we maintain the integrity of our chosen breed and find loving homes for our pups.

What kind of things should one consider if they want to start breeding?

First and foremost, ask what the motivating factor is. If it's to make a quick buck or let the children experience the miracle of birth, think again. If done responsibly, breeders will not make money (see above) and there are numerous videos online that can help educate ones children. If one is adamant their child must experience firsthand the miracle of life by irresponsibly breeding two dogs together just for the sake of education, then I would strongly recommend the children get a firsthand lesson on what irresponsible breeding creates - pet overpopulation and resulting euthanasia.

If folks want to do it right (and responsibly) then I suggest they find a mentor in their chosen breed and become a student of the breed first. After a few years of earnest study, invest in the best bitch possible, prove her form (conformation) and function (as stated above) then pick the most complimentary male that will produce offspring better than its parents, thus doing no harm and leaving the breed better for future generations.

Why do you breed when there is an over population at shelters?

Responsible purebred breeders are not the problem. We have waiting lists of interested people prior to breeding, we sell our pups on spay/neuter contracts, on limited AKC registration (offspring from dogs with limited AKC registrations cannot be AKC registered. The AKC is the oldest reputable purebred registry). We thoroughly vet potential owners and are very particular who gets to purchase one of our dogs. We also mandate "first right of refusal" which means if at any time during the life of the dog the owner cannot keep it, as the breeder we must be given the first opportunity to rescue and re-home the animal. Responsible breeders NEVER knowingly allow any of their dogs to ever end up in a shelter situation.

Purebred dogs make up a small percentage of the dogs in shelters. Most purebred clubs have purebred rescue organizations that work with shelters to get their breed (and oftentimes any mixes that look like their breed) out of shelters, into foster care and eventually adopted.

Per the AKC: "There are many special benefits to owning a purebred. At the top of the list are matters of predictability and reliability. Purebred dogs are the result of a long process of selective breeding for specific physical attributes and temperaments. When you buy a purebred puppy you know what to expect as far as size, amount and type of coat, and temperament."

I love my chosen breed and I want to see my breed continue onwards forever, if possible. I responsibly breed as defined above, as do others, to ensure their chosen breed continues to have a viable, responsible and healthful future.