



# Puppy Mills? Unethical Breeders?

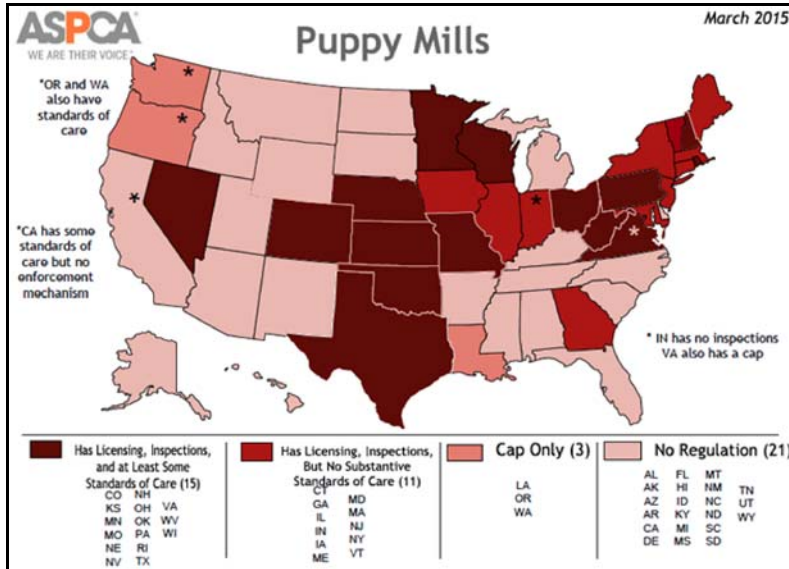
## How Can You Tell Them Apart From the Respectable & Ethical Breeders?

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Let me start by saying that what I am writing in this article is just my opinion and I know everyone has an opinion. It's like the old joke—the only thing two Rottweiler breeders can agree on is what the third breeder is doing wrong. However, listen to all three of the Rottweiler breeders in the joke and then use your own common sense and some research to form your own opinion.

It would seem with the explosion of the world wide web, and the instant experts who know everything after a owning a Rottweiler for a year or two, that finding a competent, honest, and reputable breed to get a good quality Rottweiler is like trying to run one of those crazy obstacle courses we see on tv. That's why I say to the new and even experienced Rottweiler person looking for a puppy—trust your intuition and use your common sense.

I hope I can help with some ideas and things to think about when you are looking for your Rottweiler puppy. Many Rottweiler breeders will do or say whatever they think you want to hear so they can sell you a puppy. Be careful and never be in a hurry to buy a pup—there will always be other great pups.

What should you look for to begin with? Look for excellent Rottweilers; but, also look for an excellent breeder. What I mean by “excellent” is not the breeder with the most wins, show titles or working titles. Look for a breeder who is excellent at helping and teaching you about their breeding program and the Rottweiler in general.

Also, you need to learn as much as you can on your own about Rottweilers—breeding them, training them and living with them. There are a lot of books on the market and they are a great resource so read as many as you can. Some are written by very knowledgeable people and some are written by book companies and you should be able to see the difference fairly fast. But, as a teacher, I recommend that new people to the Rottweiler read as many books on the Rottweiler as they can.

Talk to breeders and ask some questions.

Find out how long the breeder has been a Rottweiler breeder. While most new people ask about how many of the breeder's pups have been titled, you should ask how many pups have had to be replaced. Ask for some previous puppy buyer's names and phone numbers. You don't need a lot—two or three will do as it will give you an idea on what type of breeder you are speaking with on how the breeder responds to you. Excellent breeders will gladly give you two or three names and phone numbers.

Also, ask you breeder about their puppy contract and make sure you understand it.





Many puppy contracts have guarantees that are honestly worthless. For example, the breeder says they have a hip guarantee in their puppy contract. When you read it you think this is great but in reality it is written to never require the breeder to stand behind his pup. Many contracts say they will replace the pup if it has crippling hip dysplasia. But what is crippling hip dysplasia? The dog can't walk? The dog can't run? The dog limps? Do you see what I mean?

Also, be careful of the meaningless claims that sound great but truly say nothing of substance. Following are some examples that I pulled off of several different websites of Rottweiler breeders who have no health certifications on their dogs.

***"Rottweilers with superior intelligence, bone density, and massive bear heads."***

This claim proves nothing. There are no working or obedience titles associated with any of the breeding dogs at this particular kennel. How do they prove their dogs have "bone density" or "massive bear heads"?

***"When you purchase one of our Rottweilers, you have 30 days to keep the puppy. If you are not 100% happy with your purchase, simply return the puppy and you may choose one out of our next world class litters."***

I especially love this claim. The buyer has a whole 30 days to keep the puppy! I have to say that 30 days is ridiculous. Frying pans and pillows sold on late night tv have 90 to 120 day guarantees to see if you like them.

***"All our pups are imprinted from birth to be fearless, loving, loyal guardians."***

Here is another hollow claim, but, below they tell you how they do it.

***"All the pups are picked up and handled as soon as their eyes open around days 12 thru 14. At that point in their lives, they are introduced to people and loud noises such as vacuum cleaner, pots and pans, and other dogs as part of their daily life."***

I would like to see some scientific research on what vacuum cleaner and other loud noises do to a 12 to 14 day old pup because I don't think it will make them fearless, loving and loyal guardians.

***"When they reach 25 days, we slowly wean them from the mother. At day 28 they are eating a special diet of grain free kibble blended with chicken and sweet potatoes."***

So, at barely three weeks old, the pups are weaned and then within 3 days or so they are eating kibble with chicken and sweet potatoes? At four weeks of age, the pups barely have any teeth so, in my opinion, this is a wild, undocumented claim.

***"At four weeks, they are introduced and allowed to live outside with all our dogs and horses. The older dogs play with the pups 24/7 teaching them when to run to the fence line along with play wrestling to build their strength and confidence."***

So, at four weeks of age, which is 28 days old, the pups are not only eating dry dog food but they are living outside with other dogs and horses and the older dogs are teaching the four-week old pups to run a fence line? So, the claim here is that at four weeks of age, the pups are eating dry kibble when they barely have teeth, they are living outside with other dogs and horses and they are running fence lines.

I really want to meet the people who believe this claim because I have several bridges to sell them. This claim is one of the most outlandish bizarre claims that I have ever heard. At 4 week the pups haven't had any vaccinations yet and they should be inside in a warm and safe place learning to eat something other than mom's milk but they should still be getting some of mom's milk or puppy formula at 4 weeks of age.



***“At night they are brought in for socialization with us. They are put into an extra-large shipping kennel by the door to teach them comfort while in the kennel for traveling and safe keeping while with their owners. The kennel is kept by the door to teach them that every morning when they awake, they are let out to do their duties.”***

So, at four weeks of age, these puppy mill pups are crated at night to socialize and learn to go outside in the morning to potty is the claim. Now, in my almost 30 years of having Rottweilers, I have never known of or heard of a four-week old pup learning where to go to the bathroom. Plus, how can the pups be socialized in a crate? Again wild claims that may sound good to the person who has never owned a dog before but this is nothing but a used car sales pitch to me.

***“During weeks 4 through 7 they are introduced to noises such as leaf blowers, gunshots, motorcycles, sirens, water and inclement weather. When you put all these together we send you a Fearless puppy that enjoys everything in life, and always comes running when there are distractions and noises.”***

Again, bizarre claims that I think a bunch of drunken comedians had to have made up for a joke! With everything else this particular puppy mill breeder claims to do to these 4 week old pups, they are shooting guns near the pups, riding motorcycles near the pups and blowing sirens near the pups. At 4 week old? Yet this breeder says nothing about health certificates or titles on any of the puppies' parents.

Also, many of the puppy mill breeders use claims like pet or “BREEDER” quality—not pet or show quality—but, they have beautiful, almost professional pictures of their pups and still not a single health certificate or any title on their Rottweilers they are breeding. Some puppy mills will give a detailed description of where they live like, ***“Located in the country among the scenic hills and valleys of beautiful”*** wherever USA.

I also have to mention the wonderful catch phrase like ***“in good standing with the AKC”***, or a member of ***“Better Business Bureau”***, or they list their kennel name Best Rottweiler’s Kennel Inc. ***“LLC Limited Liability Corporation”***.

The puppy mills use every trick in the book to distract the puppy buyer from finding out they do not have any health checks or certifications done on their dogs. I have even know some people to contact these puppy mills and ask about hip x-rays or OFA certifications and they get rude answers and lied too. But, here is what I hope every puppy buyer does looking for a pup in the USA—copy the dogs' names listed on the puppy mills' webpage and put them in the OFA data base at <http://www.ofa.org/> If the dog cannot be found in the OFA data base, and if an AKC registered dog, it means the dog either failed the tests or else the tests were never done on the dog.

So what do you, as the puppy buyer do?

Ask questions! First, ask the breeder what their goal is in breeding Rottweilers. If the breeder says he/she is breeding pets, thank them for their time and move on to your next prospective breeder.

Hopefully, the breeder will have a specific goal for breeding a Rottweiler along the lines of breeding a top show or working dog. I have just randomly picked five different Rottweiler breeders from the AKC and German/European styles who have breeding goals listed on their website. Following are some of the things you want to hear from an ethical breeder.

1. ***“I am dedicated to the betterment and high standards of the Rottweiler breed. I am an AKC show and obedience breeder and have put AKC Championship and AKC Obedience titles on my dogs, including multiple AKC UD titles.”*** This kennel lists their titled Rottweilers and the health clearances with OFA numbers and pictures of the health certificates. I would recommend buying a pup from such a kennel.



**IS  
THIS  
ok with you?**

2. *"Our goal is for the Total Rottweiler. We strive for beauty, brains, temperament, and health. We show our dogs in many different conformation venues (AKC, CKC, UCI and German style). We are Code of Ethics breeder. Our dogs are all health tested and are of sound temperaments. We want to help educate people about this wonderful breed. The more we educate people, the better the breed will become."* This kennel's goal statement states what venues they are involved in and they list the health certificates their Rottweilers have and the titles they have also. They state what they are breeding for and why. With a breeder like this, it is easy to check them out and substantiate their claims. I would recommend buying a pup from such a kennel.
3. *"We have a history of breeding both top show prospects, working dogs and incredible family companions. Take time to look at our rich history of producing and importing some of the top Rottweilers in the world and providing the foundation stock for many other top kennels."* This breeder and kennel tells you to look at, what they have produced and imported, along with what they have done with show and working dogs who have also been family dogs. Well worth spending some time looking at their information. I would recommend buying a pup from such a kennel.
4. *"We are a Code of Ethics Rottweiler breeder. Our goal is to breed healthy, well-tempered, good looking, correct in type, and intelligent Rottweiler puppies. If you study our website, you will find information on ALL of the Rottweilers that we breed."* Here is a very clear and simple message that is overwhelmingly straightforward and has absolutely everything you need to know. They are a Code of Ethics breeder and they state their goal loud and clear—HEALTHY, SMART, CORRECT—and they tell you that you will find all of their claims backed up with information on all of their Rottweilers listed on their website. Nothing fancy or flowery but yet powerful and direct. I would recommend buying a pup from such a kennel.
5. *"We have a breeding program designed to have excellent working and excellent temperament combined with strict adherence to the Rottweiler's standard."* Here is another simple and direct goal focusing on working and temperament within the Rottweiler's standard. Personally, I like the simple and sweet ones. As a puppy buyer, the breeders should attract you with their lack of sales pitch. I would recommend buying a pup from such a kennel.

A prospective puppy buyer's second question to the breeder should be specific as to what health clearances the parents have and the puppy buyer should ask to see the health certificates. The reputable breeders will be more than happy to show you their health certificates on the Rottweilers. The puppy buyer should also learn what the different health certificates from the different groups mean too. OFA or ADRK or FCI will all have a different code for their passing hips and elbow along with how they report a genetic test such as the JLPP results. Puppy Mills may have one or maybe two of their dogs done but they won't have them done for every breeding dog they have. I will bet that when questioned, they will get defensive and try to change the subject.

The third question a puppy buyer should ask is what titles do the parents and grandparents have. Rottweilers do not need titles to be bred but this goes back to why is the breeder breeding the Rottweilers they are? Are mom, dad or one of the grandparents a really nice champion or a high level working dog? Puppy mills will be breeding untitled dogs to untitled dogs. Sometimes, there will be a good reason to breed an untitled dog to a titled dog because the pedigrees line up, or the untitled dog is almost titled. Again, this goes back to the breeder being able to explain why they are doing the particular breeding between the parents.

In my opinion, there are many more questions a puppy buyer should ask a breeder they are thinking of getting a puppy from but the three questions I listed are the most important. The puppy buyer should talk to the breeder asking questions on food, training and different activities the breeder has done with their dogs to gain a sense of what the breeder is all about. Breeders who have done some aspect of conformation or working will have a depth of knowledge that should be evident during your conversation with them. The breeder should be able to tell you some of their experiences with either AKC or European style of conformation showing. If the breeder is involved in the working aspect of Rottweilers then they should be able to tell you about their experiences in IPO, or AKC/CKC obedience, herding, agility, carting etc. or whatever aspect of working they are involved in. The Puppy Mill breeder won't be able to tell you about their experiences with some part of the dog sport because all they are doing is breeding puppies to be sold.

You should also expect as a puppy buyer to be asked questions yourself. A reputable breeder will ask the puppy buyer questions determining what are the puppy buyer's plans with the puppy, where will the puppy be living (in the house, outside in a run, tied up to the dog house in the yard), and the puppy buyer's experiences with Rottweilers and dogs in general. Some of the responsible and ethical breeders may even ask for references. The Puppy Mill breeder will only ask about your money and will the check clear the bank.

I hope this helps answers the question of what is a Puppy Mill breeder and how to tell this sort of breeder from the responsible and ethical breeder.

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