Reader Beware

The internet is an awesome place to look for information on any given topic. It is an amazing source for prospective purchasers of just about any item. I took the time, this summer, to visit many websites that are offering their kennels as the place to purchase your new German Shepherd puppy. While I was impressed in some instances, I was also dismayed at the mis-information, partial truths and the “whatever you want we breed” statements that I read. It appalls me to see some breeders taking advantage of the less than knowledgeable public. I will try to talk about some red flags that you need to watch for when you decide to purchase a puppy and are checking out websites.

One word that irritates me is “rare”. This could refer to rare colours, rare coats, rare size. When I see the word rare in relation to our beloved German Shepherd Dog then I immediately know that this breeder is out to sell pups. They are not interested in preserving the breed, improving the breed or following the German Shepherd Dog standard. They are $$$ driven. Period.

The key to colour is this line from the CKC standard……Generally speaking, strong, rich colours are to be preferred, with definite pigmentation and without the appearance of a washed out colour. White dogs are not desirable and are to be disqualified if showing albino characteristics.

Coats- The outer coat should be as dense as possible, hair straight, harsh and lying close to the body. A slightly wavy outer coat, often of wiry texture is equally permissible. Faults in coat include complete lack of any undercoat, soft, silky or too long outer coat and curly or open coat.

Size- The ideal height for dogs (males) is 25 inches (64cm), and for bitches, 23 inches (58 cm) at the shoulder. The working value of dogs above or below the indicated heights is proportionally lessened, although variations of an inch (3cm) above or below the ideal height are acceptable, while greater variations must be considered as faults. Weights of dogs (males) of desirable size in proper flesh and condition average between 75-85 pounds (34-39 kg); and of bitches, between 60 and 70 pounds (27 and 32 kg).

All the bold print is mine as I quote from the CKC standard. If your German Shepherd is well outside these guidelines, then you do not have a good representative of the breed. You probably have an awesome dog but not within the guidelines for breeding. Good breeders do not deliberately put faults in their breeding program and they do not advertise dogs with faults as rare and charge exorbitant prices for them. You, as the public, are being misled.

King Shepherds and Shiloh Shepherds, are not German Shepherds. For the most part a general definition of what they are is oversized dogs that are bred to oversized bitches to produce large dogs.

I went to another very interesting Canadian website that took the time to compare German bloodline dogs with the American/Canadian bloodline dogs. Some points were well taken. There are poor dogs from both types of bloodlines and there are good dogs as well.
However, the breeder didn’t explain that she was comparing German working line shepherds to American/Canadian show dog bloodlines. The website was misleading as it was stated that these “German” dogs were tough, very assertive and didn’t make good pets so if you are buying a shepherd look for the American/Canadian lines that are excellent to have as a companion. Whoa! Let’s not mislead the public again.

We could, for arguments sake, state that there are German working lines and German Show lines. This is very simplistic but I’m trying to write for the general public to try to clarify for them the difference. In general, a German working line shepherd, may not be an entry level dog for the first time shepherd owner. They have been bred to work. They have excellent temperaments and they can make a super companion / pet in the right hands. They have a lot of drive and they want to do something. They can’t lie around on your couch all day and then go out in the back yard to relieve themselves and come back in to “veg”. This would not be fair to the dog and it certainly would not make a great house dog.

German show dog lines are bred for more general use. They do work and they do live in the house with their families and they can be the very best representatives of the breed world wide. They are large boned and solid and have very deep pigment (colours). They have excellent temperaments. They live with families, go to dog shows, compete in dog activities and sometimes “veg” on the bed or couch. So, be careful when you read comments from breeders who are trying to steer you to the type of dog they are breeding. The aforementioned breeder is selling American/Canadian bred puppies. That is a surprise, isn’t it?

Guarantees- “I will replace your puppy “You simply send the pup you have back to me and then you will get a replacement.” Great guarantee! How many people would send back a puppy that they have come to love? This is a breeder loaded guarantee. Most breeders know that a family will not return a pup. Therefore they never have to replace it. They can truthfully point out that you did have the option but you chose to keep that dog. And other guarantees say that your pup will be replaced up to 2 years of age. So, too bad he only lives to be 3 or 4 years old You are on your own. You knew the guarantee and the breeder is off the hook.

Read between the lines and sort out the good, caring breeders from the ones who want to make money. It is always “Buyer Beware.”

For more GREAT Articles and information about our German Shepherd Dogs
Please visit our web site at

Contact us at 902-582-3637 or via E-Mail