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A GOOD BREEDER: HOW TO SELECT ONE. HOW TO BECOME ONE.

A) Breeder Preparation:

- 1) Have knowledge of the breed and have the goal of enhancing the breed with this particular sire and dam being considered for breeding purposes. Know how to read and use pedigrees
- 2) Understand “Form follows Function”, the breed standard and gait/structure, and use this information in selection of breeding pairs.
- 3) Breed one breed (or two at the very most).
- 4) Compete – or be preparing to compete – in at least one venue – conformation, obedience, agility, tracking, field. Reason: the breeder who competes in organized activities is known by others, has a reputation to uphold and is not “working” in a vacuum. The breeder who does not participate is deprived of the opportunity to exchange information.
- 5) Is a member of the local breed club and the national parent club. Reason: this indicates depth of involvement and exposure to other points of view. Local breed club membership implies the breeder participates in the planning and implementation of activities (Trials, Matches, Field events, etc) to benefit the breed. And as a measure of “Giving Back” to the breed.

B) Decision-making

- 1) Considers 3-5 generation pedigrees and is able to articulate why these particular dogs are being considered.
- 2) Considers temperament, breed type and the quality, soundness and current health of the breeding pair. Minimum age: two years.
- 3) Has obtained clearances:
 - a) Hip and Elbow (OFA and/or PennHip)
 - b) Heart Clearance by a Board-certified Cardiologist after the age of 1 year.
 - c) Eyes examined annually by a Board-certified Ophthalmologist and are free of hereditary cataracts, PRA and other eye anomalies.
- 4) Number of litters per year should not be determined by a fixed number but rather by the ability of the breeder to adequately care for the puppies including socialization and stimulation as described below and by the market demand for the puppies. Generally speaking, one litter at a time is all that can be properly handled.
- 5) Does not breed a female until mature, at least until age 2 when all necessary clearances can be obtained. Reproduction Specialists may recommend “back-to-back” breedings (breeding at consecutive estrus cycles) in the case of a young, healthy female that has made a full recovery after the most recent pregnancy, delivery and nursing. Veterinarians should be consulted regarding spaying and the timing of spaying to reduce the risks of infections.
- 6) Have the resources – time and money – to do this well (or not at all) to include dealing with emergencies should they arise.

C) Puppy Raising:

- 1) Ideally puppy raising is done in the home and not in a barn or kennel. We do note however that some kennel designs can resemble a home environment and meet the socialization and stimulation expectations described below. Not ideal but could be accepted.
Note: GRCA says “Goldens are very people-oriented and aren’t happy alone in a kennel” Carrying this thought further, mom and puppies do better in the home during this sensitive time.
- 2) Provide very clean environment.
- 3) Does not allow puppies to leave mom and littermates until at least 7 weeks of age.
- 4) Provides stimulation and socialization including handling, exposure to children, sounds and physical development and confidence building activities. Continually improves skills and materials in this regard through discussion with other breeders, independent study, seminars, etc.

D) Selection of where the puppies will go.

- 1) Learn about the interested puppy buyer – their interests, accommodations, provision for exercise including yard fencing, children, number of hours left alone, intents to train including Puppy Socialization and Obedience, understanding of house training, “part of the family” or an “outside” dog, desires to breed or show. We suggest a standardized application as a launch for the gathering of this information.
- 2) Expect the entire family to meet the puppies and observe interactions.
- 3) Suggest family take the “Compatibility Profile” on www.grca.org. (“Is this the breed for you?”)
- 4) Be able and willing to discuss Golden Retriever Rescue as an alternative.
- 5) Never sell to a pet store or to make a puppy available as a raffle prize or auction item.

E) Breeder responsibilities to buyers.

- 1) Commit to taking the dog back at any point in the dog’s life
- 2) Design and use a clear contract. All expectation should be spelled out. We know that terms of sale vary and the contract should carefully define that including spay/neuter expectations, Limited Registration, any Co-ownership, any understanding about showing (Conformation)
- 3) Provide references including those of a veterinarian.
- 4) Provide copies of all health clearances and AKC registration information.
- 5) Provide feeding, training and care information and offer to be a source of guidance throughout the dog’s life. Encourages puppy buyers to stay in communication so that assistance can be offered with any training, grooming or health issue that may arise.