



Screening Potential Puppy Buyers

One of the most difficult aspects of breeding is finding that “forever home” for our pups. When a breeder chooses to produce a litter, that breeder is the sole reason for the very existence of those puppies. Consequently, responsible breeders are obliged to insure their puppies are provided with adequate care for the duration of the puppies’ lifetime.

Conscientious breeders screen prospective puppy buyers to be certain that their puppies go to loving, caring and forever homes. Careful screening can make the difference of a successful placement of a Weimaraner puppy, or having a pup returned due to inappropriate expectations, or even worse, having a pup wind up being left at a shelter.

There are a myriad of questions that can and should be asked of the prospective puppy buyer. First and foremost is “Why do you want to own a Weimaraner?” We are all aware that our chosen breed is not the “everyman” breed, and that it takes a unique and committed family to successfully raise a Weimaraner.

We’ve found that a comprehensive questionnaire completed either online or via snail mail is a good way to begin. Some sample questions are included herein. Some of these questions may not seem necessary, but they may lead to a discussion that can be useful in deciding if the family can be a forever home.

The answers to some questions can immediately send up red flags. For instance; if the answer to the

question, “what qualities would you not like in your Weimaraner?” is “Barking”...well, then you know right off, this is not a candidate for a Weimaraner. Do not hesitate to ask personal questions. Most informed puppy buyers have come to expect this type of interview from reputable breeders. This is one of the processes which separate us from the back yard and puppy mill breeders. Following up with a telephone interview is a good way to clarify or further develop information, and to “get a feel” for an individual. If geography permits, a visit by the entire family is the next step. Be sure to insist that all family members visit, (and we know who they are, since that has been determined by our questionnaire). Sometimes things don’t match up and you’ve found out ahead of time that a Weimaraner would not be a good fit.

If geography does not permit a visit, request references from a veterinarian or someone whose opinion will hold weight. An inquiry to the local Weimaraner club may provide you with a local contact that may be able to personally interview the prospective owner.

Hobby/show breeders usually breed infrequently, and put a great deal of time, effort, expense and love into their puppies. Most will spare no effort to provide our pups with the best homes possible. However, circumstances beyond any control can sometimes develop, and a previously determined “forever” home doesn’t turn out. In these cases, it is our personal responsibility and duty to

rehome these pups with the same effort we used initially.

Ensure that you have an enforceable contract. A good contract can make all the difference in whether or not that puppy gets to come home if necessary. Once a breeder sells a dog, it becomes the property of the owner. You cannot tell someone what they can or cannot do with their own property. You can, however, sue for "breach of contract" if your contract is worded correctly. (Please refer to the BEC column in the July 2007 *Weimaraner Magazine* written by Linda C. Garrett and Mary Ann Hall, Esqs.)

Questions that the breeder should ask:
Are you familiar with Weimaraners?
What is it about the breed that makes you want one? What do you expect the activity level to be (very high, high, normal, low)? What qualities are you looking for in a dog?

Have you familiarized yourself with the characteristics, temperament and health related problems that are common in the Weimaraner?

Have you previously owned a Weimaraner? How many other dogs have you owned? What animals are now present in your home?

How long did your last dog live? What were the circumstances of its death?

Have you ever had to return a dog to the breeder, take it to a shelter, give it away or euthanize it? Explain.

Do you want a puppy; male or female, or would you be interested in an older puppy or dog? Are you willing to spay/neuter? If not, why?

Number of adults in your family?
Number of children and their ages?

Does anyone in your household have allergies to dogs?

How long have you lived at this address? Are you planning on moving in the next year?

How do you plan to meet your dog's exercise requirements?

Do you have a fenced yard? What size, height and type?

Who will be the primary caregiver?

Where will the puppy be kept during the day, at night and during family vacations?

Is anyone home during the day? How many hours on average will the puppy be left alone? Is someone available to feed and exercise the puppy during the day?

How many hours a day will the puppy be kept outside? How will the puppy be confined when it is outside?

Are you familiar with dog crates and their use in training?

Have you ever housetrained a dog? Will you be attending any training classes?

Are you interested in competition or performance events (show, hunting, obedience, agility, tracking etc.)?

Do you intend to breed the dog?

Do you understand the difference between a limited registration and a full registration?

Are you willing to stay in contact with the breeder for the life of the dog and provide updates?

What will happen to the dog in the event of a divorce or death?

Are you interested in joining or learning about the Weimaraner Club of America and local Weimaraner Clubs?

Ask for references - one of which should be their veterinarian.

Do you know where your puppies are?