

Thinking About Becoming a Breeder?

Breeding dogs that grow up to be excellent companions takes a special commitment. A good breeder is interested in individual dog and breed welfare above ALL other personal goals. The decision to become a conscientious breeder starts when you decide where to get your dog. When breeding dogs, the people you decide to work with as advisors, as mentors and as partners can have a significant impact on the quality of dogs produced. A breeder's best reward is producing dogs that enrich people's lives.

Starting with a good dog is the first step.

How can you tell if the puppy you are buying is likely to grow into a suitable breeding dog?

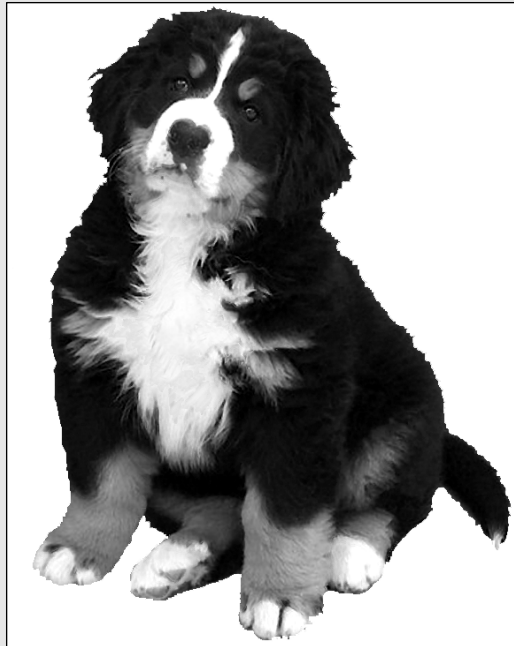
- Begin by working with a breeder who is committed to the breed and has a well thought out breeding program.
- Understand that every breeder places emphasis on different qualities and traits possessed by dogs. Breed type & conformation, working ability, character, trainability, temperament, movement, structure and health are all important aspects of a good dog. Learning which of these characteristics and traits a breeder places emphasis on will be a strong indicator of the kind of traits a puppy from that breeder will be likely to produce.
- A breeder should be able to explain to you, in detail, the structure, breed type and temperament of a puppy deemed to be of breeding potential.

Sometimes things don't pan out.

- Realize that not every promising 8 -10 week old Berner pup will grow into a dog that can or should be used for breeding – It is not until pups reach adulthood that their temperaments and orthopedic status including hips, elbows and eyes as well as other traits and heritable health conditions can be assessed.
- Some Bernese have reproductive problems. Bitches may not breed naturally, require artificial insemination; may fail to conceive, carry litters to full term, or require c-sections. Males may not breed due to lack of libido or may develop prostate problems which can render the dog temporarily or permanently infertile.

Time & Effort

- Breeders should make every effort to define for themselves and others their priorities purpose for breeding Bernese Mountain Dogs.
- Every breeding dog came from a family of dogs. Knowledge of and understanding all assessable traits in families of Bernese, in addition to accurate assessment of phenotypic and genotypic traits possessed by individual dogs chosen for breeding is critical.
- Open, honest sharing of facts related to temperament, structure, and health is an essential part of any conscientious breeder's approach.
- Breeders engaged in perpetuating any breed should take their responsibility seriously. The decision to produce offspring from a carefully selected pair requires that both the breeder and the stud dog owner make every effort to ensure that progeny will be good examples of the breed.
- Breeders should make their best effort to select homes for their puppies so that the dogs will live happy lives with people who appreciate their value and can provide the necessities for the puppy to develop and maintain a healthy life.



In order to breed the best dogs possible – all dogs used for breeding

- Should undergo genetic screening for hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, inherited eye disorders and other hereditary health conditions that have occurred in families of dogs. Genetic test results should be taken into consideration when determining the breeding suitability of individual dogs as well as mating pairs. The goal is to produce pups that have the greatest chance to live a normal, healthy life.
- Should be examples of the breed that possess characteristics described in the AKC or FCI Breed Standard.
- Should be in excellent health.
- Should be granted AKC full registration privileges or other legitimate registry breeding privileges.

Commitment to puppies

- 1) Puppies should be carefully evaluated and placed by breeders.
- 2) Puppies placed in homes where the owner plans to eventually use the dog for breeding purposes should be assessed for their capability of making a positive contribution to the gene pool.
- 3) Breeders placing a dog as breeding stock must assume the responsibility for ensuring that the owner is committed to applying standards and management practices that will protect individual dogs and the breed as a whole.
- 4) Puppies evaluated and deemed to lack in breed characteristics sufficient to be categorized as potential breeding stock should be sold on AKC Limited Registration and requirement to spay/neuter.
- 5) Every effort should be made when placing a puppy or adult Bernese to ensure that the prospective owner's home and management of the dog will be adequate to meet the dogs needs and that the dog will not become a public nuisance or a public burden.

Puppies should be

- Offered optimal conditions which are conducive to their survival and development from conception until the time they are ready to be placed.
- Kept in quarters that are warm, clean and dry and given access to a safe area outdoors (weather permitting) after the age of 5 - 6 weeks.
- Offered good nutrition in order to ensure proper development.
- Offered a stimulating environment with ample human interaction, gentle handling and attention.
- Should be examined by a veterinarian prior to placement and have received vaccines and a fecal check.

Recommended reading

Genetics of the Dog by Malcolm B. Willis

Practical Genetics for Dog Breeders

by Malcolm B. Willis

Control of Canine Genetic Diseases

(Padgett D.V.M.)

The Joy of Breeding Your Own Show Dog

by Ann Seranne

Canine Reproduction: The Breeder's Guide

by Phyllis A. Holst

Canine and Feline Endocrinology and Reproduction

by Edward C. Feldman and Richard W. Nelson

Dog Locomotion and Gait Analysis

by Curtis M. Brown

K-9 Structure & Terminology

by Edward M. Gilbert Jr. & Thelma R. Brown

Dogsteps: A New Look by Rachel Elliott

Books or cd's/dvd's

Your Athletic Dog Video & Workbook

by Suzanne Clothier

The Dog in Action by McDowell Lyon

Canine Cineradiography DVD

by Rachel Page Elliott



Financial Considerations

If you want to become a breeder, please review this generalized cost breakdown (remember, these figures are estimates and costs vary depending on the veterinary practice you use and on the locale)

Preliminary Cost for Stud or Bitch

Elbow & hip radiographs	\$200.00 - \$500.00
Application to OFA/registry	\$40.00- \$75.00
Ophthalmologist exam (eyes)	\$50.00 (clinic rate)
AKC Championship	\$500.00 - \$3000.00
DNA testing	\$40.00
Other genetic testing	\$100.00 >

Cost per litter

Canine brucellosis test	\$30.00 - \$45.00
Vaginal and fecal cultures	\$60.00 - \$150.00
Progesterone testing	\$45.00 - \$250.00
Artificial insemination	\$50.00 - \$90.00 per
Stud fee	\$1000.00 >
Transportation to stud	\$50.00 >
Palpation or ultrasound	\$75.00 - \$150.00
Prenatal supplements, food	\$50.00 - \$100.00
AKC Litter Registration Fee	\$25.00 + \$2.00/pup

Preliminary litter supplies

Whelping box and supplies	\$200.00 +
Postage, pedigrees, forms	\$50.00 - \$150.00
Puppy kits, collars, crates, delivery	\$50.00 - \$200.00

Litter supplies con't.

Puppy food (for 5 weeks)	\$50.00 - \$250.00 (depends on litter size)
Paper towels, laundry soap, cleaners, towels	\$100.00 >
Toys	\$25.00 - \$100.00

Whelping costs

Cesarean section	\$350.00 - \$3000.00
Medications	\$50.00 >
Puppy & dam vet exams	\$100.00 - \$400.00
Dew Claw removal	\$50.00 - \$200.00
Puppy shots and worm medications	\$100.00 - \$300.00
Health certificates for pups	\$25.00 > (per)

Non – Monetary costs

Missing work, worry about dam, losing puppies, time spent caring for pups, time spent going to vet, time spent on phone calls, written correspondence and on home visits, or in your home visits by prospective owners.

Being a good dog breeder means getting involved with other Bernese fanciers.

Breeding good dogs is both an art and a science. It requires patience and good communication skills. Breeding dogs should ideally be undertaken by breed enthusiasts who understand and appreciate a breed's unique qualities. Breeders who are part of a community can more accurately assess suitability of their own dogs and have a better understanding of a breed's ever changing strengths and weaknesses.

Breeding good dogs requires thought, common sense and is hard work. The lives that a breeder chooses to bring into the world are precious. Ensuring a lifetime of well being for dogs from a breeding program is part of a conscientious breeder's job.