

# NEW ADDITION TO THE FAMILY?

## *Take Your Time and Do Your Homework!*

This document reflects expertise from the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, the Canadian Kennel Club and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada. Together they constitute the National Companion Animal Coalition (NCAC), which was created in 1996 to promote socially responsible pet ownership and enhance the health and well-being of companion animals.

Additional input was provided by the following agencies on this particular project: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Dogs in Canada magazine.

**CONGRATULATIONS!** You are thinking of inviting a dog into your home as part of your family. A dog can bring much happiness and companionship for many years and the choice of a dog is an important one.

**WE URGE YOU TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING BEFORE MAKING THIS DECISION :**

## *What Type of Dog Best Suits Your Lifestyle?*

- Different breeds, sizes, and temperaments of dogs will influence the type of care and amount of exercise required. Be honest about your ability to provide an appropriate environment for the type of dog that you are considering.
- Where do you wish to obtain your dog, and is it a reputable source?
- Before deciding on a dog, have you obtained information regarding health, genetic, and behavioural problems that may impact its well-being?
- Do not be tempted to purchase a dog impulsively. Take your time, and do your homework.
- The NCAC developed this document to address the issue of puppy mills. You may also want to consult the member organizations\* for additional information.
- When you are ready to welcome your dog into your home, use this Check List to assist you in your decision.

\*The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association [www.animalhealthcare.ca](http://www.animalhealthcare.ca); The Canadian Kennel Club [www.ckc.ca](http://www.ckc.ca); The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada (PIJAC Canada) [www.pijaccanada.com](http://www.pijaccanada.com); The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies [www.cfhs.ca](http://www.cfhs.ca).

## *What is a Puppy Mill?*

### **AVOID PURCHASING A DOG FROM A PUPPY MILL**

A **puppy mill** is defined by NCAC as a high-volume, sub-standard dog breeding operation, which sells purebred or mixed breed dogs, to unsuspecting buyers. Some of the characteristics common to puppy mills are:

- Sub-standard health and/or environmental issues;
- Sub-standard animal care, treatment, and/or socialization;
- Sub-standard breeding practices which lead to genetic defects or hereditary disorders;
- Erroneous or falsified certificates of registration, pedigrees, and/or genetic background.

*Note: These conditions may also exist in small volume or single-breed establishments.*



**National Companion Animal Coalition (NCAC)**  
**CHECK LIST FOR ACQUIRING A DOG**

**You should be able to check “yes” to all boxes!**

**ASSESSMENT OF THE FACILITY/ENVIRONMENT**

***A clean and sanitary environment fosters healthy dogs.***

- Have you been allowed access to the facilities where the dogs are housed?
- Are food and water available in the dogs' environment?
- Are references supplied upon request?
- Have you been asked pertinent questions to ensure the compatibility of you (the buyer) and the dog?
- In the case of a breeding establishment, is the mother (dam) on the premises and available for you to see?

**HEALTH ISSUES AND PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE DOG**

***Healthy well-socialized puppies have an active, open and friendly disposition.***

***Avoid puppies that are overly shy and fearful.***

- Do the dogs have good dispositions?
- Do the dogs appear to be in good health?  
Below are some of the symptoms that may be of concern:
  - Thin body condition
  - Lethargy
  - Cough
  - Pot-belly
  - Diarrhea or stained hair around the anus
  - Discharge from the eyes or nose
- Are copies of health, vaccination certificates and documentation of the dog's last visit to the veterinarian available for you to see?
- In addition to the above, when dealing with a breeder, is documentation available confirming formal health clearances for both parents? (Such information is required to reduce the likelihood of transmissible diseases and genetic disorders).

**ISSUES AT THE TIME OF SALE**

***Buyer beware! Proper documentation protects you and your dog.***

Will you be provided with a bill of sale listing:

- Date of purchase?
- Names of the buyer and seller?
- Description of dog?
- Purchase price?

***In the case of a purebred dog, will you receive:***

- A bill of sale stating that the dog is a pure bred and naming the breed?
- Confirmation the dog has been uniquely identified by microchip or tattoo?
- Confirmation of a valid certificate of registration\* of the parents, litter (when applicable) and dog that you are acquiring?
- The total purchase price of the dog?

***Will you be provided with a written guarantee that lists:***

- Specific details of pet return or compensation arrangements in the event of a health problem / illness and any time frame that apply?
- What is expected of the buyer (i.e. exam by a veterinarian within a certain time frame)?

\*In Canada, a valid registration certificate may be issued by a breed association recognized under the Animal Pedigree Act, including the Canadian Kennel Club, Canadian Border Collie Association, Canine Federation of Canada, Working Canine Association of Canada and the Canadian Livestock Records Corporation.