



Ten Questions to Ask Breeders

Here are the top 10 questions to ask any Border Collie breeder you're considering, along with what a responsible, reputable answer looks like for each.

1. What health tests have the parents had, and can I see the documentation?

Good Answer: The breeder provides documentation (not just verbal claims) for hip/eye clearances (e.g., Orthopedic Foundation for Animals for hips and elbows or PENN hip exams, DNA tests for things like Collie Eye Anomaly, and any other breed-relevant tests), with certificates or test results for both parents. Frequently these are posted on the breeders' website or they should be available on request.

2. Where are the puppies raised, and can I visit to see the environment?

Good Answer: Puppies are raised in a clean, safe, social environment often in the breeder's home or a well-kept kennel and the breeder welcomes you to visit and meet the whole litter and at least the dam (mother). It is also acceptable for the breeder to let you visit, but protect the puppies by allowing entry to only a specific controlled area if the breeder is concerned about a communicable disease being brought into the kennel area by visitors.

3. What is the temperament of both parents?

Good Answer: The breeder knows both parents well, describes their work, sport, or family temperament in detail, and can discuss how they match the puppies to your needs.

4. Is there a written contract or health guarantee?

Good Answer: The breeder has a clear contract and health guarantee outlining return policy, health expectations, and responsibilities for both parties; this shows transparency and long-term involvement.

5. Do you have references from previous puppy buyers?

Good Answer: The breeder is willing to provide contact information for prior buyers, and you can verify previous healthy, happy placements; they are open and proud of their track record.

6. What is your experience and philosophy in breeding Border Collies?

Good Answer: The breeder has years of experience, can articulate their breeding priorities (working ability, temperament, health), and is involved in breed clubs and activities. Many excellent breeders have taken courses on breeding, whelping and puppy temperament.

7. What support do you provide to buyers after they take the puppy home?

Good Answer: The breeder offers ongoing help with training, health advice, and will take the puppy back or help rehome it if necessary, showing a lifetime commitment.

8. Can I meet the dam and, if possible, the sire?

Good Answer: The breeder is happy for you to meet the dam (who should be on site) and, if possible, the sire, and both are well adjusted, healthy, and socialized. It is not always possible to enter the whelping area based on disease transmission potential and the disruption of having a stranger in the immediate whelping area. It is perfectly appropriate for the breeder to allow you to visit the Dam on the property if best practice is followed to reduce disease transmission and overstimulation of the Dam and puppies.

9. How do you socialize the puppies and prepare them for their new homes?

Good Answer: Puppies are exposed to various sights, sounds, people, children, and gentle handling; efforts made toward crate or potty training are described in detail.

10. Will you take back the dog if I cannot keep it at any point?

Good Answer: A truly reputable breeder will always say yes, no matter the dog's age, and often stipulates this in the sales contract, showing their commitment to every puppy they produce.

Asking these questions and expecting thoughtful, reasonable answers protects both you and your future pup, ensuring you're starting off with a responsible, caring breeder and guaranteeing your new puppy the best start possible!

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