**Types of Breeders Where Dogs May Be Obtained**

*You have heard the terms…do you know what they are?*

**REPUTABLE BREEDER**  
There are three Labrador Retriever Clubs in Southern California. The San Diego Labrador Retriever Club, The High Desert Labrador Retriever Club of California, and the Labrador Retriever Club of Southern California. Each has established their own guidelines for membership responsibilities. Each of those guidelines may differ in [Appearance](http://www.hdlrc.com/wp-admin/themes.php)one respect or another, but the basic framework is the same. Being a member of a breed club does not guarantee that an individual is reputable, but it does show that the person is being, at the very least, exposed to a continual teaching process through the club newsletters, and club events. Ask anyone you contact, to what, if any, clubs do they belong to. This will at least give you some very basic information about the breeder you speak to.

**BACK YARD BREEDER**  
This type of breeder is a private person, who most likely bought a puppy from someone, and now wants to breed that dog for a variety of reasons…. all the wrong ones. If you hear the following reasons for breeding, this person is most likely a ‘Back Yard Breeder’ … “We bred her, because we want one just like her”, “We bred her, so that the children could experience the joys of birth” , “We bred her because we wanted to make our money back on the purchase of the dog”. Very often, these people own two dogs… the mother of the litter (Dam) and the father of the litter (Sire), and this is either the first of many breedings (every six months) between the two, or one of many litters these same two dogs have had. These people have little if any concept of the genetic problems in the breed, and when asked questions about the lines, or about genetics at all, they will have little to tell you. Their education in Labradors begins and ends in the one book they have on the breed, and they may boast a “Champion line”, meaning that there are Champions SOMEWHERE in the Pedigree (probably three or more generations back). They have little criteria by which they place their puppies, just wanting to be ‘rid’ of this now obnoxious litter.

The Chances of any one person owning just a few dogs, having the BEST stud dog for their bitch is very slim. Reputable breeders research pedigrees for a very long time, looking for the best possible breeding partner for their dog. If they did breed to their own dog, they will have sound reasoning for doing so. The reputable breeder is very knowledgeable about their pedigrees, lines of dogs, and the genetic flaws one can find in the breed.

When buying from a ‘back yard breeder’, one has a higher risk for their puppy developing all of the problems that can be found in the dog, to include, joint, temperament, visual, immune, heart, and other genetic problems. They will also have little advise for you, should you have any problems with your puppy.

**PUPPY MILL**  
Puppy Mills have received a great deal of press in recent years, and some of that press may have misled the public. In the media, the worst of all possible situations in puppy mills has been shown. The filth, stacked cages of dogs and puppies, the mass production of sick and dying puppies, and the rural settings (far from the eyes of the governmental agencies) are surely a part of what makes up a puppy mill. But to look only to the extreme, can lead one to mistakenly buy a puppy from one of these suppliers of dogs. Not every puppy mill is as horrible as some that have been seen in recent media. Some are lesser versions of the disgusting conditions noted above, but none-the-less, are puppy mills all the same.

A puppy mill can take many forms. Basically, a puppy mill can be found anywhere … city or rural area. Generally, they are less than clean, have many different breeds of dogs, have many litters at one time, often with several litters in a pen together. The adult animals are less than social or “out of control”. You are not permitted to view the general living conditions of the dogs, they do not encourage the spay or neuter of your pet, and in fact may encourage you to go into business for yourself…. and they’ll supply the mate. They are the worst form of breeder with only one thing in mind… how much cash is in your pocket. They are good salesmen, and talk a good story. Some may even claim to have Hip and/or eye clearances preformed on Sire and Dam, only to make excuses about not being able to produce the actual documents when questioned.

In reality, they may have lied about who the sire of your puppy is, or they may actually not know who he is, as they allow “free breeding” to insure the most litters they can have. Females are bred from their first season on, and you can expect that a five year old bitch has had anywhere from five to ten litters in the hands of a puppy mill (the norm being 2-3 for a 5 year old bitch).

**PET STORE**  
Buying from a pet store does not permit the buyer to view the living conditions in which the puppy was raised. It prevents the buyer from seeing related dogs, to determine the temperament. It puts your puppy at much higher risk for illness, as puppies from different litters (and breeds) are shipped together, and any virus one may have, is now spread to the rest. Pet stores only get their puppies from two sources, a puppy mill or from a back yard breeder. NO reputable breeder sells any puppy to or through a pet store. In fact, many breed clubs have by-laws that provide for the expulsion of anyone who knowingly sells puppies to a pet store. There are many reasons not to buy from a pet store. These are just a few reasons.

**BE AWARE**

There are Several ‘puppy mills’ in Southern California. You should be extremely cautious of any breeder who boasts a large number of litters each year, has several different types of dogs, gives any number of EXCUSES or rationale for not doing genetic clearances (to include articles or books that back up their theories), boasts that they do their OWN Veterinary work (practicing medicine without a license), encourages you or insists that you breed your dog, or is reluctant to allow you to view the living conditions of their dogs – inside and outside.

There is NO excuse for filth.

You should never feel that you are being pushed into buying a puppy. Rather, you should get the feeling that you’re being interviewed by the breeder to determine your readiness for a puppy from their kennel. If you buy out of feeling sorry for a puppy, your purchase has just guaranteed that another litter will be bred by that person.

No breeder associated with a [American Kennel Club](http://www.akc.org/) breed club & bound by a breeder’s club Code of Ethics will sell or consign a pup (or kitten) to a commercial pet store.

*We hope this information will make your search for a Labrador puppy easier*