



Dog Brokers

Bernese Mountain Dogs are considered a "hot commodity" in today's dog market. In addition to the unfortunate increase of Berner puppies for sale in pet stores, brokers are also attempting to make money by selling Bernese Mountain Dogs. In our use of the term, a broker is someone (other than a pet store) who sells puppies they didn't breed. Brokers usually have little knowledge of the breed(s) they sell, nor do they know (or care about) the family history of the pups they offer. Turnover is the name of the game—buy 'em cheap and sell 'em at a profit—the quicker the better.

Brokers do not always identify themselves for what they really are. Most brokers obtain their dogs from puppy millers. The dogs are transported via various methods from other parts of the country such as Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Oklahoma, or even from other countries to the broker. Many times a broker will advertise a Bernese for sale in the newspaper. They provide the caller with a "story" about how they obtained the dog and why they are now selling it. The caller is told that they are "helping a friend to sell his/her puppies", or that the dog was purchased for a variety of reasons; "I was going to show the dog but I have changed my mind...I thought about breeding but have lost interest...It was for my child and the dog is too big for him...My husband (child, myself) are allergic." The broker tells the caller that he/she paid a large sum—usually \$2000 or more—but they are willing to sell the dog for a much lower price—\$1500 or less—in order to give the dog a good home. The truth is that the broker most likely paid less than \$400 for the puppy and is now going to make a nice profit with a price tag of \$1000 or more. All this for very little risk or overhead! No risk of the mother dying in whelp, no risk of dead puppies born or dying after birth, no health examinations of parents or puppies, no time spent raising adults to maturity or litters to the age of placement, no hours spent researching pedigrees or days spent traveling for dog events and breedings. The only overhead is the price of an ad in the paper and the purchase price from a puppy miller!

Brokers often provide the caller with a story that makes the caller feel "obligated" to purchase the dog in order to provide a good home and/or help the seller. The caller thinks they are doing a good thing by "saving" the dog from a not-so-good situation. When their pitch is successful, the broker simply obtains another dog from the puppy mill and the process starts over again. The puppy mill/broker chain continues.

Please think twice when encountering a potential sale by a broker. Contact any of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Nashoba Valley officials or breeders to inquire about a situation before you make a decision to purchase a puppy from someone in question. As with a pet store purchase, a purchase from a broker can lead to many health problems and heartache in the future.

Visit bmdcnv.org, or contact education@bmdcnv.org; or puppychair@bmdcnv.org

Red Flags: To help you recognize a Broker from a Responsible Breeder:

Brokers usually advertise one or two dogs; a responsible breeder will advertise their litter; or advertise only to provide information about the breed (as many breeders don't need to advertise).

Brokers do not own the dog's mother or father; responsible breeders own at least the mother if not the father, also, and will have them available for you to meet.

Brokers may not be able to offer or provide American Kennel Club (AKC) registration papers; responsible breeders own AKC registered mothers who produce AKC registered(able) puppies.

Brokers cannot provide any health information about the family (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings) of the dog for sale; a responsible breeder can provide health certifications, ages of death, recurring problems, etc. on not only the pups parents, but for many generations.

Brokers are selling a dog second (or third or fourth) hand; conscientious breeders require that if a puppy does not stay with its original owner it is returned to the breeder for rehoming.

Brokers usually do not belong to any dog clubs or participate in dog events; responsible breeders are members of regional and/or national breed clubs and obtain titles by participation in AKC and/or BMDCA events.

Brokers will ask to meet you at a convenient location to see the dog and discuss the purchase so that their actual location is not disclosed; responsible breeders will ask you to come to their home and invite you to meet their dogs.

Brokers do not ask questions about your interest or knowledge about the breed; A responsible breeder will "interview" prospective owners and encourage discussion prior to making a placement decision. It's a given that breeders who put a great deal of research and care into producing the best puppies they can, *do not* turn around and give them to someone else to sell.