

This chapter is designed to assist those fanciers who plan on having more than 5 dogs with the intent on breeding and using them on a serious level. Therefore, if you personally only have (or plan to have) 1 or 2 dogs then most of this chapter will not apply to you, so feel free to skip to Chapter 3. However, if you have (or are planning to acquire) several dogs and really get serious about raising them, then I do believe this foundational chapter will be critical to your success.

Okay, so here goes—a person looking to start breeding dogs on a serious level is faced with many options—what to do, what to get, from whom to get it—and then what to do with his stock when he does get it. The multitude of decisions a person faces includes both dogs as well as supplies for dogs. Some people have a game plan—but most people do not. Most people are all full of desire and “want-to,” but they’re running short on how-to and where-to. This chapter will bridge that gap. Remember, nobody plans to fail—what they do is *fail to plan*. If you want to succeed in professionally-raising dogs, then you need to clarify what your goals are first. *Where do you want to go?* Once you answer that basic question, then you need to devise the best way to get there, and then you need to stick to this plan until you do get there. In other words, know where you want to go first—then plan your work on how to get there—and then work your plan until you finally arrive. The many options the beginner faces on his journey, like anything else, can be boiled down and analyzed. Basically, they are

- (1) Am I going to focus on performance or just breeding dogs?;**
- (2) Do I want to start by acquiring a pup or an adult?;**
- (3) Do I want to start with a male or a female?;**
- (4) What bloodline am I going to select my dog(s) from?; and**
- (5) Whom can I trust to sell me quality animals from my chosen line(s)?**

I realize there is a lot of room for overlap here, but this chapter is to get you thinking. True, some people can be commercial breeders and still focus on performance; true again, a person can buy both pups and adults, etc. Nonetheless, these are ultimately the real break-downs of the decisions you will be making when you first get ready to dive into the world of breeding and perpetuating some form of specialized canine performance, be it competing with racing greyhounds or trying to raise voracious rodent-dispatching terriers. These same 5 breakdowns will still ultimately always apply.

Let's start with **(1) Should you use or breed dogs?** I can tell you right now, if you want to be a breeder, then you'd better buy yourself a lot of land first, before you ever get your first dogs—ten acres minimum (that is properly-zoned for breeding dogs)—or you will be moving, *a lot*. If you fail to get your land first, and if you start breeding dogs anyway, you will eventually be forced to move when animal control discovers you are over your limit, or you will have to give up many good dogs if you choose to remain where you are and be compliant. I know, I lived through it too many times when I first started out. So learn from my mistakes. I had to let go of a lot of dogs I wish I wouldn't have, by *my* failing to plan when I first got started, so take it from me (since hindsight is 20-20), if you want to be a breeder of any significance, then get yourself set up on the right piece of land FIRST. The right piece of land is a place you own, first of all (do not rent), and it is a place where you will be happy to stay for many years. It should be a 10-acre parcel, minimum, and again it should be *properly-zoned for breeding kennels*. [To find out if a piece of property is zoned correctly for breeding dogs, check the Zoning Department (or Dept. of Regional Planning) in your area *before* you buy your land, and make sure you can run a kennel from that spot. Also keep in mind “zoned for horses” does not mean zoned for dogs, so make sure you get it straight. Zero-in on securing for yourself the right spot, then set yourself up in that spot *before* you buy your first dogs.]

Yes, this may take 5 years of your time, and 5 years of saving money, but it will ultimately prove to be nowhere near as much as the amount of time and energy you will *waste* if you fail to plan, and buy a home where you *can't* breed dogs and are forced to move by animal control. Set yourself up to succeed, not to go bust, by getting your strategic land pur-

chase out of the way first. Also, again, forget about renting. No landlord is going to put up with you slowly accumulating a yardful of 10-20 dogs, so why set yourself up for failure by building up a yard of dogs on "someone else's" land—only to be told you have to move? What do you do then? Therefore, be smart, and save up to buy yourself a plot of land, first, before you do anything else, and make sure the spot you pick is in a rural area that is properly-zoned for dogs.

Another thing you want to do is select a spot that does not have any animal control or Humane Society within a hundred miles, or at least not in your county. The reason for this is simple—so no one can call them on you. These animal rights fanatics (HSUS, PETA, etc.) will bother you and try to shut you down—if they discover your whereabouts—so select a spot where these insane groups don't exist and you will save yourself a lot of future headache also. It is likewise preferable to select a spot where there are a lot of farm animals in the surrounding properties, as most country folks who own farms and who have farm animals generally understand "working dogs" better than do pale, limp-wristed, plastic city-dwellers. If you select a place to live where most folks in the area have livestock, that also have no animal control or Humane Society, then right away you lower your odds of being around the kind of zealot who could call these agencies on you—and you've further made sure there's no animal rights nuts in the area for them to call anyway. Believe me, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. These agencies are a serious threat to any kind of commercial breeders (as you will see in the Epilogue), so make sure you take these preventative measures right off the bat.

However, if you can't afford to buy acreage, then just forget about being a commercial breeder. Yes, you "can" work around the land issue, to an extent, by forming a "combine" (a group of trusted friends who pool their resources and dogs together, and who can thus keep a lot of dogs of a bloodline going between them, with only a few in each man's yard), but this is not as good as what I've laid out. In a combine, there is always the potential to have personality conflicts to deal with, with all kinds of differing ideas as to direction, so it is typically much easier to just do things yourself. That doesn't mean you can't work with other people—you have to and you should—it means you don't want to have to *depend* on a group of people for your goals, which can be a big drawback. Yet if you really do have a trusted circle of fanciers then forming a combine can be a good way around the land issue.

With me, I became obsessed and got my first dogs in my early 20s—and just started breeding them—and I quickly had too many dogs for my situation. So please don't be this foolish. Believe me, I had to part with many good dogs early on, ruining many of my initial plans as a breeder, by *my* failing to plan. So all I can do is urge you to listen to me and to follow my advice, and make a better start than I made. If I would have had advice like this to read years ago, and if I would have actually followed it, I would have saved myself a lot of hassle.

Therefore, take it from me, this is the first and most major real issue you need to address before you can take off as a breeder—and that is finding the right spot to do it. So clarify this question first—are you going to just enjoy one or two dogs or are you going to be a serious commercial breeder? If you want to breed dogs seriously, ask yourself if you realistically have the resources (land) to do it, as it should be done. If not, get the land first. If you can't afford the land, you can try to form a group of trustworthy friends to do so, and form a combine, but if you can't do either then forget about being a breeder and just focus on being a hunter, trainer, or competitor. End of tip.

On the other hand, if strictly want to hunt or compete, then it is actually better that you have a small yard of quality dogs, so you can really form a deep relationship with each good dog. A small yard allows you to exercise each dog daily, and spend quality time with each one daily, throughout their lives. This makes a BIG difference between two otherwise equal dogs, where one receives his master's regular attention while another does not.

Ok, you've crossed that road now and made your decision: you're going to be a breeder, or you're just going to hunt or train your dogs (or both). Next thing, **(2) Should you start with a pup or get an adult?** If you're a pet owner, go with a pup, but this section isn't really addressed to pet owners (though certainly there are principles here that can benefit any pet