

Smart Questions for Rating Breeders

1) Are you member of a Scottie club?

Quality breeders join Scottie clubs to learn more about the breed and to establish friendships with others working for the welfare of Scotties. Some club members exhibit dogs in dog shows to evaluate their dogs against other Scotties and the Scottish Terrier breed standard.

2) Do you sell other breeds besides Scotties?

Ideal breeders breed only Scotties. Breeders of multiple breeds are usually commercial producers who are less knowledgeable about Scotties.

3) What problems can I expect from Scotties?

If the breeder doesn't point out undesirable characteristics, you know you are talking to someone eager (or desperate) to sell dogs to the first comer.

4) Do you offer a trial period?

Many responsible breeders do and also offer to take the Scottie back at any time in its life. Responsible breeders want the buyer to have the right Scottie, and will stand by that Scottie for a lifetime.

5) Do you require spay or neuter?

Some responsible breeders require their puppies be spayed or neutered. Research in recent years has revealed health benefits of later spay/neuter. Options may be spay/neuter delayed to one to two years of age, ovary-sparing spay (OSS) or vasectomy.

6) Do you own both parents?

Veteran breeders sometimes own both parents, but often do not. Rather, they choose a male with qualities to complement their female, even if that male lives 1,000 miles away.

7) Do your Scotties have skin problems?

If the breeder answers "no," ask him what he knows about the parents, grandparents and siblings of his breeding stock. Most casual breeders know nothing about the health of their dogs' relatives. Skin problems can be hereditary and will be a 10- to 15-year pain and expense.

8) Have the sire and dam had health tests?

The Scottish Terrier Club of America has established a health registry with Orthopedic Foundation for Animals' (OFA's) Canine Health Information Center (CHIC). If a breeder has a CHIC-certified Scottie, or even a Scottie with one or more of the required tests, you know you are dealing with a breeder who is trying to minimize health problems.

CHIC certification for Scottish Terriers requires OFA registration of three tests: 1) DNA-based test for von Willebrand's (VWD) Disease; 2) evaluation for patellar luxation; 3) One of the following three tests--OFA thyroid evaluation; eye evaluation; or DNA-based test for craniomandibular osteopathy (CMO).

9) What can you tell me about Scottie Cramp, CMO and VWD?

If a breeder can't tell you about these diseases, he will know nothing about other Scottie health problems. You are playing Russian roulette if you buy from this kind of breeder.

10) May I see your sales agreement?

Responsible breeders use sales agreements in which they outline their own responsibilities to the buyer, and what they require of the buyer (like the breeder's right of "first refusal" if the buyer later does not want the dog). A simple bill of sale is not a sales agreement.