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People obtain pets from many sources – Shelters, rescues, pets being re-homed by family, neighbors and friends; puppies and kittens from unplanned litters; pet stores; farm auctions; flea markets; newspaper ads; social media, fliers posted in public places and breeders.

While many pets obtained from any one of these sources live wonderful lives and are well loved, far too many end up again needing new homes or, worse, living lives of neglect or misery with owners who were truly not prepared or who quickly lose interest in them.

Adding a living, breathing animal to your family should be a deliberate, well thought out process. This is why we have an Adoption Application to adopt a pet as far too many of our pets are there because they were obtained on a whim or without due consideration to their physical & mental needs. The application process is us, doing our best, to make sure that the adoption is a good fit for the pet and for the new owner. Questions about lifestyles, the home environment, the adopter's expectations, children, other pets, etc, help us match the right pet with the right family. We do this because far too many of the animals in shelters are there because they took on a pet without really thinking it through and it turns out to be a bad fit for all concerned.

Just like there are good and perhaps not so good sheltering agencies, there are wonderful breeders who breed for the love of their breed and breeders who are only in it for money. Good breeders care about the homes they are placing their puppy or kitten (or horse, or bird, etc) in. Good breeders question potential buyers thoroughly to ensure the new owner will be able to provide a good home for the pet for its entire lifetime. Good breeders do not just sell a puppy or kitten to the first person who can pay the purchase price.

Our pets all leave us fully vaccinated based on their age with our puppies and kittens having at least two sets of vaccinations. Our puppies and kittens have to be a minimum of eight weeks old before we place them for adoption so as to allow them socialization from their littermates or kennel mates and to get at least the two sets of vaccinations complete. We say this as conscientious breeders will also ensure their babies are healthy, vaccinated and ready to leave mom and littermates, so they also wait until they are 8-12 weeks old before sending them to new families.

It is understandable to look for a breeder if you have a desire for a particular breed and want to start with a puppy or kitten. If you do turn to a breeder here are some hints to find a reputable breeder: a reputable breeder will not sell their puppies or kittens at a flea market, auctions or out of the trunk of their car in a parking lot. Reputable breeders will not have you meet them in some parking lot 'because their house is too hard to find.' Reputable breeders will decline a sale if they don't think it is in the best interest of the puppy or kitten. Reputable breeders care more about their animals than they do the almighty dollar and work hard to breed pets that are physically & genetically healthy, with stable temperaments as well. Reputable breeders help by becoming mentors to those who do purchase their puppies or kittens and stand by their pets. Truly reputable breeders are there for their puppies and kittens even years after the sale if the need arises. Reputable breeders are some of our best allies in terms of animal welfare as they work very hard to teach responsible pet ownership and have much expertise to offer.

So the next time you are thinking of adding a new pet to your family, take your time. Do your homework, make sure you are ready, check with a shelter perhaps and if you do choose to purchase from a breeder, take the time to make sure they actually care about their pets and their future. One way to find a conscientious breeder is to ask area veterinarians since caring breeders will be good clients of veterinarians as they both work to ensure the best health of the parents and the babies they produce. Getting a pet is a serious commitment in terms of time and money so please make sure you are truly ready to commit to that pet for the next 15-20 years of its life.