

Good dogs gone bad

It seems every breeder has at some time sold a show borzoi puppy only to find that the dog has turned into a pet, and all hope of showing is gone. Whether it is 6 months or a year, this promising young dog has turned out to be a tall narrow gangly youngster with feet that point in all the wrong directions. How can this happen when the puppies brother is already major pointed? The accusation is that the breeder keeps only the best for them selves. We know that this is really not the case.

In large breed dogs, the growth of a young puppy can be forever changed with improper feeding and exercise. If a person takes the time to find a reputable breeder, and pays the purchase price of a show puppy, this should be just the beginning in a mentoring program that helps this young dog to grow to a future champion.

What a breeder has learned after years of experience, is not necessarily what food is the best, but how to adapt to the changing needs of a large breed puppy. Often, the new owner calls only after the damage has already been done. Breeders know that increasing or decreasing exercise and/or protein at critical growth stages is important to the development of a puppy. The astute perception of the smallest of telltale signs, and a quick reaction can reverse a hocky, or east-west puppy from becoming a permanent problem.

As an example, there is nothing that helps lay down good bone in a puppy then the right amount of exercise. New owners have been heard saying that they play with their dog, or walk it once a day, but, nothing can take the place of active play with another dog of the same age. Puppies play for short periods, and frequently with periods of rest spread throughout the day not just at 5:30 when the owner comes home.

A good mentor can help ward off those problems, but they have to be a source early in the development, and help guide the changes an owner can make to stop a growth development problem from being permanent.

Dogs never grow at a measured pace, and an astute owner can see the changes, and help give the dog the needed nutrition a long-boned dog demands, at different periods in their development. Keeping in touch with the breeder, and reacting quickly with their guidance, can keep your puppy on the path to being a future champion.

What a breeder should be - is a resource book for a new owner - to help that owner, and their puppy reach the potential they had when the puppy left the whelping box.

We all know not every dog turns out, but using the breeder in a mentoring role through these critical times in a puppy's development, will help reach those goals. While the puppy can't tell you what they need, a good breeder may have seen the same symptoms before, and help turn a bad situation around. The key is to be proactive, not reactive, and use the guidance of the breeder to help your puppy grow up to be the next champion.

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