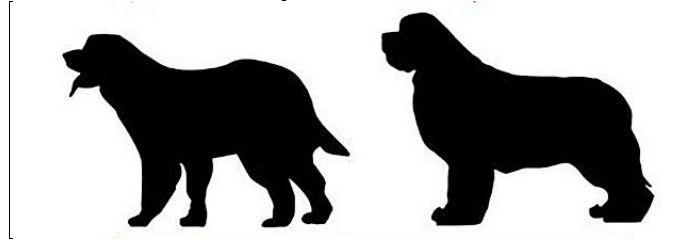


But I Don't Need a Show Dog!

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Why do people recommend choosing a breeder who shows and titles their dogs to folks who are just looking for a pet and have no interest in showing? Why should breeding to breed standard be important to a pet home? Does it seem excessive, or “snobby”?

It's not, and here's why.

Dog shows are a means of evaluating dogs against the breed standard, to evaluate soundness, movement/gait, type, and temperament.

Soundness: The state of physical and mental health when all organs and faculties are functioning properly, each in its rightful relation to each other.

Type: Breed type encompasses appearance, character, condition, bone structure, temperament, and movement; "breed type is all these things." Breed type also includes a character specific to each breed, a combination of behaviour, temperament and carriage that demonstrate an essence of the breed.

Gait: The gait of a dog is its quality of movement. You want to see ease of movement, unimpaired by illness or poor structure.

Temperament: The general attitude a dog has towards other animals and people. From the Newfoundland Breed Standard: “Sweetness of temperament is the hallmark of the Newfoundland; this is the single most important characteristic of the breed. The Newfoundland is a sweet-dispositioned dog that acts neither dull nor ill tempered. He is a devoted companion.”

So. That's a very basic intro to what goes on at a show... why does this matter? You want a pet, a companion, not a show dog, right? Well, you chose Newfoundlands for a reason. You've done your research, and have read that they're great with kids and other animals, they're gentle giants, not aggressive, they make excellent companions and love spending time with their people. That their good and kind nature predisposes many Newfs to be excellent therapy dogs. That they're large, and STRONG. Good, responsible breeders seek to preserve those definitive and positive characteristics.

Here's an example-- there are aggressive and aloof Newfoundlands. An aggressive dog is no joke, and a 140lb. aggressive dog even less so. Aggression can run in lines. Wouldn't it be difficult to show an aggressive, reactive, fearful, or excessively shy Newfoundland? Do you want to take the gamble and trust someone about their dog's history, or would you rather buy from someone who has taken their dogs into the ring and had the dog's temperament proven over and over, consistently?

What about type and structure? How the dog is put together, able to move freely and comfortably? Would you rather buy from someone who has proven publicly, over time, that the dog they're breeding can move well, free of limp, or a structural problem? Or just trust someone who has no interest in proving their dogs? It's your puppy's quality of life and comfort (as well as your wallet) that's at stake.

Not every dog in a well-bred litter is going to be show quality- there will ALWAYS be pet-quality puppies. Well-bred, but maybe with a slight imperfection, and those are the puppies placed in pet homes. You don't have to want a show-quality puppy to get a well-bred puppy!

Here's the bottom line.... every day, Newf rescue is seeing more and more aggressive Newfs. Newfs in pain because they were poorly bred. Newfs requiring extensive vet care, expensive surgery. People having to remand their dogs to breed rescue because they can't manage the dog, fear the dog, or found out the dog needs costly vet care they can't afford.

This is not about being snobby, being elitist, thinking that one dog is “better” than another, it's about ensuring you get a puppy that acts and looks like the breed you fell in love with. It's about ensuring that all Newf puppies have the best start in life, and will grow into a loving family member. It's about loving our breed enough to want to see everything that's good about them preserved for future generations to enjoy. If you want a healthy dog, with a properly sweet temperament, choose your breeder wisely.

(Note: the two dogs pictured in silhouette above... the one on the right came from a breeder who shows and titles her dogs. He's sweet, healthy, can move freely... he had a good start in life. He looks and acts like a Newf, and will pass those qualities onto his offspring.)