

# Choosing a breeder

Below you will find a comprehensive list of questions compiled by many different participants all of whom have good knowledge of the Fila. These are questions that you should feel comfortable asking any breeder. If you should encounter a breeder who is unwilling to take the time to answer your questions.....move on immediately!! There is more than one reputable, honest breeder available, but by using this list, you will be better able to determine which breeder will work best with you and your family.

## Responsible Breeders Do:

Breed in order to improve the breed and produce the best puppies they possibly can. This type breeder usually keeps the most promising pups for themselves.

Ask as many questions of you as you do of them.

Show evidence of at least two or three years of serious interest in their breed, i.e. dog club membership, show titles, and/or performance titles.

Breed only dogs that closely match the breed standard and are free of serious health and temperament problems.

Tell you if they think you would be better off with a different breed or no dog at all.

Provide referrals to other breeders if they have nothing available.

Use a written contract and guarantee when selling a dog with clear terms.

Provide a registration slip, a pedigree, and up to date health records with every puppy they sell.

Honestly discuss any special problems/requirements associated with the breed.

Offer assistance and advice on grooming, training, care for the life of the dog.

If, for any reason and at any time, you cannot keep the dog, will take the dog back.

Have dogs that are clean, healthy, happy, and humanely cared for.

Have properly evaluated their breeding stock. This includes hips, elbows, and temperament.

Have the parents (at least one) of the puppy on site.

Require a spay/neuter on pet quality puppies.

## Responsible Breeders Do Not:

Appear overly eager to get rid of a puppy.

Breed to produce puppies to sell to commercial businesses.

Breed a bitch every season.

Claim all their puppies are "show/breeding" quality.

Sell puppies to people that they have not personally screened.

Require you to euthanize your dog before replacing it.

Import entire litters of puppies for re-sale.

## Experience....

How long have you been involved with the breed of Fila Brasileiro?

How long have you been involved with dogs?

Are you sufficiently experienced with the breed to answer almost any question I would ask or be able to network to assist me in finding an answer if you do not know?

As a result of your experience are you willing to discuss breeding programs that in your opinion should be avoided or those that you consider good choices?

Will you be able to explain with factual statements why you consider them to be good choices or to be avoided?

Are you able to explain what differentiates your breeding program from others?

Are you willing to explain how your breeding program differs from others in regards to type/temperament/size/color etc...?

### Breeding Program

What is the most important thing to you in the breed? (type, temperament, soundness)  
For what reason did you become involved with this particular breed and what led you to become a breeder?  
In what way has your breeding program improved over time? How has your breeding program improved the breed as a whole?  
How long have you been breeding?  
Are you likely to be breeding and available to me for advice/support in the future? (I have been told that most new Fila breeders are out of breeding within 5 years)  
If the dogs in your breeding program do not all fit the breed standard perfectly, can you offer an explanation for why you chose to keep those particular dogs to breed?  
Out of the dogs at your kennel what percentage are your: retired dogs / young dogs (the wait and see group) / and the dogs being bred currently?  
At what age do you first consider breeding a female? At what age do you breed your females?  
How many litters will your females have in a breeding lifetime?  
Do you evaluate each dogs temperament in your breeding program?  
Do you breed only those dogs which have proven themselves to have the proper temperament according to either the FCI or Cafib standard?  
Do you evaluate through Pennhip and/or OFA the hips and elbows of each dog in your breeding program?  
Do you only breed those dogs which pass Pennhip and/or OFA with at least a score of good?  
Have you had any of the dogs in your breeding program analyzed for conformation to breed standard by anyone other than yourself? (other breeders, shows, judges)  
Why did you breed these two particular dogs?  
How many dogs in this puppies pedigree do you personally know and what can you tell me about them?

### Breed Information

Do you feel that the majority of the information available about the breed is accurate?  
Is my interpretation of what I read correct to your understanding of the breed? If not, please explain in what way it differs in your opinion.  
Will a Fila fit my expectations for the breed?  
Is the Fila good with children?  
  
Is the Fila easy to train?  
Can you over socialize your Fila?  
Will your breeding program / kennel be able to provide the dog I am seeking for my lifestyle and goals in ownership?

### Care

Will you provide photos of the kennel area / play area / your home as well as photos of the dogs?  
How much time do you spend with each dog individually each day?  
Do any / some of your dogs live inside your home at least 50% of the day / night?  
Are you home or do you work full time? Part time?  
Please describe a typical day for one of your dogs.

Do you provide daily exercise?  
Do you provide specialized training such as search/rescue, companion dog?  
Do you take your dogs to dogs shows / hiking / swimming etc..?  
Where are the puppies raised at the various stages of development?  
Please tell me about your puppy parasite control and the type and frequency of the shots that are given.  
How many shots would a puppy from your kennel have at shipment time of 8/9 weeks?

### Health

What are common problems in the breed?  
Do you offer specific suggestions for ways to avoid injuries, death, illness in my puppy?  
How long do your dogs and that of your customers generally live? Most common cause of death?  
Will I receive a shot and worming record and dates on which you recommend the balance of the shots and worming should be given?  
Are there any instances of degenerative, hereditary, or genetic illnesses in the pedigree of this puppy?  
If I purchase a pet quality puppy am I required to spay / neuter it.....if so at what age?  
Do you have an opinion on early spaying and neutering?

### Registration Papers

Do you offer FCI / CBKC papers on all dogs sold?  
Do I receive papers on a “pet” and if I do are they somehow restricted?

### Contract

Do you offer health and temperament guarantees on your puppies? If so, what are your guarantees, are there any time limitations?  
Do you have a written contract?  
Is your contract as fair to the purchaser as it is to the seller?  
Does the contract cover the puppy for more than Hip Dysplasia / Elbow Dysplasia?  
Am I covered for other health problems....if so which?  
Is the dog guaranteed to be correct to type by maturity as well as having the temperament I requested at purchase?  
Am I required to show or breed the dog I buy or get Hip Dysplasia / Elbow Dysplasia certification?  
What happens if I am unable to comply to any of the requirements that I agree to?  
Is your contract on your website for everyone to see before they purchase?

### Return Policy—Procedures

Are you willing to take back any dog you have bred and provide it with a home or find it a suitable home even if it is altered / old etc..?  
If a dog is not acceptable by my standards, what is the protocol for remedy?  
If I do not find the dog suitable how long do I have to notify the breeder and must I take a replacement within a certain time frame?  
Am I required to return the dog?  
What if I do not wish to return the dog?  
Do you require alteration of the original dog before it is replaced?  
May I choose my replacement or do you?

If I am unhappy with my original purchase I may not want a replacement from the same genetics...do you offer a broad genetic base from which I may be able to select my replacement?

If I am allowed to keep my original purchase, may I order a opposite sex replacement to maintain harmony in my home?

What is your policy should the unthinkable happen and a second dog need to be replaced?

#### Placement

What is the earliest age you will allow a puppy to leave your kennel?

Is that age different if the puppy is being flown?

Do you require your customers to drive to pick up their puppies?

#### Feeding Program

What brand (s) of food do you feed?

If I can not get that brand do you offer alternatives?

Do you have suggestions for supplements?

If you feed meat is it fed cooked or raw?

Suggestions for treats?

#### Customers

What type of customer do you prefer your dogs to go to?

What is required of a potential purchaser before they would be considered suitable to buy a dog from your kennel?

Do you require references?

Do you require specific fencing before placing a puppy?

Do you require that at least one person in the home be at home all day?

Do you require proof of financial / professional stability?