

ABCA Code of Ethics and Best Practices

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The goal of these recommendations is to protect, preserve, and improve the breed and its future, as well as to protect individual dogs. These recommendations are established as a voluntary standard for members and as a guide for non-members.

CONDUCT

GENERAL

Members of the ABCA have an obligation to put the welfare of the breed above personal gain and refrain from activities that would be detrimental to the best interests of the breed, the individual dogs, and the ABCA.

STANDARD OF CARE

Dogs should be provided with all nutrition, exercise, socialization, vaccinations, de-worming, external parasite control, and appropriate veterinary treatment necessary to provide optimal mental and physical well being.

EDUCATION

Breeders should educate themselves with regard to known health problems within the breed and should understand the principles of genetics and know how to apply them.

HEALTH RESEARCH

Members are encouraged to participate in and support health studies for the breed.

ADVERTISING

Advertising of puppies, adults or stud service should be honest and not in any way misrepresentative, fraudulent, or misleading.

CONTRACTS

Written contracts are strongly recommended for all transactions such as sales, guarantees, co-ownerships, breeding rights agreements, female leases, stud services, etc.

BREEDING PRACTICES

QUALITY

The Border Collie stands alone in its exceptional ability to work livestock. That is the purpose for which the breed was developed, and the ABCA defines the breed by this working ability. The main goal of any Border

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Collie breeder should be to produce sound, useful, working dogs. While Border Collies also excel in many non-herding activities, they should be bred primarily for the ability to work livestock. The ultimate responsibility for maintaining the integrity of this as yet unspoiled breed lies with the breeders. Breeders are urged to take this responsibility seriously. Puppy buyers are encouraged to buy only from those breeders who do take this responsibility seriously.

Only dogs that are physically sound, of good temperament and superior working ability should be considered for use in a breeding program. Dogs with temperament issues such as excessive shyness, aggression or extreme sound sensitivity should not be used for breeding.

BREEDING AGE

Even a basic evaluation of males and females being considered for breeding -- in terms of health, working ability and temperament -- cannot be accomplished until they have reached at least 18 months of age. (Note: Hips cannot be fully evaluated and approved as normal by the ABCA-accepted certifying institutions before the age of two years, and the onset of epilepsy typically occurs anywhere between one to three years of age.

A female should not be bred before 18 months of age or after her 9th birthday. A veterinarian should be consulted when breeding an older female or one that has had any prior problems in breeding or whelping.

BREEDING FREQUENCY

Breeders should ensure that litter numbers are consistent with both sound breeding principles and the best interest of the individual female. Sufficient time to evaluate the health and stock-working ability of the preceding litter is recommended before rebreeding a male or female. A female should not produce more than 4 to 5 litters in a lifetime, and only if the female remains in good health.

EXCESSIVE BREEDING

The ABCA is strongly against the commercial breeding of Border Collies for the pet market. Breeders should aim for quality and not quantity. A breeder producing more than a few (4-5) litters per year may not be producing the quality of dogs necessary for preserving the Border Collie as an outstanding working dog and may not have enough time for proper care, socialization and placement of the puppies.

HEALTH & GENETIC CONSIDERATIONS

Breeding animals should be in good health, free of all internal and external parasites and communicable diseases. Testing for parasites and communicable diseases (e.g., brucellosis) should be done as close to breeding time as possible. Both sire and dam should be screened and certified free from hereditary hip and eye defects prior to breeding. This includes x-ray evaluation of hips by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) or their equivalent and the DNA test for CEA/CH. Other genetic diseases with low incidence rates can be present in some lines within the breed. Breeders should educate themselves on these diseases and when working with these lines utilize available clinical and genetic testing to prevent producing affected pups and carriers of these genetic mutations.

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(A table summarizing the main health issues for the Border Collie can be found on the ABCA website)

CARE OF MOTHER & PUPS

Breeders should protect the health of the mother by providing necessary veterinary care and a safe, sanitary environment for whelping. Puppies should be raised in a healthy environment with socialization and training pertinent to the puppies' developmental stages. All appropriate inoculations and veterinary care should be provided.

REPEAT BREEDINGS

A particular mating that has produced a defect that compromises the health and well-being of the offspring should not be repeated. If the male or female produces the same defect when bred to another partner, further use of this animal for breeding is not recommended.

ACCIDENTAL BREEDINGS

In the event of an accidental breeding, appropriate health testing should be done as soon as possible. Progeny from such litters should be registered with non-breeding status or not registered until the health of the parents or the pups can be documented.

RECORDS

Breeders should keep accurate and complete breeding, whelping, identification, registration and health records. Sample forms for this purpose are available on the ABCA website for both owners and breeders.

STUD DOGS

Stud dog owners should exercise great care when accepting females for breeding, with an aim not only to maximize the potential quality of the resulting litter, but with assurances that the puppies will be properly maintained and eventually appropriately placed.

SALES & PLACEMENT

PLACEMENT

The proper placement of pups or dogs cannot be over stressed. Breeders should screen buyers and should take care to place pups in situations where they will be well cared for and trained, and will have sufficient exercise. Particular discretion should be exercised when placing dogs with people with inactive lifestyles, with little dog experience, or that lack adequate space or facilities to properly manage an active dog bred for work.

No member should engage in the wholesaling of litters of Border Collies or selling individual pups or dogs to such places as pet dealers, animal brokers, catalogue houses or commercial sources of distribution. Pups and dogs should never be offered as a prize in a raffle, lottery or contest.

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Use the ABCA's non-breeding registration for pups that will be placed as pets or in non-working situations. Note that non-breeding registration requires agreement of both buyer and seller.

PUPPY HEALTH & CONDITION

Each puppy or adult sold should be in good health, free of communicable disease and internal and/or external parasites, and up to date on appropriate vaccinations. Puppies should be of a suitable age to leave litters (at least 7 weeks old and older if the law so requires).

RECORDS & INFORMATION

Records of all immunizations and treatments given, and information on further necessary immunizations and treatments should be provided to new owners. When selling to an inexperienced BC owner, instructions on the feeding, health, training, and general care of the puppy/ dog should also be provided. CEA and OFA certificates of the sire and dam should be made available to puppy buyers. If a puppy is sold as ABCA registered, the breeder must submit the registration documents to the ABCA. See the ABCA website for complete registration requirements.

HEALTH CHECK

Breeders should encourage or require new owners to have their pup/dog checked by a veterinarian within a specified time period from the date of acquisition. This is not only for the benefit of the dog but also serves to protect both buyer and seller.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BREEDER TO PUPS PRODUCED

The breeder should be available for consultation and to assist in re-homing of any dog sold by the breeder if such need arises at any time in the dogs' life. Breeders that stand behind the animals they produce are respected and will deservedly be sought out by responsible buyers.

Breeders should follow up on all pups/dogs sold to ensure their welfare and offer advice if new owners have questions or problems. This contact will also give the breeder valuable information regarding the health, temperament and working abilities of the dogs they have produced and help guide future breeding.

Breeders/Sellers should request that owners advise them if any hereditary diseases or conditions arise. Likewise, breeders should notify buyers of any genetic health problems in their line about which they become aware after the placement or sale.

Notes:

- **Dog in this document refers to both males and females.**
- **ABCA website: www.americanbordercollie.org**