



HAYES HAUS

10 Questions You Should Ask Every German Shepherd Breeder

As a customer of the dog industry, it's important to understand that you vote with your dollars and cents/sense.

If an organization fails to meet your standards of dog and animal care, be sure not to “vote” for that operation.

The customer base can be the first line of defense in the fight to raise the animal breeding standards.

A quick check for whether or not a breeder should get your “YES” vote is their knowledge level of not only their respective breed, but also the dog world in general.

This is not an industry that can lend itself to the supply and demand factor. Yes, customers can create demand. But an uninformed customer base drives “bad” supply, which have long-term negative effects on the entire dog world.

And this is especially true with such a complex working breed like the German Shepherd.

In order to help you vote “YES” for the right breeders, we've made this free guide for you.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us through our website. We're more than happy to help you and your family navigate the sometimes confusing, and potentially dangerous world of dog breeding.

Please note: if a breeder doesn't answer a few questions on this list 'to your liking', they're not necessarily a bad breeder. There are plenty of well-intentioned breeders who produce well-tempered dogs that miss on some of these items. The dog world is one that often struggles to 'keep up with the times.'

This list should simply be used to help you along the way:

For the 10 questions, keep reading:

Question #1: Where/how are your breeding dogs kept/raised?

This question is particularly important when dealing with large or 'commercial' breeders.

At Hayes Haus

Our breeding males and females are kept onsite live with us in our home and rotate time in their crate/kennel, outdoor playtime and free time in the house with us and guests. The dogs that aren't kept on site are in training with their owner or in our foster program as a loved member of another family.”

Warning Sign

Dogs can be kept in many ways. We object to keeping them in cages/kennels for the vast majority of the time, like many commercial kennel operations do because they don't develop proper temperament and social skills that will be passed down to a puppy that will be raised in a family atmosphere.

Exception: dogs that are kept as competition dogs, or real life working dogs may have a vastly different lifestyle. There's no fault in keeping these dogs in a kennel environment, if that's the aim of your program.

How To Make The Call

If you arrive at a breeding facility or operation and you don't feel comfortable with the conditions in which the dogs are kept, don't support those conditions by buying a puppy.

Question #2: Where/how are your puppies kept/raised?

At Hayes Haus

From 1-3 weeks (roughly) puppies are kept in a climate controlled room with their mother and handled exclusively by our staff on a daily basis to ensure proper growth and development.

After 3 weeks, the puppies spend time in a multitude of environments. Weather permitting, the puppies spend time outdoor too. It's important that they always have something to do and someone to do it with.

Children are always supervised around the puppies. Puppies are handled by adults and supervised children.

Warning Sign

Puppies must be handled and exposed. Puppies kept either alone or exclusively with the mother dog for the first 8 weeks of life will not be prepared for what the outside world will throw at it when it becomes a member of your family.

How To Make The Call

If the breeder can't assure that puppies are being cared for and attended to in the appropriate fashion, or answer questions about how they're 'socialized' before they come to your home, it's important for you to give your business to someone else.

Question #3: Are your puppies up-to-date on shots and wormings?

At Hayes Haus

All puppies must get a booster shot and general health checkup before going to a new home. All puppies and dogs have parasites, so they must be dewormed when they are young (at least once but usually a worming regimen is needed).

Warning Signs

Puppies can become very sick and/or die if these precautions are not taken.

How To Make The Call

Do not take a puppy home that hasn't had at least one set of vaccinations because you don't know what lurks under every stone, in another dog's fecal matter, or under the couch you and your new puppy will be relaxing on together. Puppies need to be protected with vaccinations.

Question #4: How do you handle returns?

At Hayes Haus

Any Hayes Haus dog will be taken back and given a home with us or placed in a more fitting family should its first family not be able or not want to care for the dog any longer. The dogs we breed are our family. Every breeder should have the same philosophy.

Warning Sign

If a breeder doesn't follow this policy, it's a warning sign that the adult dogs and new puppies are not being cared for at a high level.

All breeders should take dogs they breed back if the first owner wishes to return the dog because it sets the dog breeders apart from pet stores and forces all breeders to share knowledge and facilitate relationships between owners and their dogs.

In the end, the people who benefit most are puppy buyers.

How To Make The Call

Ask yourself if a breeder that doesn't have a policy like this should have your business.

Think about the very small chance that a situation would come up where you would no longer be able to care for your dog. Wouldn't it be comforting to know the dog would be cared for?

Question #5: What health guarantees do you offer?

At Hayes Haus

All German Shepherd breeders should offer a hip and elbow guarantee, as well as a guarantee against genetic defects that negatively affect the dog's quality of life. When these cases arise, a replacement puppy will be provided to your family if the original puppy is not up to working standards.

Warning Sign

The AKC HEART Breeding Program requires the hips and elbows of German Shepherds who participate in breeding programs to be evaluated in order for that dog to be cleared for breeding under AKC guidelines. This is done for the betterment of the breed but unfortunately not strictly enforced.

Because of this, it's important to do your job as a customer to ask the right questions about the puppy's parents and if the situation just doesn't feel right, to ask for documentation.

How To Make The Call

Breeders, of course, can't guarantee against every health problem because after all, dogs are living creatures. Hips and elbows are a little different, so if the breeder neglects screening the hips and elbows of their breeding dogs, we recommend you choose a different breeder.

Question #6: How do you ensure you're not adding to the shelter population?

At Hayes Haus

Our dogs and puppies are all sold on a contract stating any dog surrendered to a shelter or rescue or foster, immediately become the property of Hayes Haus. They will be retrieved from where they were dropped off and given a place to stay just like a returned dog, until we find another appropriate, loving home.

Responsible breeders should follow similar policies and be open with their customers about expectations if a life event pops up and they can no longer care for the dog.

Breeders bring dogs into the world, and though legal responsibility is given up when the new owner steps in, we believe that if the animal can no longer be care for, it's our duty to resume the role of responsibility.

Warning Sign

If a breeder cannot convey these emotions to you, it's a big warning sign.

How To Make The Call

America has a large shelter dog population. Thousands of dogs are put to death every year. A breeder who allows their dogs to be part of that statistic should be forced into another profession. And the only way to do this is for customers like you choosing to not keep them in business buying their puppies.

This is a topic we feel very strongly about at Hayes Haus.

Question #7: How do you ensure cleanliness?

At Hayes Haus

Our puppies are whelped in boxes that do not harbor or keep bacteria and our crates, kennels and yards are cleaned twice daily (more if needed) at a minimum.

Warning Sign

Cleanliness is of the utmost important when dealing with new life. As part of their upbringing, puppies need to be exposed to regular real world stuff, excess dirt, dust, bacteria, feces, urine etc. These things can cause a host of problems, so it's important that the breeder has a plan in place to reduce negative effects as much as possible.

How To Make The Call

If you are uncomfortable with the cleanliness of a facility as a human, then it's probably not fit for breeding animals. Remember that puppies are much more sensitive (especially at a young age) to bacterias, etc. So if you're not comfortable, that's a *bad* start and you should vote "no" and visit other breeders.

Question #8: How do you choose which two dogs to breed together?

At Hayes Haus

We choose our breeding pairings by first evaluating the dog on paper.

- Compatibility is checked based on bloodlines and pedigrees.
- Past litters are (if possible) are determine if there are temperament traits commonly produced by either one of or both of the parents.
- Verification of health and structural checks by a trusted body (Vet, OFA, SV, Penn Hip etc.).

Temperament is also evaluated. Note: this does not mean check and see if the dog has titles. It means that we look deeply into the dog's history, ancestry and environment to determine whether or not the temperament exhibited would be a common outcome had the dog been raised in a typical home.

Warning Sign

It's a warning sign if the breeder you're speaking with is unable to articulate how they choose their dogs for breeding. Another red flag is if the breeding pair is simply chosen for appearance preferences or looks. There's much more to dog breeding than "oh look how beautiful those dogs are, let's make puppies!"

Because of this, it's important to do even more in-depth research if you're choosing from a breeder of "show line German Shepherds." Often, these dogs are bred solely for looks rather than temperament.

How To Make The Call

This one is very complex. Use your judgement based on the information above.

Question #9: At what age can I bring my puppy home?

At Hayes Haus

As early as but NO EARLIER than 7 weeks. Seven weeks is the beginning of a “fear stage,” which is a deep bonding stage for you and your new family member. It’s also a powerful imprinting stage in a young puppy’s mind and body. At this time it is important for you as the owner to interact with your puppy as much as possible and to expose it to a real-world lifestyle.

Warning Sign

If you hear an answer like “as early as you want,” run the other way. Sprint, even.

How To Make The Call

No earlier than 7 weeks, no exceptions.

As an additional check, make sure a breeder is able to explain this “fear stage” to you and help you understand what this means for you, your family, and your new puppy.

Question #10: Can I see the mother of the puppies?

At Hayes Haus

Yes, most of the time if you come to see the puppies the mother will be on site. If you're picking the dog up after 7 weeks of age and the mother is no longer with the breeder, that's okay as long as the mother was with her litter up to 7 weeks of age.

Warning Sign

If a breeder gives you weird excuses as to why you can't meet the mother. A meeting away from the puppies after week 4, should never be a problem.

How To Make The Call

As a rule of thumb, tread wisely if you're not allowed to meet the mother of the puppies if she is on-site. Puppies should be raised by their mother, or they becomes 'at-risk' for behavioral issues down the road.

You're voting with your dollars and cents/sense and your decision should be as 'risk-free' as possible.



HAYES HAUS

Whether you choose Haus Haus for you German Shepherd puppy or not, we wish you the best of luck on your journey. And if you ever need someone to help answer questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us!

