

BMDCA BREED AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

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BMDCA BREED AMBASSADOR PROGRAM PURPOSE STATEMENT

The BMDCA Breed Ambassador Program is a grass roots, person-to-person informational program for those wanting to learn about the breed, understand the importance of responsible breeding practices, ask basic questions about puppy training and what it is like to live with a Berner, gain insights into the various activities that can be enjoyed with Bernese, learn about how to decipher an AKC pedigree and tap into health clearance databases, meet other Berner people and become involved in clubs and activities, find more help beyond the scope of the BMDCA Breed Ambassador Program and connect with knowledgeable, experienced and caring people who can and will answer questions about Bernese Mountain Dogs.

So that you get the best support the BMDCA can offer, we suggest that you contact one of our Breed Ambassadors by phone. While e-mail may be convenient, it may not be a conducive forum for a lengthy or multi-topic discussion. Also, please feel free to contact more than one Breed Ambassador for you will find a wealth of knowledge and experience in this resource.

A sampling of frequently asked questions includes:

- How can I determine if this is the right breed for me and my family?
- What types of health issues are associated with the breed?
- On average, what is a Berner's life expectancy?
- What distinguishes responsible breeders from those who just breed dogs?
- Are there sources of health information pertaining to Bernese Mountain Dogs?
- What can I do to improve my odds of getting a healthy puppy with a good temperament?
- What sources can you recommend for me to use when networking for a puppy?
- What kinds of activities can I hope to enjoy with a Bernese Mountain Dog?
- What type of socialization and training are recommended for a Berner puppy and when should they start?
- How much can I expect to pay for a Berner puppy and what expenses might I incur over the dog's life?
- How would I go about finding obedience training and other dog-related resources close to me?
- If I think I might want to become a breeder what BMDCA resources are available to me?



BMDCA BREED AMBASSADOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Appointed by and Serves at the Sole Discretion of: BMDCA Board of Directors

Basic Purpose: Provides people interested in Bernese Mountain Dogs with basic information about the breed, the BMDCA, the regional BMD clubs, and generic information about how to find responsible BMD breeders. Also helps inquirers to be aware of tools and resources provided by the BMDCA and other approved sources (e.g., AKC, regional BMD clubs, the Berner-Garde Foundation) that will be of assistance in the breeder/puppy search and evaluation process such as the **BMDCA Info Series**, Breed Standard, Online Breeder Referral Program, Berner-Garde database, BMD regional club websites, and more.

Principal Accountabilities:

- Explain the Breed Ambassador Program, including its purpose, scope and limitations;
- Provide information and answer questions about Bernese Mountain Dogs as a breed of dogs (history, breed standard, general nature, health issues, socialization/puppy training/socialization, grooming/hygiene, etc.);
- Help individuals and families assess whether this is the “right breed” or a good choice for them;
- Assist those interested in the breed in obtaining an informed and balanced understanding of the pros and cons associated with this breed (e.g., health issues and potential costs, longevity, exercise requirements, grooming needs, socialization/training needs, etc.);
- Provide general guidance in understanding the importance of health clearances, information contained in pedigrees, information available in the Berner-Garde database, and, generally how to use same in basic and generic breeder/litter evaluation;
- Share information about what responsible breeders do and why, and point out the tools that will help the individual become an informed and educated buyer;
- Help the puppy buyer understand what tools are available on the BMDCA website about puppy rearing and the importance of entering the puppy’s health information into the Berner-Garde database throughout the dog’s life;

- Using the ***BMDCA Info Series*** and other appropriate tools, illustrate the versatile nature of the BMD and point out all of the materials that are available to help a Berner owner get started in various activities with his/her dog;
- Help the inquirer understand that some topics (e.g. breeding mentoring) and levels of question complexity (e.g., beyond basic health and training questions) are outside of the scope of the BAP, and it is the Breed Ambassador's obligation to ask the inquirer to redirect those questions to an outside professional such as the dog's breeder, a veterinarian, a professional dog trainer, etc.
- Be sure not to answer any question for which you don't have the knowledge and seek the assistance of the Breed Ambassador Program Chair/Administrator for guidance;
- Direct those wanting specific BMD breeder referrals only to the BMDCA Online Breeder Referral Program and BMDCA member breeders within the geography the person is willing to travel to purchase a puppy/dog;
- Acquaint interested parties with the values of club membership at the national and regional level and how to's for pursuing membership.
- Fully support and agree to abide by the most current version of the BMDCA Code of Conduct, and, if a BMDCA member who breeds, further agree to comply with those requirements and standards specified for breeders.

Qualifications & Criteria for Participation:

- Must be a member in good standing of the BMDCA for five years;
- Must own, or have owned, a Bernese Mountain Dog for at least five years;
- Must enter and maintain up-to-date health and other data in the Berner-Garde database on all current Bernese Mountain Dogs owned or co-owned.



SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR BMDCA BREED AMBASSADOR

1. **BREED AMBASSADOR VOLUNTEER:** I _____
(*fill in name*) hereby volunteer to serve as a Breed Ambassador for the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America (BMDCA). As a Breed Ambassador I understand and agree to the terms of this Service Agreement as stated below.

2. **QUALIFICATIONS AND CRITERIA:** I understand the following criteria and qualifications for Participation in the Breed Ambassador Program, and I certify that I meet these qualifications and agree to abide by these criteria:
 - I am currently a BMDCA member and have been a member in good standing for at least five years;
 - I currently own, or have owned, a Bernese Mountain Dog for at least five years;
 - I enter and maintain up-to-date health and other data in the Berner-Garde database on all current Bernese Mountain Dogs I own or co-own.
 - I fully support and agree to abide by the most current version of the BMDCA Code of Conduct, and, if I am a BMDCA member who breeds, I further agree to comply with those BMDCA requirements and standards specified for breeders.

3. **TERM OF SERVICE:** I understand that as a Breed Ambassador I am appointed by and serve at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors of the BMDCA. This is a volunteer position that I may resign at any time, or my service as a Breed Ambassador may be discontinued at any time by the BMDCA Board of Directors. As part of the selection process I further understand that my name will be published in the *BMDCA Bulletin* for member comment, and the BMDCA Board of Directors will address any issues that might arise in a timely and appropriate manner.

4. **PURPOSE:** I understand that the Purpose of the Breed Ambassador Program is to provide people interested in Bernese Mountain Dogs (BMD) with basic information about the breed, the BMDCA, the regional BMD clubs, and generic information about how to find responsible BMD breeders. The Breed Ambassador Program also provides information regarding resources provided by the BMDCA and other approved sources (e.g., AKC, regional BMD clubs, the Berner-Garde Foundation) that maybe of assistance in the breeder/puppy search. Such resources may include the *BMDCA Info Series*, the

AKC Breed Standard, the BMDCA Online Breeder Referral Program, BMD Compatibility Profiler, Berner-Garde database, BMD regional club websites, and similar resources.

5. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** I understand that my Responsibilities as a Breed Ambassador include providing the following types of information and assistance to people who are interested in Bernese Mountain Dogs and who come to me for assistance through the Breed Steward Program:
- Explain the Breed Ambassador Program, including its purpose, scope and limitations;
 - Provide information and answer questions about Bernese Mountain Dogs as a breed (history, breed standard, general nature, health issues, socialization/puppy training, grooming/hygiene, etc.);
 - Help individuals and families assess whether the BMD is the “right breed” or a good choice for them;
 - Assist in obtaining an informed and balanced understanding of the pros and cons associated with BMD’s (e.g., health issues and potential costs, longevity, exercise requirements, grooming needs, socialization/training needs, etc.);
 - Provide general guidance in understanding the importance of health clearances, information contained in pedigrees, information available in the Berner-Garde database, and, generally how to use Berner-Garde in basic and generic breeder/litter evaluation;
 - Share information about what responsible breeders do and why, and point out tools that will help the individual become an informed and educated buyer;
 - Help the puppy buyer understand what tools are available on the BMDCA website about puppy rearing;
 - Help the puppy buyer understand the importance of entering the puppy’s health information into the Berner-Garde database throughout the dog’s life;
 - Using the ***BMDCA Info Series*** and other appropriate tools, illustrate the versatile nature of the BMD and identify materials that are available to help a BMD owner get started in various activities with his/her dog;
 - Acquaint interested parties with the values of club membership at the national and regional level and how to’s for pursuing membership.
6. **LIMITATIONS:** I understand that there are limitations to my responsibilities as a Breed Ambassador and I agree that I will:
- Help the inquiring parties understand that some topics (e.g. breeding mentoring) and levels of question complexity (e.g., health or training beyond basic health and training questions) are outside of the scope of the Breed Ambassador Program, and ask the

inquirer to redirect such questions to an outside professional – e.g., the dog’s breeder, a veterinarian, a professional dog trainer, etc.

- Not answer any question for which I don’t have the knowledge and I will seek the assistance of the Breed Ambassador Program Chair/Administrator for guidance;
- Direct those wanting specific BMD breeder referrals only to the BMDCA Online Breeder Referral Program and BMDCA member breeders within the geography the person is willing to travel to purchase a puppy/dog.

Date: _____ Name (print) _____

Signature: _____

Approved by BMDCA Board:

Date: _____ Name (print) _____

Signature: _____

BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG CLUB OF AMERICA CODE OF CONDUCT

(Adopted: December 3, 2003)



The membership of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America (BMDCA) is dedicated to:

- * promoting the standard of the breed
- * advancing the objectives and integrity of the club
- * protecting the interests of the breed and individual dogs
- * promoting quality and integrity in breeding programs

This code is established to further the objectives of the club as set forth in Section 2 of the BMDCA Constitution and By-laws. BMDCA members recognize that as individuals, our practices of ownership, breeding, sportsmanship, and ethics directly affect the welfare of the breed. We realize that no code will ever cover every behavior necessary to protect the breed. Therefore we acknowledge our actions are the truest reflection of our personal integrity and ethics, our commitment to the enhancement of our breed community, and true concern for the welfare of the breed.

1. Promoting the Standard of the Breed

BMDCA members agree to:

- A) use the breed standard created by the BMDCA and adopted by the American Kennel Club (AKC) for the Bernese Mountain Dog (BMD) to assess the suitability of dogs' temperament and type for exhibition in AKC and club events and for breeding.
- B) participate in and/or support events which promote the breed standard and reflect the breed's history and heritage such as specialty shows, performance events and BMDCA Draft Tests.

2. Advancing the Objectives and Integrity of the Club

BMDCA Members agree to:

- A) adhere to all AKC rules, regulations and requirements pertaining to the sport of dogs, the Constitution, Bylaws, and regulations of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America (BMDCA), and this Code of Conduct (COC).
- B) share knowledge truthfully, constructively and respectfully when conveying information about members and members' breeding programs, as well as about individual BMD's.
- C) display good sportsmanship and conduct themselves in a manner that gives credit to the BMDCA, the AKC, and the breed.
- D) encourage and promote public awareness of responsible pet ownership.
- E) ensure that in all dog related activities, the dog's welfare takes precedence over considerations of breeders, trainers, owners, organizations, sponsors, and officials.
- F) participate in activities and programs sponsored by the BMDCA to the best of their ability.

3. Protecting the Interests of the Breed and Individual Dogs

BMDCA members agree to:

- A) keep only as many dogs for which they can provide a high standard of health care, shelter, nutrition, attention, affection, and overall care.
- B) provide appropriate training, exercise and supervision to ensure their dogs are well mannered, kept in safe conditions, and are not abused or neglected.
- C) not allow their dogs to roam at large unsupervised, nor to become a public nuisance or a public burden.
- D) ensure to their best ability that all dogs they place are not brokered, wholesaled or consigned through a pet shop, auction or other commercial establishment; and are not offered as prizes in contests, raffles or fundraising events.
- E) ensure to their best ability that no stud dog or brood bitch owned by them is bred to any dog or bitch whose owner is directly or indirectly involved with any dog broker, puppy mill, pet shop that retails dogs, auction, litter lot sales, or any other commercial enterprise whose business is involved in these activities.
- F) ensure that all animals released to the care of others have received the health care appropriate for their age and needs.
- G) prior to placing any BMD, discuss with the prospective owner the health care and behavior management needs of the dog and provide recommendations for general care.
- H) guarantee the health of the dog subject to a veterinarian's examination, at a minimum, within 72 hours of placement.
- I) provide assistance to dogs of their breeding in need of rehoming whether through a shelter, auction, rescue organization or an individual. Stud dog owners should also assist with rehoming of dogs sired by their stud dogs.

BMDCA members are encouraged to:

- J) use a written contract detailing all guarantees, obligations, and expectations of sellers, buyers, receivers and providers of services.
- K) assure that any dog they place which is not suitable for breeding is placed with an AKC limited registration and a non-breeding contract. A spay/neuter requirement is additionally recommended.

4. Promoting Quality and Integrity in Breeding Programs

Members who wish to breed Bernese Mountain Dogs should do so with the full understanding of the responsibility they bear to the future of the breed and with the paramount intention of improving and protecting the breed. Breeders should understand the breed standard, evaluate individual mature dogs' traits, evaluate traits present in a breeding dog's immediate and extended family, and apply the principles of genetics. Additionally breeders should have a practical knowledge of mating, care of the bitch in whelp, raising a litter, and the time, effort and resources required to engage in this activity.

Ideally the suitability of BMD's for breeding purposes should be assessed after twenty-four months of age. The BMDCA recognizes that some breeders with extensive knowledge of the breed and of a dog's extended family may, in special circumstances, elect to use less mature animals for breeding. Minimum ages stated in this code are not recommended for use routinely. The recommended age for first breeding a BMD is after twenty- four months.

Experienced member breeders should make themselves available as a resource to novice breeders when requested. Conversely novice breeders should actively recruit assistance from experienced breeders when engaging in this activity. All members should assist the breeders of their dogs by keeping them informed of their dogs' development throughout life.

BMDCA members who breed agree to:

- A) adhere to AKC rules applying to litter and individual registrations, ensuring that any litter they produce is eligible for AKC registration.
- B) refrain from breeding females prior to eighteen months and males before twelve months of age.
- C) ensure a female bears puppies no more than two out of three seasons. A period of a one year rest between litters is desirable.
- D) use for breeding only animals which exhibit good type, are in good health, and are physically and temperamentally sound. Shy and aggressive dogs will be eliminated from breeding.
- E) obtain an evaluation for hip and elbow dysplasia from the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) or other BMDCA recognized orthopedic registry prior to using a BMD for breeding. Regardless of any prior evaluations, all dogs over 24 months of age who are to be used for breeding must be evaluated by the OFA or other BMDCA recognized orthopedic registry for hip and elbow dysplasia after 24 months of age and prior to being bred.
- F) provide new owners the following documentation: this COC, an AKC registration application or registration papers for the individual dog, a health and veterinary care history, evidence of the individual's and/or sire and dam's health certifications or evaluations, a four generation pedigree, and recommendations for general care and training.
- G) remain available for advice, when sought, for the lifetime of offspring from their dogs.
- H) ensure to the best of their ability that puppies produced from any of their BMDs will be raised and sold in a manner in accordance with this COC.
- I) exhibit at dog shows and matches where feasible.

The BMDCA recommends that members:

- J) assess whether prospective breeding candidates and their immediate relatives are affected with or carriers of hereditary disease for which there is diagnostic testing. Such hereditary diseases include, but may not be limited to, hip and elbow dysplasia, eye disease, thyroid disease, heart disease, and von Willebrand disease.
- K) submit and update data to the Berner-Garde database.
- L) use dogs for breeding which are at least two years old, have sound temperament, structure, conformation, and type, and who have been evaluated and are known to be not affected with a crippling nor disabling defect nor affected with a known hereditary disease for which there is diagnostic testing.
- M) refrain from using dogs for breeding which, although unaffected with a specific physical or temperament defect, consistently produce afflicted offspring with different mates.
- N) transfer puppies to new owners in accordance with the laws of their state and meet, at least, the minimum federal standard for transporting puppies (8 weeks of age).
- O) obtain an AKC DNA profile on all dogs used for breeding.

As a member of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America, I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Signature: _____

Date: _____