



VSO Breeders' Code of Practice: For Members Applying for the VSO Breeders' List

NOTE: Ethical Breeders meet the VSO Members' Code of Conduct (2019) and in addition agree to the following Vizsla Breeders' List Code of Practice if they wish to apply for the VSO's Breeders' List.

Breed Clubs: Reputable breeders support Vizsla breed clubs and are members of both their local, national, and international Vizsla clubs. They are involved with and provide information on the national and local clubs to callers. VSO Breeders' List breeders encourage their puppy owners to become involved in Vizsla activities, the Vizsla Society of Ontario, Vizsla Canada, the Vizsla Club of America and regional Vizsla clubs. Ethical breeders buy memberships for, or at least send a free issue of the newsletter to, all their puppy buyers in order to create a new generation of breed club members and supporters.

Sportsmanship: Ethical Vizsla breeders protect and advance the development of the Vizsla through continued improvement of soundness, stable temperament, natural hunting ability and conformation as set forth in the official Vizsla Standard. VSO Breeders' List breeders are honest about the faults in the breed and in their line and recognize that other breeders also care about and are committed to the Vizsla as a breed. While there may be breeders, they do not feel they can recommend, they let silence speak for itself. Ethical breeders should provide puppy buyers with a choice - they should be able to talk to other breeders with confidence.

Health: Reputable breeders never breed Vizslas under the age of two, and ideally choose to wait until three years of age. They are aware that most genetic defects will show up before the age of three - for example idiopathic or inherited epilepsy usually shows up between the ages of two and three. VSO Breeders' List breeders follow the breed-specific recommendations for health testing set out by the [Canine Health Information Center](#) (CHIC) for Vizslas. CHIC certificates (with numbers) are issued to:

- Smooth Vizslas tested and for which results are published on the OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) website:
 - hip dysplasia (OFA x-ray certification and/or Penn-HIP)
 - autoimmune thyroiditis (OFA)
 - eyes (OFA CAER - Companion Animal Eye Registry).

- Wirehair Vizslas tested and published on the OFA website for:
 - hip dysplasia (OFA x-ray certification and/or Penn-HIP)
 - eyes (OFA CAER - Companion Animal Eye Registry).

In addition, it is recommended that VSO breeders test for:

- congenital cardiac disease
- elbow dysplasia
- hyperuricosuria (Wirehair Vizsla only).

These health records may be found on the [OFA website](#). Other non-OFA certified tests that are recommended include tests for von Willebrand's Disease, and Schirmer's tear tests.

In addition, ethical breeders maintain the best possible standard of canine health, cleanliness, and veterinary care in an atmosphere conducive to the stable mental and physical development of their dogs. Ethical breeders breed only with the intention of improving the breed by breeding only those Vizslas who conform to the standard as recognized by the Canadian Kennel Club and who exhibit soundness, stable temperament and natural hunting ability. Further, Breeders' List breeders shall breed only those dogs who are free of serious hereditary defects (including hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, epilepsy, progressive retinal atrophy, inherited cataracts, entropion, ectropion, Keratitis Corneal Sicca (KCS), Von Willebrand's blood clotting disorder, thyroid malfunction, cardiac problems, sebaceous adenitis, and cranial muscular atrophy).

Temperament: VSO Breeders' List breeders are fully aware that temperament is a keystone of the Vizsla breed. The best show dog, the best hunting dog, the best obedience or agility dog are nothing if they are shy or aggressive. Vizslas live closely with their families. Breeders recognize that knowingly breeding poorly tempered dogs presents a risk to society. While both nature and nurture impact temperament, it remains clear that temperament is a strongly heritable trait, and there are many examples in Vizslas of poor temperaments which can be traced back for generations. Vizslas should be active, happy, outgoing, and unreservedly friendly, without a trace of shyness or aggressiveness. VSO Breeders' List breeders recognize that breeding dogs with any other traits is irresponsible.

Support: VSO Breeders' List breeders commit to support the dogs they breed and their owners for the lifetime of the dog. Reputable breeders take back puppies they have bred, assess them, and find homes for them if they ever need to be placed again. They recognize that the decision to bring this life into the world was theirs and they take the responsibility of protecting it. Their contracts clearly state that puppies must be returned to them, no matter what their age.

Sales: VSO Breeders' List breeders:

- Do not breed, sell, or consign puppies or adult dogs to pet shops or other commercial ventures such as lotteries or raffles.
- Honestly evaluate the quality of the Vizsla sold, fairly represent that evaluation, and urge puppy purchasers not to breed dogs which, for any reason should not be used for breeding.
- Do not release puppies under seven weeks of age.

- Furnish details on feeding, care, inoculations, pedigrees and provide written sales agreements.
- Sell any puppy which will not be used for breeding on Non-Breeding Contracts from the CKC or Limited Registration from AKC. CKC Non-Breeding Contracts may be subsequently lifted (at no additional charge except that charged by the CKC). Reputable breeders know the damage ill-informed and indiscriminate breeding can do to the breed. Non-breeding contracts are one way to help prevent this. If non-breeding contracts are not an option, reputable breeders sell puppies on co-ownerships.
- Screen all prospective buyers to assure that puppies have safe and loving homes.
- Introduce potential owners to their Vizsla family and show where a litter is being whelped and raised.
- Provide a written agreement for review prior to sale.
- Provide CKC or AKC registration papers, a signed written agreement, and a veterinary health certificate upon sale.
- Provide a guarantee with their puppies. The puppies must be guaranteed to be healthy when they leave the house. Veterinary inspection should be required within 72 hours to confirm this. In addition, VSO Breeders' List breeders offer a guarantee against genetic defects.
- Supply assistance and support to puppy buyers for the life of the dog.

Knowledge:

- **Standards and Pedigrees:** VSO Breeders' List breeders strive to breed according to the CKC and AKC Breed Standards for the Vizsla. Ethical breeders ensure their Vizslas remain true to type in the show ring, in the field, and at home with the family, and that their Vizslas represent all physical characteristics which have distinguished the breed. Ethical breeders work hard to acquire information both about dogs in general and about the Vizsla breed in particular. This means more than reading the 20 or so books currently in print about Vizslas. VSO Breeders' List breeders should be fully knowledgeable about the pedigrees of their own dogs, as well as the pedigrees of the stud dogs they breed to, and will share pedigree information (e.g., health and temperament going back 5 generations) with prospective buyers. Ethical breeders provide potential owners with information on how to [search for a pedigree](#).
- **Function, Health, and Temperament:** Ethical breeders know and always breed with the function of the Vizsla in mind. Vizslas are medium sized, hunting dogs. Breeding for hunting ability, conformation, temperament, and genetic health is not easy - but it is a disservice to the breed to do any less. VSO Breeders' List breeders make decisions on breeding to sires based on the best decisions for health, temperament, conformation, and ability of the breed, not on which sire is most convenient. Unless an ethical breeder truly feels that a dog is a superior representative of the breed and the pedigrees of mating partners combine well, it is irresponsible to breed simply for the sake of having a litter. This means that ethical breeders may breed, keep, raise, train, and show several bitches before deciding one is worth breeding. VSO Breeders' List breeders can clearly explain why a particular breeding seeks to improve upon the dam's and sire's characteristics.

- **Inbreeding:** VSO Breeders' List breeders are fully informed about the dangers of inbreeding and the difference between inbreeding and line-breeding. This is especially important in Vizslas since the initial gene pool for Vizslas was small and contained sufficient problems that any great duplication of blood-lines runs considerable risk of genetic problems. Line-breeding is only valuable for a breed when the lines being closely crossed are free of problems - otherwise the genetic future of the breed is placed at risk.

Sharing Knowledge: Reputable breeders provide callers with information on how to look for a good breeder. Many people have no idea what questions to ask when looking for a puppy. Reputable breeders should provide them with this information. Reputable breeders are honest about the faults as well as the advantages of our breed. It is only fair to warn potential owners that they are obviously not getting an unbiased view about Vizslas as a breed if they are talking to someone who loves the breed enough to breed them. In addition, a VSO Breeders' List breeder is honest about the inherited problems which are found in the breed and does not try to pretend that the Vizsla is the 'perfect' breed for everyone.

Approved by the VSO Board of Directors on July 17, 2023.