

WHAT DOES AKC REALLY MEAN?

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United Coton de Tulear Association for Rescue
and Education – a 501(c)3 non-profit charity

The debate is raging about AKC recognition for the Coton de Tulear. Consider the following:

- AKC pedigree means the dog is well bred or does it?

According to the AKC website, AKC *does not guarantee the quality or health of* dogs in its registry. AKC is only a registry body which also sanctions dog events.

- AKC pedigree means the dog is a purebred – or is it?

The language contained in an AKC pedigree states that the information provided is not guaranteed and that AKC is not liable for any resulting damages. In 1999, Dateline NBC conducted a hidden camera investigation of Commercial Dog Breeding. Dateline conducted a test of the AKC registration procedures to determine how easy it is to obtain AKC papers for an animal. Dateline successfully registered two pets with the AKC and received two registration certificates stating that two purebred Golden Retriever puppies had been registered. However, in reality, those two purebred Golden Retriever puppies were 13 year old cats.

- Dogs with AKC pedigrees do not come from puppy mills – or do they?

AKC has established a High Volume Breeder Committee; however, they told the Dateline reporter that AKC does oppose large scale commercial breeding. A “high volume breeder” has been known to have as many as 500 dogs in his kennel producing litter after litter that are registered with the AKC. These high volume breeders sell their dogs at auctions to brokers who sell the pups to pet stores. AKC told Dateline “we do not champion the cause of the pet shop but can’t stop pet shops from taking advantage of the AKC name”. The High Volume Breeder Committee established a rule that all AKC dogs sold at auction must be at least 8 weeks old and microchipped. The AKC representative attends these auctions and apparently turns a blind eye when the auctioneer indicates that the mom up for bid has a litter of puppies that can’t be put on the auction table because they are only 3 weeks old. The winning bid amount generally includes the puppies.

- Pet stores get their AKC puppies from quality breeders – or do they?

A number of pet stores get their puppies through the Hunte Corporation, the largest distributor of puppies in the United States, which gets its puppies from those “high volume breeders”. The Hunte Corporation sponsors an annual breeder conference with keynote speakers who have been board members, judges or employees of the AKC. At the September, 2006 AKC Delegates Meeting, AKC reported that it had reached an agreement with the Petland chain (150+ stores) “in order to facilitate the registration of dogs” – a major departure

from the statement made to Dateline about pet shops. However, that agreement was ultimately withdrawn based in part on comments that AKC received from a number of outraged breeders.

It is UCARE's opinion that AKC recognition would not be a positive step for the Coton de Tulear. Although there are a number of reputable breeders of AKC registered dogs, it is also true that AKC seems to be the preferred registry of "high volume breeders". Many of those "high volume breeders" raise their dogs in crowded cages with inadequate food, water, and medical attention and sell their pups to an unsuspecting public who believes that AKC pedigrees mean the dogs are well bred, purebred dogs.

The current volume of Cotons in puppy mills is relatively low but would increase exponentially if the Coton is recognized by the AKC and the result would be an increase in health problems in the breed and an increase in the number of Cotons in shelters across the United States.

It would be a very sad day for those of us who have known and loved this breed for a long time to see its rapid decline in health, temperament and appearance because of AKC recognition. If you agree and care about our breed, **just say NO to the AKC!**