



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®

## Creating Demand for Purebred Dogs

By Mike Ganey, Vice President AKC Marketing

There is one thing we all can agree on about our business. We all depend on *consistent consumer demand for purebred dogs* for our livelihood. And while the current economic downturn has caused many organizations to slash budgets, the AKC has expanded its marketing efforts, working to create preference for AKC-registrable purebreds.

### AKC Meet the Breeds®

Because of the AKC's unique scale and depth of our involvement, we create events other organizations can only dream about. Events that draw thousands of pet owners and potential pet owners—events that have a positive impact on your business whether you are a breeder selling to distributors, dealers, pet stores, or direct to consumers.

One of the largest additions to AKC's marketing toolbox has been its events strategy. For the past three years, the AKC has hosted a major event called "AKC Meet the Breeds." Sponsored by PetPartners, Inc. a leading pet healthcare provider, AKC Meet the Breeds is the world's largest showcase of dogs. It offers pet lovers a unique opportunity to play with some of the country's rarest dog breeds while educating themselves about responsible pet ownership and choosing the right pet for their lifestyle.

This October event, which last year drew over 40,000 attendees, is held at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City. It spans 160,000 square feet of event space to accommodate enhanced breed booths and activities for spectators. Consumers can observe demonstration rings featuring law enforcement K9s, grooming, agility, obedience and more.



Families can literally 'meet' thousands of dogs, including some of the rarest breeds most people have only read about. Animal lovers get to play with a 200 pound Mastiff dog that is larger than most New York City kitchens and pet a hairless Xolo puppy, all while learning about the characteristics of more than 160 dog breeds.

Offering over 200 individually decorated official breed booths, AKC Meet the Breeds allows dog lovers to interact with dogs and puppies, and learn about their history and unique attributes directly from the experts. There are 100 vendor booths offering every imaginable product for pets and their owners. Last year's event was a big hit with the press, generating 490 million media impressions. When attendees leave determined to add one of these breeds to their family, we all benefit.

## Responsible Dog Ownership Days

In addition to AKC Meet the Breeds, the AKC hosts many Responsible Dog Ownership events that reach pet lovers all across the country. These community events highlight AKC programs and services that support responsible dog ownership. The AKC publicizes these events to news media and the dog loving community.



What do these events include? Canine Good Citizen® tests, AKC/CAR microchip clinics; health clinics and screening; obedience, agility, AKC Rally®, and performance demonstrations; and exercises by therapy dogs or Police K9 Units.

Last year, more than 630 dog clubs and other organizations hosted events reaching millions of dog lovers and potential pet owners through extensive media coverage. Dog lovers also posted thousands of “Acts of Responsible Dog Ownership” on our Facebook and Twitter pages to help celebrate “Virtual AKC RDO Days.”

## AKC Adds Value for You

So how do these AKC events help breeders? By helping create preference and demand for purebreds, no matter where the consumer chooses to buy their purebred dog. Giving consumers a positive, hands-on experience is an important way we remind potential dog owners of the unique benefits of purebreds, in a fun, informative way.

The most tangible benefit for breeders, however, is reflected in dollars and cents. Sure, AKC litter registrations may *cost* more than other registries, but we turn that difference into a *marketing investment* that can yield more *margin* for you. It’s evident in the premiums paid by many distributors, retailers, and consumers for AKC-registrable dogs.

For over 127 years, the AKC has built a reputation on superior breed knowledge and predictability dog owners seek. That reputation and endorsement, properly communicated, can directly yield greater value for you. Helping breeders thrive, even in a down economy, is our ongoing commitment. And events are just one highly visible means of helping you promote your dogs.

You will be hearing more about new additions to our marketing toolbox in the coming months.

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact your AKC Breeder Relations Team at 1-800-252-5545, PIN 74777 or [dogbreeders@akc.org](mailto:dogbreeders@akc.org).



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