



Thank you for your interest in adopting a Fidelity Farm Labrador puppy! The addition of a faithful Labrador family member is an exciting experience, and we believe our lives are truly richer for their presence in them! We raise conformation/British-type Labradors, bred to uphold the AKC Lab standard. You are welcome to arrange a time to visit the farm and meet our dogs! Just email or give us a call and we will be happy to set up a mutually workable time. We are proud of our Minions! 😊

Please take time to read over things pertaining to health, guarantee, and puppy topics on our website, [www.fidelityfarmlabradors.com](http://www.fidelityfarmlabradors.com). It is our earnest hope to help make this process both fun, as well as informative. We hope to assist with some of the “tools” you will need to be the best puppy/dog-owner possible. There are many wonderful resources available, so (if not already) we hope you will enjoy becoming a lifelong Labrador enthusiast!

**While by no means exhaustive, we hope the following will be a helpful resource as you begin your journey. We’re confident this furry friend will soon occupy a very special place in your heart! ❤️ Adding a Fidelity Farm puppy to your family also makes you an extended part of ours, so please feel free to contact us with any questions ([info@fidelityfarmlabradors.com](mailto:info@fidelityfarmlabradors.com)).**

### **COMMITMENT REQUIRED**

A puppy should never be an impulse-purchase. This new family member will be around for a while! 😊 The average lifespan of a quality-bred Labrador is 10-14 years. Thanks to her ethical breeding and wonderful genetics our recently-passed, sweet Molly lived a few months past her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday! Proper raising and training require time, effort, patience, and financial resources for supplies and appropriate veterinary care. A dog’s innate essence is to serve and love unconditionally, so the return on any such investment typically merits a faithful, devoted companion for many years to come! We highly recommend the following two books as great resources both before and after your puppy comes home: [How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With](https://www.amazon.com/How-Raise-Puppy-You-Live/dp/1577790766), by Clarice Rutherford and David H. Neil (<https://www.amazon.com/How-Raise-Puppy-You-Live/dp/1577790766>), and [Your Labrador Retriever Puppy Month by Month](https://www.amazon.com/Your-Labrador-Retriever-Puppy-Month/dp/1465451064), by Terry Albert, Deb Eldredge, DVM, and Don and Barb Ironside (<https://www.amazon.com/Your-Labrador-Retriever-Puppy-Month/dp/1465451064>).

### **HISTORY**

We have a 30 year history owning Labradors together, and Cindy’s family had a very special one (Peaches) on the farm as she grew up. That said, we knew what we wanted when selecting foundation animals: proven conformation/British-type show lines not only amazing in themselves, but those that would also complement and positively contribute to the other. Our focus at Fidelity Farm is on temperament, health and conformation – “the All-Purpose Labrador”, whose trainability and family-friendly sweetness are its hallmark! ❤️

### **TESTING, CLEARANCES AND QUALITY MATTER**

All our dogs have been thoroughly tested for recessive genetic and physical (hips, elbows, heart, & eyes) health issues, so you can be confident in the future long-term health of your puppy free from typical maladies many breeders do not take the time and significant financial investment to test for (Paw Print Genetics, PennHip, CAER/CERF, & OFA). You will receive our signed 2-year guarantee on Adoption Day along with copies of your puppy’s parents’ clearances. For this guarantee to remain valid there can be no signs of abuse; your puppy should have been fed a high quality food; and proper documented care must have been received from a

qualified veterinarian, as needed. Should it become necessary, our veterinarian will assess any documentation and consult your personal veterinarian to verify any covered issues. We stand behind our dogs 100%.

### **DEPOSIT AND AKC REGISTRATION**

The date we receive your Adoption Application and deposit of \$300 will determine your “pick number” when it comes time to select your puppy. We retain the option of first-pick on all litters, as we will be assessing future show and foundation prospects to continue to improve our Fidelity Farm lines. Over the course of the puppies’ initial 8 weeks we will observe and record personality tendencies to help recommend particular individuals that best-match your stated Adoption Application preferences. If your firmly-preferred gender of puppy does not end up in the specific litter applied for, we will gladly refund your money, or move your deposit forward to the next litter of choice in available “pick order”. The remaining balance will be due prior to adoption day, or in cash the day of. Any personal check must clear our bank prior to you taking your puppy home. We will supply you with the proper paperwork to submit to AKC for a Limited Registration on adoption day. All Fidelity Farm puppies are sold with Limited AKC Registration Papers as Pets (no breeding rights). Limited AKC Registration still allows participation at AKC events including: obedience, agility, tracking, field trial, hunting tests, herding, lure coursing, Earthdog, etc. The only exception is showing at AKC Conformation events, which requires Full Registration. Full AKC Registration may be granted on a limited basis to select breeders or show homes. All AKC-registered names must begin with “Fidelity Farm’s \_\_\_\_\_”.

### **VETERINARY CARE**

If not already the case, we recommend you find a well-respected local veterinarian, as she or he will be an important resource throughout your dog’s life.

### **WHELPING AND EARLY SOCIALIZATION**

Puppies are born in our home where we can closely monitor and assist for the duration of each whelping. Our veterinarian is notified and on-call should additional help be needed. Litters are monitored 24 hours a day, in person, as well as via live video feed. Mothers and puppies receive appropriate, tender-loving care. While initial immunities are transferred from the mother through milk, puppies’ systems are very sensitive to outside infection (bacterial, viral and parasitic). For that reason, we do not allow visitation of puppies during the first 8 weeks until you come to pick them up. Presence of a stray “bug” (particularly Parvovirus) on the sole of an outwardly clean looking shoe could pose life-threatening consequences to an entire litter! We will however, regularly post pictures so you can see all the puppies’ progress. Special, colored bands will be placed around each puppy’s neck so we can track weight and temperament tendencies as they develop. Critical socialization begins at approximately 3 weeks of age once eyes are open and first real steps are taken. We have a carefully-trained human socialization team ☺ who will regularly interact with each puppy. We use the “Rule of 7’s” to help ensure puppies receive a wide variety of experiences to enrich their development.

### **ADOPTION DAY!**

Well in advance, we will coordinate the date and time to pick up your new puppy. Please be thinking ahead to approximately 8 weeks post-birth, and leave a needed window of flexibility to schedule this important day. We will schedule specific, individual times to come in “pick order”. An appropriate, lined basin/basket to put your puppy in for his ride home would be helpful. To lessen anxiety on his/her (or your ☺) part, you may want a non-driver with you to hold and cuddle puppy at least part of the way. To lessen any potential little messes (puppies have small bladders at this point), you can use a puppy-training pad as liner and/or “blanket” on your lap. We also recommend being prepared with a roll of paper towels and hand wipes. Small dishes for both food and water are helpful as well; especially if you’re coming from a greater distance. We are happy to fill your water container with our water, since puppy may be sensitive to its change.

## **NEW! HOME SWEET HOME**

It's important to have a safe, comfortable place for puppy when he comes home with you. A small, collapsible puppy pen is very helpful. Example: <https://www.chewy.com/frisco-dog-exercise-pen-step-through/dp/125049> . You can even connect this type of pen to a wire pet crate to begin crate training! Place the pen on a washable floor, or line with cardboard initially, until he gets the hang of pottying outside. Make sure he gets outside frequently to relieve himself; especially after eating. Once outside introduce a designated command such as "go potty", to reinforce that you want him to do his business outside! When successful, be sure to be extravagant with verbal praise and petting. Your puppy is smart and will learn quickly, the more consistent you are!

If you have other dogs or pets, make sure you closely supervise introductions and any interaction until puppy is big enough to be able to fend for himself. These positive introductions are super important to get right! Small, separate dishes (stainless steel is best) for water and food are important, along with puppy-appropriate soft and hard toys. It's best to rotate toys, so puppy doesn't get bored. For the first year, feeding 3 times per day is recommended – divide daily amount specified on food bag given the puppy's weight. Keep plenty of fresh water available.

This initial time of bonding between you and your puppy is very important. Do not be harsh in your tone or actions, as this can set a pattern for interaction that is not helpful to overall trust development and learning. No matter the age, your dog wants your love and praise. With patience, consistent expectations, and rewards (verbal praise, petting and treats when appropriate) for positive behaviors, puppy will learn quickly.

**Safety** for your puppy is very important while they are young and ready to explore their world. Keep in mind, he/she is at an equivalent "toddler stage" when he goes home with you. His little body will be growing quickly, and it is important that you limit certain activities that can result in damage to joints, etc.

- Never let him jump off anything higher than his own shoulders for the first year.
- Give him plenty of opportunities to rest and nap.
- Do not take him for long walks, unless you are willing to carry him a good part of the way. 😊
- Keep play from becoming too physical.
- Do not purposely frighten your puppy. It will make them fearful about new situations and life in general.
- Regularly check his ears and trim toenails when needed. Getting him accustomed to this as a puppy will make caring for him much easier as he gets bigger.
- Inspect your yard fence regularly to make sure holes have not been dug so he can get out.
- Keep training time fun, regular in frequency, and limited in duration.
- Keep all recommended veterinary appointments, and don't hesitate to ask lots of questions!
- Make sure all home and outdoor chemicals are not within puppy's reach. Just like small children, whatever they find will probably go in their mouth!

## **CARE AND PREVENTATIVES**

We worm puppies beginning at 2 weeks of age and continue at two week intervals until you pick puppy up at 8 weeks. This is a standard, recommend preventative, since it is not uncommon for treated, un-presenting mothers to potentially pass them through milk to the puppies. Puppy will also be given his first combo vaccination just prior to going home with you.

Each Fidelity Farm Labrador Puppy will be examined by our Veterinarian prior to you taking him or her home. They will be micro-chipped and checked for heart murmur, eye, and overall health. You will receive a record to give your veterinarian at your first visit. This appointment with your veterinarian should be scheduled within the

first day or two of having them home to make sure they are transitioning properly to their new surroundings. Your veterinarian will arrange appointments for the remaining puppy booster shots and worming.

We will let you know what puppy food we have been feeding, and encourage you stay with it for at least a couple weeks before slowly transitioning to a different brand, should you choose to do so. If you bring a container or two suitable for water, we would be happy to send you home with some of ours. All water tastes different with varying mineral levels, and puppy may be initially sensitive to the change. **It is very important to keep your puppy well-hydrated during this transition!** The natural stress that a change of location and “hu-moms” can bring on make it extremely important that dehydration does not occur. Your puppy’s pooh should remain regular in form. It may soften slightly as they adjust to new surroundings; however, if it becomes loose, and/or they are not wanting to drink water, consult your veterinarian immediately! This rarely happens; however, still keep watch.

### **PUPPY (AND HUMAN) TRAINING**

We encourage you to begin training right away! Labradors are super-smart and very food-motivated learners. We’ve had much success using small, soft training treats (available at most pet stores), such as Pet Botanics (<http://www.petbotanics.com/training-reward-treats>). Begin with the mini-size teaching your puppy his name, along with “sit”, “wait” and “okay”(release) commands before feeding, etc. Keep a few treats in your pocket, and regularly use your puppy’s name in his presence. Immediately reward him when he turns his attention after you call his name. Add the command “come” with his name, and always speak this command with a happy voice, so he will be eager to obey. At mealtime, begin teaching puppy to “sit” and “wait” before his meal is set before him. Then give the release command, “okay”, for him to go ahead and eat. You can also use these commands and rewards when having the puppy sit and wait for his pen gate to be opened (or a door). Puppies are quick to learn! Just make sure all family members are consistent, so puppy doesn’t get confused!

Another great option once all initial puppy immunizations have been received is formal training, such as AKC Star Puppy and obedience classes. They are truly worth your time; whether new to dog ownership or a veteran! It’s a great way to learn and develop a strong, life-long partnership with your pup! The importance of socialization they receive while in class cannot be under-estimated in helping to produce a confident, well-balanced dog. Plus, it’s fun! The camaraderie and encouragement received from other puppy-owners is incredibly helpful as well. The more your puppy learns, the prouder you will be to show him or her off! 😊

### **FEEDING**

Proper feeding has a huge effect on your puppy’s healthy growth and development. It is recommended to feed puppies three times per day, in (divided) amounts stated on the puppy food bag (according to weight). There are many high quality foods available at varying costs. The “best” food is not necessarily the most expensive; however, cheap foods are generally manufactured from cheaply-sourced ingredients and may not be a wise choice. One way to check a particular food is to type its name and “recall” in an internet search. If there is a “pattern” of multiple recall incidents, stay away from it. It is the **quality** and form of ingredients, as well as guaranteed nutrient analysis that are important factors to consider. Just as with human bodies, if you put nutritious food in, you usually reap positive health benefits! The first ingredient listed should be a high quality, responsibly-sourced meat-meal or meat (chicken, turkey, lamb, beef, salmon, etc). The puppy food we feed has chicken and chicken meal as the first two ingredients, with eggs as a second source of the overall 27% minimum crude protein content. It includes natural prebiotic fiber from chicory root, probiotics (with live active cultures), DHA and omega-3 & 6 fatty acids from salmon oil, chicken fats (preserved with mixed tocopherols), and AFFCO-guaranteed levels of important vitamins and minerals derived from high quality fruit, root, and vegetable sources. We do **not** feed table scraps of any type to our dogs. A high quality dog food is balanced

for a dog's needs, and introduction of table scraps can be a negative for their overall health. We do use fresh baby carrots, apple slices (no seeds), etc., as convenient periodic snacks. Canned (no-salt) green beans are also an option for the "always hungry" dog whose weight may be an issue. Below are a couple helpful links listing a variety of human foods and their fitness for canine consumption.

<http://www.akc.org/content/health/articles/human-foods-dogs-can-and-cant-eat/>,

<http://www.akc.org/content/health/articles/fruits-vegetables-dogs-can-and-cant-eat/>.

## **CHEWING**

Did we mention... Labradors chew?!! ☺ Yes, they do! Make sure to have proper chew toys readily available, so shoes and other more important items are not creatively substituted by your puppy! We like to begin with puppy-level Nylabone toys. You can also introduce puppy-appropriate soft toys to gauge their chewing tendencies. As puppy grows, if they are a bit of a "power chewer", transition them to the harder Nylabone chews. We also like the Kong brand, which has a number of good options. Do **not** feed rawhide chews as they can cause life-threatening GI obstruction! Poultry and fish bones are also very dangerous due to their shape and physical nature. There are different opinions on larger beef and/or pork bones. We do not use them with our dogs. Labs are voracious eaters and the potential of swallowing large (impassible) pieces of bone, once broken off, outweigh any benefit in our estimation. You may want to consult your veterinarian.

## **THE TEENAGE PHASE**

As puppies grow toward adulthood, they too go through a teenage phase that can be challenging at times. Unfortunately, pet-owners who are not aware of this can become frustrated as their "charges" test the boundaries of conduct from time to time. It is super important that you recognize this is just a stage, and that proper early training can make a considerable difference while passing through it! We believe it's best educate yourself and be consistent (and early) with training.

## **SPAYING AND NEUTERING**

We recommend waiting until your dog is at least 12-14 months old before spaying or neutering them, as research is now showing that "adolescent hormones" play a critical role in the overall healthy development of your dog. Early alteration has led to certain issues that can negatively affect health and skeletal development. That said it is important to know that male Labradors can reach their sexual maturity as early as 6 months of age, so you will need to take care in monitoring his whereabouts. Females can have their first heat cycle as early as 6-9 months. Under no circumstances should either be allowed to sire a litter, or become pregnant! Have a good conversation with your vet; however, if they recommend spaying or neutering before a year old, we still recommend waiting a bit longer for the sake of your dog's holistic health.

## **IN CLOSING**

Thank you again for adopting a precious Fidelity Farm puppy! We wish you a lifetime of fun and happiness with your new furry family member! Should you care to share updates with us from time to time, we would be excited to hear how you and your new puppy are doing! We would also be thankful for your recommendations to others who may also be interested in a Labrador puppy. Best wishes from our family to yours!

Blain & Cindy Secor  
Fidelity Farm Labradors

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