The choice of a dog is an important one. Consider the following before making this decision.

### NEW ADDITION TO THE FAMILY?

You are thinking of inviting a dog into your home as part of your family. A dog can bring happiness, love, and companionship. However, it is important to ensure that your lifestyle and your living situation are conducive to having a pet. Here are some key considerations:

1. **Research:**
   - **Do you have enough time to commit to your dog?**
   - **Are you prepared for the financial responsibilities?**
   - **Is your home and lifestyle suitable for a dog?**

2. **Consultation:**
   - **Contact local animal control or animal welfare organizations.**
   - **Ask neighbors or friends about their experiences with pets.**

3. **Visit a shelter or rescue group:**
   - **Choose a dog who matches your lifestyle and preferences.**
   - **Visit several shelters to find the right fit.**

### WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR LIFETIME?

- Different breeds, sizes, and temperaments of dogs will influence the type of care and amount of exercise required. Consider your ability to provide an appropriate environment for the dog.
- Some breeds require more exercise and socialization than others.

### WHAT IS A PUPPY MILL?

A puppy mill is defined by the USDA as a high-volume, sub-standard breeding operation, which holds puppies in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions for breeding purposes. Puppy mills are often used as a source of puppies for pet stores. Here are some red flags to watch out for:

- **Minimum care:** Puppies are not properly exercised or socialized.
- **Health problems:** Puppies may have genetic defects or hereditary disorders.
- **Poor living conditions:** Puppies are kept in cramped, unsanitary conditions.

### HEALTH ISSUES AND PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PUPPY MILL

- **Symptoms to observe:**
  - **Diarrhea or stained hair around the anus**
  - **Pot-belly**
  - **Skin allergies**
  - **Eye or ear infections**

### ISSUES AT THE TIME OF SALE

- **Documentation:**
  - **Pedigree**
  - **Health certificates**
  - **Microchip or tattoo**

### COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT

- **National Companion Animal Coalition (NCAC)**
- **Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada (PIJAC)**
- **Canadian Kennel Club**
- **Canadian Veterinary Medical Association**

### OUR CHECKLIST IS HERE TO HELP YOU!

- **Physical examination:**
  - **Exercise ability:**
  - **Socialization:**

- **Age of the puppy:**
  - **Weight:**

- **Health status:**
  - **Vaccinations:**
  - **Parasites:**

### THE CHOICE OF A DOG IS AN IMPORTANT ONE.

It is important to make an informed decision when choosing a pet. Ensure that you have researched the breed, understood your responsibilities, and are prepared to provide a loving and nurturing environment for your new family member. If you are unsure about your ability to care for a pet, consider adopting a rescue animal who may be in need of a loving home.