

Farmers Insurance® & Pets Best Reveal Top 5 Hybrid Dog Breeds Pet owners share why hybrid dogs are the best of both breeds

WOODLAND HILLS, Calif., Nov.10, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Farmers Insurance®, one of the nation's largest multiline insurer groups, and Pets Best Insurance Services, LLC (Pets Best), a leading U.S. pet insurance brand, started collaborating together in 2014 to offer savings to those looking to purchase pet insurance for their cats and dogs. Today, the companies revealed the list of the top five hybrid dog breeds based on a review of the company's database of more than 140,000 dog policies.

1. Australian Shepherd and Border Collie (Border-Aussie)
2. Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and French Bulldog (Royal Frenchel)
3. Border Collie and Whippet (Border Whippets)
4. Labrador Retriever and Bernese Mountain Dog (Labernese)
5. German Shepherd and Poodle (Shepadoodle)

Pets Best has 246 dog breeds in the company's database of insured dogs. Of those, the category of hybrid dogs (the offspring of two purebred dogs) represent the third most common dog breed behind Labrador retrievers at number two, and mixed breed (the offspring of two or more different dog breeds where neither the mother nor the father is a registered purebreed dog) at number one. While some hybrid dogs have become mainstream, such as the Labradoodle (a hybrid of the Labrador Retriever and Poodle), there are many hybrid dogs that are still relatively unknown.

Farmers and Pets Best encourage potential pet owners to do their research before adding a pet to the family. A pet's size, temperament, and exercise needs are among the things potential pet owners should consider and be realistic about, to have the best chance at happiness for both the pet and their owners.

"Whether you're insuring a home, vehicle, or adding a new pet to the family, Farmers and Pets Best offer a wide range of benefits and options to help limit the risk of hefty out-of-pocket expenses and help provide coverage for unexpected events for pet owners," said Mariel Devesa, head of product innovation for Farmers Insurance. "We've seen the value that this gives our customers and Pets Best offers a discount of five percent to those who purchase a Pets Best policy after referral from a Farmers agent, or at Farmers.com."

Below are detailed descriptions of the top five hybrid dog breeds from Dr. Eva Evans, Veterinary Advisor for Pets Best. (Editor's Note: Images of each hybrid dog mentioned below are available upon request)

1. Australian Shepherd and Border Collie

Dr. Evans explains that this combination makes for highly intelligent, agile dogs. These individual breeds are known for herding livestock. As a result, these dogs excel at farm work. They require plenty of exercise to run and play and need constant stimulation in order to avoid boredom.

An example of this hybrid is Pets Best member Jackson. His owner Daniel S. of Virginia calls him "The Mayor" because he's always making new friends. Daniel says the 4-year-old dog is a fun-loving social dog. He likes to poke his head inside strollers and kiss babies.

2. Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and French Bulldog

According to Dr. Evans, Cavaliers have a high rate of heart disease, while French Bulldogs struggle with obesity and breathing difficulties. However, when the breeds are combined their health issues are minimized.

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and French Bulldog hybrid is known for their smart, laid-back personality. Because of their friendly, sweet nature, they can be a perfect family dog. They are also skilled athletes as seen in Pets Best member, Rex.

"To say he is athletic is an understatement. He can be the fastest dog in the park, his vertical leap is about 5 feet, and he climbs trees to get balls," said owner Pamela N.

3. Border Collie and Whippet

Dr. Evans mentions these individual breeds are known for their athleticism so this dog will need plenty of exercise. Another plus is the shorter hair of the Whippet will likely be expressed in the combination and may shed less than a Border Collie. Because these breeds tend to be high-strung and easily agitated, Dr. Evans advises that this dog may not be a good choice for children.

Pets Best member, Zeal, is an active 3-year-old Border Collie and Whippet hybrid, who is also a proud member of the Pawbusters Flyball Team in Michigan and excels at flyball. According to her owner Cindy P., Zeal is the ultimate athlete and enjoys Frisbee, Whippet racing, and loves to swim.

4. Labrador Retriever and Bernese Mountain Dog

According to Dr. Evans, both breeds are generally good with kids and strangers, so this dog makes a good family pet. However, these breeds tend to suffer from hip and joint disease. They need a lot of room to run and play. With their big size and long hair, they also need regular grooming.

Pets Best member, Buddy, is a large but lovable 20-month-old puppy of this hybrid. His owner Charles R. calls him "Big Goofy" because he weighs 100 pounds and thinks he's a Yorkie. He is a playful puppy who likes to climb on people's laps, despite his large size.

"Buddy is large and in charge and is friendly with everyone no matter if they are human, dog or cat," said Charles.

5. German Shepherd and Poodle

Dr. Evans says that the interesting combination of German Shepherd and Poodle makes for an athletic dog. She also notes that both breeds make excellent guard dogs, but due to that they may not be friendly with strangers who visit the house. German Shepherds tend to have back and hip problems and are prone to cancer. However, this combination will reduce hip and back issues, but bloat can still be a concern with these dogs.

One example of this hybrid is Pets Best member, Tommy. His owner, Cezie J. shares that her 6 year-old-old Tommy likes to swim yet is gentle and "loves to cuddle."

For more information about Farmers pet insurance, visit [Farmers.com/pet-insurance](https://www.farmers.com/pet-insurance) or contact a local Farmers agent today.

About Farmers Insurance

"Farmers Insurance®" and "Farmers®" are tradenames for a group of affiliated insurers providing insurance for automobiles, homes and small businesses and a wide range of other insurance and financial services and

products. Farmers Insurance is proud to serve more than 10 million households with over 19 million individual policies, across all 50 states, through the efforts of more than 48,000 exclusive and independent agents and approximately 21,000 employees. Farmers Insurance Exchange, the largest of the three primary insurance insurers that make up Farmers Insurance, is recognized as one of the largest U.S. companies on the 2015 Fortune 500 list.

For more information about Farmers Insurance, visit Farmers.com, Twitter and Instagram, @WeAreFarmers, or Facebook.com/FarmersInsurance.

About Pets Best Insurance Services, LLC

Dr. Jack L. Stephens, founder and director of Pets Best, founded pet insurance in the U.S. in 1981 with a mission to end euthanasia when pet owners couldn't afford veterinary treatment. Dr. Stephens went on to present the first U.S. pet insurance policy to famous television dog Lassie. Pets Best provides coverage for dogs and cats. Dr. Stephens leads the Pets Best team with his passion for quality pet care and his expert veterinary knowledge. He is always available to answer questions regarding veterinary medicine, pet health and pet insurance. The Pets Best team is a group of pet lovers who strive to deliver quality customer service and value. Visit www.petsbest.com for more information.

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Pets Best is a proud member of the North America Pet Health Insurance Association (NAPHIA).

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