



NO PLACE FOR PUPPIES

THE TRAGEDY OF PUPPY MILLS

You've probably heard the term *puppy mill*, but you may not know much about these mass dog-breeding operations that hurt dogs in every community by selling puppies through pet stores and newspaper ads and over the Internet.



Puppy mills frequently house dogs in shockingly poor conditions. Animals kept for breeding are often forced to have litter after litter of puppies while confined to small, filthy cages that provide no protection from extreme temperatures. They can suffer from lack of food, water, and veterinary care and receive little or no individual attention and human companionship. After their fertility wanes, breeding animals are commonly killed, abandoned, or sold to another mill.

The result of all this breeding is hundreds of thousands of puppies who are shipped across the country to be sold in pet shops or are marketed in newspaper classifieds and on Internet sites as coming from small breeders. And the sales are often accompanied by false claims that the puppies didn't come from puppy mills.

Driven by profit and operating out of the public's view, puppy mills dupe unsuspecting customers into thinking they care about the animals they are breeding and love them like pets.

The long-term effects of being raised in such poor conditions include health

Breeding dogs in puppy mills are frequently housed in shockingly poor conditions with little or no human companionship.

and temperament problems that often diminish puppies' ability to adapt successfully as pets and may even shorten their lifespans.

WHY PUPPY MILLS EXIST

Simply put, it's the demand for purebred puppies that fuels the puppy mill industry. If people would stop buying the puppies, puppy mills would cease to exist.

Current laws are insufficient to protect dogs and puppies from neglect and exploitation by unscrupulous breeders, brokers, and sellers, and only minimal public resources are devoted to enforcement of the modest protections that do exist.

Because the goal of a puppy mill breeder is to maximize profits, prospective pet owners can't count on receiving honest answers to their questions about a puppy's origins. Many pet stores deliberately mislead consumers about the source of their animals. Internet sites do an excellent job of painting a beautiful picture of well-loved dogs and puppies they adore. Puppy sellers know that once puppies go home with their new

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CJ'S STORY

A BREEDING DOG'S LONG ROAD BACK TO LOVE

When Humane Society of Missouri (HSMO) officials rescued a 12-year-old sheltie from a puppy mill, she was barely clinging to life. The dog who came to be known as CJ bore typical symptoms of a puppy mill breeding dog—a frail, hairless body ravaged by untreated sarcoptic mange, ringworm, ear infections, dermatitis, arthritis, and early cataracts.

CJ was one of 220 dogs seized at a commercial breeding facility in 2001. Many had serious medical problems that required a lengthy recuperation before they could be adopted.

Then there was CJ—so maladjusted that she had no apparent interest in humans, making it difficult to envision her as someone's pet. With veterinary care, CJ's coat grew back and her skin improved. Her ear infections eventually cleared up but had already left her permanently deaf.

Linda Campbell, director of programs for HSMO, decided to foster CJ to help the dog develop social skills. "She was just existing—just there in body only. I remember helping her out of the carrier when we got her back [to the shelter]. She was almost completely bald and afraid of everyone."

Campbell began with massage techniques geared toward helping CJ learn to enjoy human touch. Treats



After barely surviving her years as a puppy mill breeding dog, CJ in time learned to be a loving pet.



were used to teach her to walk on a leash and approach family members.

After Campbell formally adopted CJ, her other dogs helped the former puppy mill pooch adjust to family life. CJ's confidence grew and she started learning to play. "She wasn't sure what to do with a ball because she never had a toy of any kind," Campbell explained.

The dog who initially recoiled from people gradually learned to enjoy being petted. For Campbell, CJ's recovery came to symbolize the resilience of the canine spirit and the difference that humane care can make to an animal.

Most puppy mill breeding females will never have opportunities like CJ's. Most communities have neither the resources to investigate puppy mills nor

the space and staff to accommodate the large number of animals involved when a big commercial breeder is shut down.

And even with loving care, CJ wasn't able to outrun her past. She began having uncontrollable seizures. Heartbroken, Campbell made the difficult decision to euthanize CJ so she wouldn't suffer in old age as she had in her youth.

Now Campbell advises that the best way to combat the suffering of dogs like CJ is to cut the flow of consumer dollars to those who sell dogs raised in puppy mills—usually through pet stores and over the Internet.

"Think about these animals and how they're treated and decide that you're not going to support that," Campbell continues to educate people in CJ's memory. ■

families—even if they become extremely ill or die—it’s unlikely that the sellers will ever have to refund money or pay veterinary bills for treatment. Essentially, they bank on the fact that people begin to love their new puppies immediately.

Shelters, breed rescue groups, and responsible dog breeders focus on ensuring the health and well-being of their animals. They never sell puppies through a pet store or to people they haven’t met because they want to assess the puppy buyers’ ability to provide a safe, loving, and permanent home.

So if you’re looking for that one-in-a-million best friend and really care about dogs, be sure to visit your local animal shelter—where one in every four dogs is a purebred.

WHY KENNEL CLUB PAPERS DON’T GUARANTEE HEALTH

Many people mistakenly believe that purchasing puppies with “papers” from a dog registry ensures that the dogs have healthy bloodlines and came from responsible breeders. Unfortunately, dog registry documentation doesn’t prove health or humane care at all.

Various kennel clubs issue purebred papers to identify dogs’ parents and dates of birth. But even the American Kennel Club (AKC), the largest and most well-known registry, notes that registration “in no way indicates the quality or state of health of the dog.” Neither does registration indicate that a dog came from a compassionate breeder. But many unscrupulous breeders and pet shops exploit this common misperception.

If you’re seeking a purebred puppy, consult local shelters and breed rescue groups for information about reputable local breeders rather than relying on registry papers or empty proclamations of quality and health from puppy sellers. And before you buy a dog, read the purchase contract carefully. Many contracts clearly state that purchasers are “on their own” once a sale is complete or note that the breeder will

provide a replacement puppy for one who becomes ill. This sort of contract is a safe bet for mass breeders because they know that most people would never give up a dog after they’ve taken the animal home with them.

PUPPY LEMON LAWS

Because puppy mill dogs are more likely to have health problems, many purchasers are faced with high veterinary bills or even the death of their puppies soon after purchase. In an attempt to hold breeding facilities and sellers responsible, several states have passed consumer protection laws—often called *puppy lemon laws*—under which purchasers may be entitled to a refund, another puppy, or reimbursement of veterinary bills up to the purchase price of the puppy within a certain period of time.

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Unfortunately, most such laws have specific limitations that often render them ineffective. Legislators hoped that the threat of financial loss would spur mass breeders and sellers to improve the care they provide puppies and breeding adults. But the laws are so seldom used that those changes haven’t occurred.

When faced with a sick or dying puppy, most people choose to focus their efforts on saving the animal; they fear that the pet store management will destroy a returned puppy rather than invest the money and time necessary to restore the animal’s health. And most families who lose a puppy are not ready to risk the heartbreak of another sick

HOW YOU CAN HELP STOP PUPPY MILLS

You can help end the abuse of mass commercial dog breeding with these simple actions.

- **ADOPT YOUR NEXT PET.** Adopting from a shelter or rescue group saves a dog and doesn’t support puppy mills.
- **DON’T BUY A DOG IN A PET STORE.** Never buy a puppy without personally visiting the breeder’s premises. And remind your friends and acquaintances never to buy a puppy from a pet store, over the Internet, or through a newspaper ad without personally visiting the place where the puppy was raised.
- **URGE YOUR LEGISLATORS TO ENSURE THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF DOGS IN PUPPY MILLS.** Current regulations don’t ensure humane treatment, and dogs and consumers suffer for it. Let your elected officials know that you want puppy mills to be a priority for Congress, because they’re a priority for you.
- **EDUCATE OTHERS ABOUT PUPPY MILLS.** Most people have no idea that those cute puppies come from a puppy mill. Order copies of The HSUS’s flyers to distribute. Talk to your groomer or pet supply store clerks. Remind everyone you know that reputable breeders would never sell a puppy to someone they haven’t met.
- **RECRUIT YOUR VET.** Supply your veterinarian’s office with flyers available from The HSUS.
- **WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF YOUR LOCAL PAPER.** Use the information in this publication to inform your community about the dog industry’s dirty secret.
- **SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE HSUS OR A LOCAL GROUP WORKING TO FIGHT PUPPY MILLS.** Your contributions are vital to keep pressure on the mass dog breeding industry.

puppy from the same seller.

While buyers focus on their puppies, they may miss the opportunity for reimbursement of veterinary expenses while the window of opportunity is quickly closing. And many consumers are unaware of puppy lemon laws because the sellers don’t actively discuss them. To find out if your state has a consumer law that will protect you, visit www.StopPuppyMills.com.

A PUPPY BUYERS’ POWER TO HELP

The neglect and exploitation found in a typical puppy mill shocks and saddens anyone who has ever loved a dog. Equally unacceptable are the serious compromises in long-term health and emotional well-being that these animals suffer for the sake of profits and convenience.

But

consumers can use the power of their pet-purchasing dollars to help end this exploitation simply by refusing to buy a dog from anyone other than a reputable breeder. As long as people continue to buy puppies who come from puppy mills, uncaring people will continue to profit from the neglect and exploitation of dogs.

At shelters throughout the nation, loving animals who have been screened for health and temperament anxiously await a responsible, lifelong home. With a little patience, the right dog can be found for nearly anyone who is prepared to care for one. Unlike for-profit businesses that seek quick sales, shelters will work with potential adopters to make the best match between the dogs’ needs and the adopters’ expectations and lifestyles.

Many breed rescue groups also offer healthy, well-socialized animals and careful matchmaking. And if you have your heart set on a puppy, with a little research you may be able to locate a good breeder. With so many humane and socially



BEHIND THE SCENES

WHAT INVESTIGATORS FOUND

One report of many from an undercover investigation by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) into puppy mills across the country:

He was so starved that his waist was considerably smaller than his neck. Mange covered much of his body. And though the outside temperature was 65°F, he shivered uncontrollably. As he sat in the one small corner of his enclosure that was free of excrement, flies aggravated his open sores and swarmed around his eyes.

The completeness of his misery had exceeded the near-boundless canine capacity for coping with all manner of conditions, leaving him unable to respond. With a fixed but faraway stare at the investigator's camera, he moved not a muscle and made not a sound.

Sadly, the suffering of this young boxer, discovered languishing in an Iowa facility, is not uncommon among animals in puppy mills. HSUS investigators spent more than a year looking into conditions at American puppy mills, encountering thousands of such unfortunate animals. In fact,

approximately one-third of the 45 facilities the investigators visited appeared to be in violation of the most basic requirements of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

With photographs and video, the investigators documented the appalling conditions typical of these facilities so lawmakers and citizens could see the truth about puppy mills.

The investigators observed dogs crammed into wire cages so small they could barely stand or turn around; animals suffering in extreme heat with no access to shade and shivering in the cold with no bedding material; malnourished, dehydrated animals

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THE HSUS

waiting beside empty bowls; and severe cases of mange and the relentless irritation of flies and other pests on open sores and wounds. Some of the animals were so resigned to their misery that they no longer bothered to respond to the approach of people.

The investigators also documented overcrowding, flea and parasite infestations, starvation, dangerous enclosures, inadequate ventilation, poor sanitation, and other obvious violations of federal animal welfare guidelines.

This view from behind the scenes is a far cry from the cute, freshly bathed puppy in a pet store window or pictured on a website. The conditions in which puppies are bred and raised in puppy mills are deliberately kept from consumers who are unaware of factors that may impact their pet's health, behavior, and lifespan. While cutting corners in basic care saves money for the breeder, a disproportionate number of puppies from puppy mills eventually require costly veterinary care.

Conditions at the Iowa facility where the young boxer cowered in his excrement-strewn cage were so deplorable that the investigators feared for the animals' immediate safety and filed a complaint with the county sheriff's department, offering video evidence of emaciated dogs with protruding ribs, dogs suffering from open sores and fly infestation, and dogs who were missing parts of their ears with no evidence of veterinary treatment.

Accumulated feces, waste, and other debris in the enclosures made it difficult for the animals to walk normally, and they had access to neither shade nor water. Many continuously paced in their cages, indicating frustration with the intensive confinement and isolation.

Among these dogs was an emaciated shepherd who had lost a front paw and had scars and sores from untreated skin injuries. The paw had apparently not been properly treated, and the animal strenuously



HUMANE SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

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avoided letting the stump of her forelimb touch the ground. She alternately paced on her three remaining legs and crouched uneasily in apparent pain.

As a result of the investigators' complaint, a local humane society was able to confiscate the animals and find homes for most of them. The puppy dealer's license was revoked.

But such victories are rare. The conditions that the investigators documented were in clear violation of at least six AWA standards, yet a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspector who had visited the facility a month earlier only documented two violations.

Until the USDA strongly enforces AWA standards—and more frequently polices puppy mills' substandard animal care—and the suffering it causes—will to be the norm. ■

IF YOU SUSPECT A PUPPY MILL

If you become aware of a breeding facility with unsanitary conditions; cramped cages; sick animals; a lack of food, water, or shelter; or any other disturbing conditions, take the following steps.

- **CONTACT YOUR LOCAL ANIMAL CONTROL, ANIMAL SHELTER, OR HUMANE SOCIETY.** If none of these exists in your area, call the police, sheriff, or health department. You have the option of making an anonymous complaint, but identifying yourself may make the investigator more likely to follow up on the complaint. If legal action is taken, you may need to provide witness testimony.
- **CONTACT THE USDA ANIMAL CARE DIVISION TO FIND OUT IF THE USDA LICENSES THE FACILITY OWNER.** Only specific facilities (those that sell puppies to other businesses that will in turn sell the puppies to the public) are required to be USDA-licensed—this is a small portion of all the puppy mills in the country. The USDA can send an investigator to the facility if it is licensed or should be. The USDA has two regional offices—visit the USDA website at www.aphis.usda.gov/lac to find your regional office.
- **IF THE FACILITY IS NOT LICENSED WITH THE USDA, BECAUSE THEY SELL ONLY DIRECTLY TO THE PUBLIC,** contact your local animal shelter or animal care and control office. The staff can help you file a complaint or direct you to the correct governmental department that handles such complaints. If you need further assistance, contact The HSUS.
- **HAVE AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE BEFORE PLACING ANY CALLS.** Assemble as many of the following details as possible:

Name of breeder
Address
Phone number
Name of facility (if any)
Your specific concerns

Number of animals present
Number of breeds
Description of conditions
Copies of any advertisements

And remember, *never* enter any facility without permission from the owner.

WHY DON'T WE OUTLAW PUPPY MILLS?

Legislation is key to ensuring lasting change for animals. But passing a law to ban puppy mills—an idea that's often proposed—isn't that easy. Anyone who has worked on legislation can tell you that bringing a bill from an idea into a law is a long and difficult process. And even adequate laws are only as effective as their enforcement.

All 50 states have anti-cruelty laws intended to prevent the neglect and mistreatment of dogs, yet mass-breeding facilities continue to operate in ways that are physically and emotionally damaging to animals. People who treat pet dogs the way their canine counterparts in puppy mills are treated could be convicted of cruelty or neglect in most states.

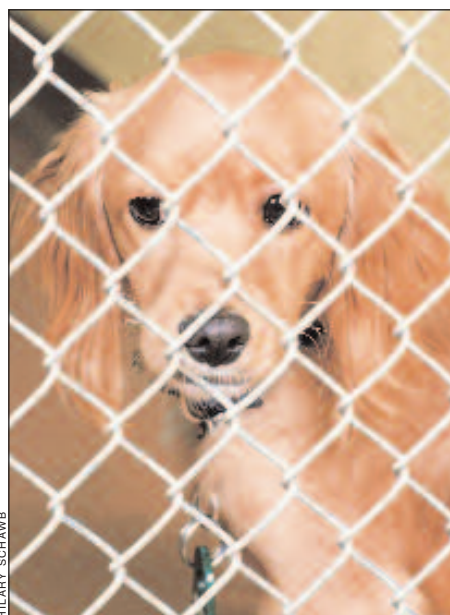
Some local humane societies and government agencies investigate conditions at puppy mills and may be able to rescue the animals. In many cases, though, it's not clear whether the local shelter has legal authority to step in. Even when organizations are empowered to investigate, the sheer magnitude of the problem may exceed their resources. Shelters that intervene may suddenly find themselves with a large number of animals in need of care throughout a lengthy legal process. The cost for veterinary care and basic food and housing can run to tens of thousands of dollars within weeks of seizing as few as 50 dogs from a poorly run facility. Nonetheless, most shelters consider protecting these vulnerable animals part of their mission and are generally eager

to remove animals from poor conditions.

At the national level, The HSUS supports legislation to give the USDA more funding to enforce the AWA and the authority to revoke the licenses of puppy mill operators who repeatedly violate the AWA. The HSUS also works to limit the frequency with which animals can be bred and supports requirements that dogs and puppies in puppy mills be adequately housed and socialized to enhance their well-being and improve their chances of successfully adapting to life as family pets. And The HSUS works at the state level on other laws to protect puppy mill animals from neglect and exploitation.

Sadly, many purebred dog registry kennel clubs—which receive frequent registration fees from puppy mills—usually oppose these commonsense proposals. And the pet breeding industry consistently lobbies against measures to improve animal care standards, sometimes using scare tactics to frighten small reputable breeders into thinking the federal government will soon be in their living rooms. The strategy has helped large commercial kennels evade even minimal improvements in animal care.

You can work to alleviate the animal suffering by asking your elected officials to support legislation aimed at improving the lot of dogs warehoused into a life of misery at puppy mills. To find out how to reach your lawmakers and learn how you can help make a difference, visit www.StopPuppyMills.com. ■



When authorities close down puppy mills, local shelters must offer expensive care for large numbers of animals throughout a lengthy legal process.

THE HSUS

HELPING PEOPLE AND PETS—FOR LIFE

The Companion Animals staff of The HSUS is committed to finding innovative ways to keep pets and their people together. The HSUS maintains dozens of programs designed to protect the dogs, cats, and other pets who share our lives and homes. The organization works with the general public and the animal protection community to reduce pet overpopulation and helps people become more responsible and empowered pet owners through the Pets for Life® program.

The HSUS also provides advice, support, and guidance to shelter workers and other professionals who have hands-on responsibility for millions of animals through a host of programs, including the bimonthly *Animal Sheltering*® magazine and the annual Animal Care Expo educational

conference. The HSUS also investigates and exposes exploitive industries such as puppy mills, greyhound racing, and horse slaughter. To learn more about The HSUS's work to protect companion animals, visit www.hsus.org/pets



The HSUS's annual Animal Care Expo brings animal care and control professionals from around the world together for invaluable training.

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WEBSITE REFERENCE GUIDE

GENERAL PET CARE
www.hsus.org/pets

GETTING A PUPPY
www.PuppyBuyersGuide.org

PET FRIENDLY RENTAL HOUSING
www.RentWithPets.org

PET BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS, ALLERGIES TO PETS, PETS AND BABIES, AND MORE
www.PetsForLife.org

ADOPTABLE PETS IN YOUR AREA
www.Pets911.com and
www.PetFinder.com

PUPPY MILLS
www.StopPuppyMills.com

DOG BITE PREVENTION
www.NoDogBites.org