

Summary Report

Update on Missouri's Dirty Dozen

Many of the worst puppy mills in Missouri are still licensed in 2011

Last October, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) released a report on some of the worst puppy mills in Missouri, known as "Missouri's Dirty Dozen." The report included direct quotes from state and federal inspection records detailing horrific care violations at the facilities, including thin-coated breeds found shivering in the cold in temperatures as low as 9 degrees, dogs with open, oozing sores, underweight dogs with their entire skeletal structures showing, and morbidly ill dogs and puppies who had not been treated by a vet. **All the facilities in the report were state and/or federally licensed kennels.**

Our update on Missouri's Dirty Dozen and other kennels of concern (available at humanesociety.org) found that many of the worst puppy mills in Missouri are still licensed in 2011. **The report demonstrates the urgent need for the full implementation of Proposition B, The Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act**, which is scheduled to go into effect in November 2011. Prop B is currently under attack in the legislature, with approximately a dozen bills introduced to gut or overturn the measure. At least one of Prop B's foes in the legislature is linked to one of the Dirty Dozen kennels.

Proposition B will increase and facilitate local law enforcement because it provides clear standards that sheriffs and prosecutors can understand, as compared to the existing vague and highly technical puppy mill regulations. And it does all this without wiping out or eliminating the existing laws and penalties. **Prop B will apply to all large-scale commercial kennels in Missouri, whether they are licensed or not.**



A photo obtained from USDA enforcement records shows a thin and matted dog at S&S Family Puppies in Milan, MO. 2008/ USDA

The numbers:

- 3 out of 12 = Number of original "Dirty Dozen" kennels that are no longer USDA nor state licensed and appear to have shut down
- 9 out of 12 = Number of original "Dirty Dozen" kennels that still hold a 2011 MO state kennel license and/or a federal license allowing them to breed and sell dogs, as of February 2011.
- 9 out of 12 = Number of "Dirty Dozen" kennels that had violations listed on their most recent routine USDA inspection reports (does not include focused reinspections).
- ALL = Kennels **newly** added to the report (6) that are both federally and state licensed.

LICENSE STATUS OF KENNELS MENTIONED IN THE DIRTY DOZEN REPORT

THE ORIGINAL DIRTY DOZEN

- Brandi Cheney & Diana Stephenson, S & S Family Puppies, Milan; Brandi Cheney, Circle B Farms, Huntsville
- STATUS: STILL STATE AND FEDERALLY LICENSED
- Beverly Fields, B&B Kennel, Galt
- STATUS: STILL STATE LICENSED
- Shannon Plymell, Windsong Kennels, Pattonsburg
- STATUS: STILL STATE LICENSED
- Diana and Floyd Miller, Bar M Ranch Kennel, Spickard
- STATUS: NO LONGER LICENSED
- Paul and Pollie Gingerich - Gingerich Farms, Bogard
- STATUS: NO LONGER LICENSED
- Mary Ann Smith, Smith's Kennel, Salem
- STATUS: STILL STATE AND FEDERALLY LICENSED
- Cox, Marsha - Mar-Don Kennel, Chillicothe
- STATUS: STILL STATE LICENSED
- Peggy Ryan, For Heaven's Sake, Reeds Spring
- STATUS: STILL STATE AND FEDERALLY LICENSED
- Robert Dukes and Robin Dollins, Tiny Tails, Edgar Springs
- STATUS: NO LONGER LICENSED
- Bill and Sandra Sackrey, S K's Kennel, Brookfield
- STATUS: STILL STATE AND FEDERALLY LICENSED
- Brenda Walter, Hidden Valley Farms, Greencastle
- STATUS: STILL STATE AND FEDERALLY LICENSED
- Jesse and Sonja Miller – Walnut Creek Kennel, La Monte
- STATUS: STILL STATE LICENSED

THE ORIGINAL DISHONORABLE MENTIONS

- Bonnie and Herman Schindler – Mettoville Kennels, Mexico
- STATUS: NO LONGER LICENSED; all dogs sold at auction in Oct. 2010
- Sharon Owen, Poodles Plus, Auxvasse
- STATUS: NO LONGER LICENSED
- Wendy Laymon, Shadow Mountain Kennel, Rogersville
- STATUS: STILL STATE LICENSED; ALSO ACQUIRED NEW STATE "RESCUE" LICENSE
- John and Sharlette Tidwell, Ramblin' Spring Kennel, West Plains (www.TidwellFarm.com)
- STATUS: STILL STATE LICENSED; JOHN ACQUIRED NEW USDA "TRANSPORTER" LICENSE
- Jerri Vestal, Vestals Kennel, Livonia
- STATUS: STILL USDA LICENSED
- Joyce Young, Young's Ozark Kennel, Pottersville
- STATUS: STILL STATE AND FEDERALLY LICENSED
- Donald Schrage, Rabbit Ridge Kennel, Edina
- STATUS: STILL STATE AND FEDERALLY LICENSED
- Barbara McCoy, Gone to the Dogs, Thayer
- STATUS: NO LONGER LICENSED

NEW CONCERNS: ALL THE KENNELS BELOW ARE BOTH STATE AND FEDERALLY LICENSED

- Tina Carr – Simply Puppies, Hannibal
DEAD DACHSHUND, OTHER DOGS FOUND IN BELOW-FREEZING COLD
- Lou Cox – Lou's Country Kennel, Chillicothe
DOGS IN BELOW FREEZING TEMPERATURES WITH WATER FROZEN "THE MAJORITY OF THE TIME"
- Joseph and LeRoy Detweiler – Sunset Ridge Kennel, Princeton:
SUMMER HEAT INDEX IN KENNEL OVER 114 DEGREES
- Rhonda Gear – Country Babies, Galt:
DOG WITH "VISIBLY PROMINENT RIBS AND SPINAL COLUMN"
- Ruth Zuspenn – Zuspenn Kennel, Edina:
IMPROPER USE OF CONTROLLED VETERINARY DRUG AND IMPROPER/EXPIRED DRUGS ON DOGS
- Wilma Jinson – Jinson Kennel, Stella:
"OBVIOUS VETERINARY CARE PROBLEMS" PER USDA INSPECTOR

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE UPDATE REPORT

Full report available at www.humanesociety.org.

Brandi Cheney now linked to two separate kennels with severe violations.

Federal inspection reports made available in early 2011 indicate that not one but two facilities linked to **Brandi Cheney (S & S Family Puppies in Milan and Circle B Farms, LLC in Huntsville)** continued to be linked to horrific violations of the Animal Welfare Act:

- **New violations in November 2010:** a dog who could hardly walk, a dog with a “red and oozing” open lesion, and a third dog with a leg injury that had gone untreated by a vet; strong fecal/ammonia odor (USDA report, Nov. 2010, S & S Family Puppies)
- **New violations in January 2011:** Temperatures in the kennel over 109 degrees F; failure to provide adequate lighting or electricity; inadequate cage space (January 2011, Circle B Farms, LLC)
- **Over 500 pages of federal enforcement records:** As documented in the original Dirty Dozen report, the kennel owned by Cheney and her mother, Diana Stephenson, has been the subject of more than 500 pages of federal enforcement records, yet remains licensed (S & S Family Puppies)
- **Consumer lawsuit for alleged sale of sick puppies:** Shortly after the initial Missouri’s Dirty Dozen report was released in October 2010, former customers of Cheney and Stephenson filed a lawsuit in Randolph County Circuit Court, accusing the duo of selling them sick and dying puppies. The suit is currently making its way through the court system.



A puppy's feet are shown from below as her paws straddle feces-laden wire floors at S&S Family Puppies. 2008/ USDA

“Dirty Dozen” kennel owner, Mary Ann Smith, linked to Representative Jason Smith, a foe of Prop B

- Jason Smith’s name once appeared on the family kennel’s state license.
- Recent news reports have called Rep. Jason Smith’s fight against Prop B a “potential conflict of interest.”
- The facility has a record of documented animal welfare violations stretching back more than a decade.
- Mary Ann Smith’s kennel was cited for Animal Welfare Act violations last summer for dogs with untreated veterinary problems, housing in disrepair, and inadequate sanitation.

Marsha Cox (Mar-Don Kennel, Chillicothe), who contributed to a group that lobbied against Prop B, continues to accumulate serious kennel violations. A relative, Lou Cox, owns a second problem kennel nearby.

- In October 2010 USDA inspectors cited Marsha Cox for refusing access to inspectors because the owner incorrectly believed “you [USDA inspector] had something to do with the Missouri Dirty Dozen report.”

- New violations documented over the winter include many dogs found in outdoor cages in 25 degree temperatures without adequate protection from the bitter cold. The inspector noted it had been only 9 degrees the previous day. (December 2010, USDA).
- A second, nearby kennel is owned by Lou Cox, believed to be a relative of Marsha's. Lou Cox's kennel has been recently cited for similar violations, including a seriously underweight mother dog, dogs exposed to 23 degree temperatures without adequate protection, and frozen drinking water in all the outdoor enclosures. Approximately 100 dogs were found at the kennel.

Conditions at licensed facilities documented in the report that would be clearly addressed by Prop B include:

- Serious medical ailments, such open wounds, injuries, even exposed bone/cartilage (Brenda Walter/Hidden Valley Farms) that have gone **untreated by a vet;**
- **Puppies exposed to temperatures as low as 14 degrees and as high as 109 degrees Fahrenheit;**
- Dogs in **stacked** cages with waste raining down on them;
- Puppies in **wire-floored** cages that allow feet to fall through and that cause severe paw injuries;
- Dogs "**thin in appearance with visible hip bones and vertebrae**" and dogs with matting so severe that urinary/ anal openings were blocked (SK's Kennel).



Last December, USDA inspectors found dogs at Lou Cox's kennel outside in 28 temperatures without adequate protection from the bitter cold, and "water frozen the majority of the time." 2010/ HSUS

Six additional kennels have been added to the update report; all are both state and federally licensed. They all demonstrate ongoing problems that Prop B would clearly address, including:

- Dead dog found outside in bitter cold (*Tina Carr /Simply Puppies, Hannibal*)
- Frozen drinking water in all outdoor cages in 23 degree weather plus "excessively thin" mother dog with puppies that had died (*Lou Cox / Lou's Country Kennel, Chillicothe*)
- Summer heat index inside kennel over 114 degrees, with dogs and puppies showing signs of heat stress (*Joseph and LeRoy Dettweiler / Sunset Ridge Kennel, Princeton*)
- "Visibly thin" dog, dogs in 20 degree temperatures, and facilities housing dogs that had not been cleaned in months (*Rhonda Gear / Country Babies, Galt*)
- "Treating" dogs with a controlled substance rather than seeking suitable veterinary care; use of improper and expired medications on dogs (*Ruth Zuspahn, Zuspahn Kennel, Edina*)
- "Obvious veterinary care problems" and one dog so matted "it was difficult to see his face." (*Wilma Jinson / Jinson Kennel, Stella*)