



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

SUMMARY REPORT: MISSOURI'S DIRTY DOZEN

A report on some of the worst puppy mills in Missouri

October 2010

Researchers at The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) have spent weeks poring over state and federal inspection reports, investigators' photographs, and enforcement records received via the Freedom of Information Act and state Sunshine Law requests to compile a list of some of the worst puppy mills in Missouri, known as "Missouri's Dirty Dozen." The 27-page report also lists eight "dishonorable mentions."

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate current problems that could be addressed by the passage of Proposition B, which Missouri citizens will vote on in November. Under Proposition B, the Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act, many of these dealers' horrific violations would be backed by stronger enforcement opportunities.

All of the puppy mills on the Dirty Dozen list are licensed by the USDA, the state, or both, according to the most recently available records reviewed by HSUS researchers.

Federal and State Kennel Violations

Missouri's Dirty Dozen were selected as examples of some of the worst licensed kennels in the state, based upon the number and severity of state and/or federal animal welfare violations and/or availability of photographs to verify the conditions. Some of the violations described in federal and state kennel inspection reports include:

- Underweight dogs described by inspectors as "very thin with ribs prominent, tucked abdomen, and palpable hip bones and vertebrae"



ABOVE: A small Sheltie in an outdoor pen appears to have no protection from the cold and snow at S&S Family Puppies. 2010/The HSUS

- Thin-coated breeds shivering in the cold in temperatures as low as 9 degrees; others found trying to lick frozen water in their bowls or break it with their paws
- Animals “lethargic and reluctant to rise”
- Dogs with open, oozing or bleeding wounds who had not been treated by a vet
- Sick or dying puppies who had not been treated by a vet
- Filthy conditions, such as stacked cages that allow feces and urine to rain down on the dogs in lower tiers.



ABOVE: Dogs peer out from small wire cages similar to chicken coops at Windsong Kennels in Pattonsburg. 2010/The HSUS

Many of the licensees have racked up more than fifty (50) federal or state animal welfare violations over the last few years, yet remain licensed.

Chilling Confessions

- One kennel (**Jesse and Sonja Miller’s Walnut Creek Kennel**) made the list because it noted on a proposed USDA program of veterinary care that the owner intended to dispose of unwanted dogs “by clubbing the dogs.”
- **S & S Family Puppies** (owned by **Brandi Cheney and Diana Stephenson**, Milan) has more than 500 pages of Animal Welfare Act violations and enforcement records on file with the USDA, yet it remains both federally and state licensed.
- A kennel operator on the dishonorable mentions list (**Wendy Layman, Shadow Mountain Ranch**, Rogersville) had her license revoked by The USDA for repeatedly violating the Animal Welfare Act, yet she remains state-licensed and continues to sell puppies over the Internet.

- A kennel operator on the dishonorable mentions list (**Tidwell, Ramblin' Springs Kennel**, West Plains), reportedly admitted to her USDA inspector that she performed invasive surgical procedures on her dogs, such as Caesarian sections, without a veterinary license.

By the numbers

- **134:** average number of adult breeding dogs at each of the Dirty Dozen kennels
- **172:** average total number of dogs at each of the Dirty Dozen kennels, including puppies
- **156:** Total number of MO state violations among the Dirty Dozen (data was only received for six of the top twelve dealers)
- **830:** Pages of recent USDA inspection report violations and enforcement records among the Dirty Dozen

The Dirty Dozen

Brandi Cheney and Diana Stephenson, S & S Family Puppies, Milan
 Beverly Fields, B & B Kennel, Galt
 Shannon Plymell, Windsong Kennels, Pattonsburg
 Diana and Floyd Miller, Bar M Ranch Kennel, Spickard
 Paul and Pollie Gingerich - Gingerich Farms, Bogard
 Mary Ann Smith, Smith's Kennel, Salem
 Cox, Marsha - Mar-Don Kennel, Chillicothe
 Peggy Ryan, For Heaven's Sake Kennel, Reeds Spring
 Robert Dukes and Robin Dollins, Tiny Tails, Edgar Springs
 Bill and Sandra Sackrey, S K's Kennel, Brookfield
 Brenda Walter, Hidden Valley Farms, Greencastle
 Jesse and Sonja Miller – Walnut Creek Kennel, La Monte

Dishonorable Mentions

Bonnie and Herman Schindler – Mettoville Kennels, aka Teacher's Pets,
 Mexico
 Sharon Owen, Poodles Plus, Auxvasse
 Wendy Laymon aka Wendy Faith Layman, Shadow Mountain Kennel, aka
 Shadow Mountain Ranch, Rogersville
 John and Sharlette Tidwell, Ramblin' Spring Kennel, West Plains
 Jerri Vestal, Vestals Kennel, Livonia
 Joyce Young, Young's Ozark Kennel, Pottersville
 Donald Schrage, Rabbit Ridge Kennel, Edina
 Barbara McCoy, Gone to the Dogs, Thayer

How Proposition B Can Help

Approximately 200,000 dogs are confined for life in small wire cages in puppy mills in Missouri, many of them in conditions like those described above. This is simply unacceptable.

Under Proposition B, the Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act, conditions leading to distress and suffering in dogs, such as painful wire flooring, lack of proper vet care, overcrowded cages, and scant protection from the elements will be more clearly addressed under the law.

Proposition B's requirements are extremely modest and, unlike the current regulatory scheme which is complex and difficult to understand, will provide clear and consistent guidance to inspectors. The measure requires access to nutritious food daily and continuous access to drinkable water, veterinary care for illness or injury, and adequate space and exercise.

Proposition B will increase enforcement in general, and specifically increase and facilitate local law enforcement as compared to the existing vague and highly technical puppy mill regulations.

The measure not only provides new, easily understandable criminal penalties for mistreatment, it does so without wiping out or eliminating the existing laws and penalties.

Proposition B will apply to all large-scale commercial dog dealers whether the owner is licensed or not, and ensures that dogs in such large-scale breeding facilities receive basic humane care.

Dogs in Missouri deserve no less than these basic protections.



A photo from USDA enforcement records shows a thin, "unresponsive" poodle lying listlessly in her cage at S&S Family Puppies. 2008/ USDA