

BAN PUPPY MILLS

Last Chance For Animals

LIFE in a PUPPY MILL

A puppy mill is a breeding facility that mass produces puppies for sale. There are thousands across the country, producing over 2-million puppies per year. Many of the dogs suffer from malnutrition and exposure, usually remaining outside year-round, enduring both freezing temperatures in winter, and intense heat in the summer. Cat breeding occurs on a smaller scale and under similar conditions.

Puppy mill kennels generally consist of small, outdoor wood and wire cages or crates. The animals are cramped into filthy cages. Their eyes are filled with pus, and their fur with excrement. Many of the puppies suffer from malnutrition and exposure. Like pet store owners, breeders save money, and thus maximize profits, by spending little on food, shelter, and veterinary care.

Puppies consequently receive below standard food, minimal if any vet care, and inadequate shelter. This, combined with inbreeding prevalent in puppy mills, produce animals with genetic diseases and abnormalities. Puppies' legs often fall through the bottom of their wire cages, causing additional injuries. Because they are mistreated (instead of socialized by humans) during an important developmental period, they may be excessively timid or ferocious, and thus unsuitable as house pets.

"BROOD BITCHES"

Dogs that are kept in puppy mills their entire lives are called "*brood bitches*". They are typically undernourished and receive little veterinary care, in spite of being kept perpetually pregnant. Their puppies are frequently taken from them before being weaned. As a result, some puppies do not know how to eat, and die of starvation. At approximately 6-or-7 years of age, when they can no longer breed more puppies, "*brood bitches*" are killed.

TRANSPORTATION and SALE

At 4-to-8 weeks of age, puppies are taken from their mothers and sold to brokers (or retail businesses). The brokers then pack them in crates and transport them for sale at various pet shops. Frequently, the puppies are not provided with adequate food, water, ventilation, or shelter during transport. Consequently, many die en route.

Those that are NOT SOLD will be KILLED, brought back to the mill TO BREED, or sold to LABS for research.

DISEASES COMMON to PUPPY MILL DOGS:

- Deafness
- Epilepsy
- Cataracts
- Eye Lesions
- Retinal Degeneration
- Glaucoma
- Hip Dysplasia
- Retardation
- Dislocated Kneecaps
- Periodontal Disease
- Mammary Tumors
- Personality Disorders such as excessive aggression

AILMENTS COMMON to PET STORE PUPPIES:

- Parvovirus
- Distemper
- Upper Respiratory Disease
- Diarrhea
- Ear Infections
- Eye Infections
- Worms
- Mange
- Coccidia
- Giardia

The PROBLEM with PET STORES

- Most of the puppies sold in pet stores come from puppy mills. Purchasing pet store animals entails not only supporting the cruel puppy mill industry, but also taking a home away from one of the 17-to-20-million unwanted animals who are killed each year.
- Because of the inbreeding and filthy conditions common to puppy mills, they often produce animals with serious health problems, which typically result in hefty vet fees for adopters.
- Pet stores generally do not socialize their animals. The puppies may consequently develop behavioral problems which make them far from ideal pets.
- Most pet shops do not check the references or histories of their customers. Therefore they send animals home with potentially abusive and irresponsible "owners", without taking even the slightest precautions.
- Pet shops dispose of unsold animals in, at times, unscrupulous ways. For instance, former pet store employees have reported finding animals starved or frozen to death.
- Cockroach and rodent infestation may spread disease to animals in pet shops.
- The overcrowding common in pet stores sometimes causes animals, such as birds, to beat up on one another.

The LAW

Anti-cruelty laws are rarely enforced in the rural areas where most puppy mills are located. The USDA is responsible for inspecting puppy mills to ensure that they are complying with the Animal Welfare Act, but kennels are inconsistently inspected. When violations are found, puppy mill operators are allowed to remain open while they remedy them. Repeat offenders often refuse to allow Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service workers to enter and inspect their facilities. Those kennels sometimes remain licensed in spite of this noncompliance.

AKC: The AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

Although the AKC claims to be devoted to advancing the health of purebred dogs, it typically spends only about 2% of its total yearly income on research towards that end.

Moreover, AKC papers do not guarantee the value or health of a puppy. The organization does not try to work with breeders to improve mill conditions, perhaps because breeders pay the AKC millions-of-dollars in registration fees for purebred dogs each year.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Adopt from an animal shelter or rescue group.
Remember that 25% of shelter animals are purebreds.
- Never buy from a pet store.
- Do not shop at stores that sell animals.
- Volunteer at your local animal shelter or rescue group.
- Ask your elected officials to outlaw puppy mills. Urge them to demand the USDA enforce the Animal Welfare Act. For your senators' and representatives' contact information, visit: www.vote-smart.org/index.phtml
- Write letters to the editors of your local newspapers about the horrors of the puppy mill industry and its connection with pet stores.
- Distribute brochures about puppy mills and pet overpopulation outside of pet shops.
- Ask shopping mall managers not to renew the lease of the pet store on their property.
- Report pet store abuses to whomever is responsible for enforcing anti-cruelty laws in your town. Write a detailed statement of the abuses and take photographs if possible.
- Educate others about the cruelties of puppy mills and the importance of adopting from shelters.

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Animal Rights Advocates of Upstate NY

P.O. Box 18415

Rochester, NY 14618

(585) 234-1306

www.ARAUNY.org

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www.banpuppymills.com

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