

## WHAT IS A PUPPY MILL?

A puppy mill is a large-scale commercial dog breeding operation where profit is given priority over the well-being of the dogs. In a puppy mill, dogs live in cages and are bred repeatedly, producing puppies to be sold in pet stores and online, around the country and throughout the world. There may be as few as 100 or as many as 1,000 breeding dogs housed at a single facility. It is estimated there are approximately 10,000 puppy mills in the U.S., the majority being located in the Midwest. About one-third of these mills are approved and licensed by the USDA, as dogs are legally classified as 'livestock'.

Most of the dogs live their whole lives in wire cages in buildings, barns and sheds which often have no heating or cooling. The dogs are not socialized, they receive little or no veterinary care, they do not have beds or toys, and they never get to run and play in the grass – some dogs never even see sunlight – and though they yearn for it, they never receive love.

The female dogs are bred at every heat cycle and their puppies are usually taken from them too young. When a dog is no longer productive, typically at 5-7 years old, standard procedure is to destroy the dog – usually in an inhumane manner.

## PUPPY MILL FACTS

- Over 10,000 puppy mills in the U.S. produce millions of puppies each year
- Puppy mills supply 99% of pet store puppies
- Millions of puppy mill puppies are sold via Internet and newspaper ads every year
- Hundreds and even thousands of dogs can LEGALLY live in a puppy mill
- Most puppy mill dogs live in wire cages, stacked one on top of another, with their urine and feces contaminating the cages and dogs below them
- Female dogs are bred twice a year – or more – for their entire lives
- It is common practice for old dogs, sick dogs, and unwanted puppies to be destroyed at the puppy mill; this is most often done in the most inhumane ways
- Nearly all puppies born in puppy mills are registered by large, well-known breed registries such as the AKC
- **If puppy mills no longer existed, there would be 75% fewer dogs in shelter and rescues**

*Puppy mills are regulated at the federal level by the USDA; some (but not all) are regulated at the state level. State and/or county and/or municipality legislation or proposals must be introduced, and in many areas regulatory agencies or committees need to be created to enact and enforce new laws.*



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