



STOP PUPPY MILLS

HOW MUCH IS THAT DOGGY IN THE WINDOW?

A trip to your local pet shop to buy a puppy might seem like a fun and harmless way to welcome a new pet into your life. Others are drawn to too-cute-for-words photos of puppies on “breeder’s” websites. But behind the friendly pet shop window and Internet sites, there often lies a puppy mill, a dog breeding facility that houses dogs in shockingly poor conditions.

What’s worse, puppy mills churn out puppies for profit while dogs in shelters wait for loving homes. There aren’t enough homes for them all!



INSIDE A PUPPY MILL

- Because a puppy mill is a business, it is designed purely for profit, not for the well-being of dogs. The dogs receive little or no exercise or veterinary care and never see a bed, treat or toy.
- Life is particularly bad for the adult dogs who live their entire lives in cages, without human companionship and with little hope of ever becoming part of a family.
- Several hundred thousand puppies are born in puppy mills each year and shipped cross-country to be sold in pet shops. Many more are sold through newspaper classified ads or Internet sites.
- Because of the poor conditions, puppy mill dogs are more likely to have behavior and/or health problems. Some of the puppies die within days or weeks of purchase.
- Current laws provide minimum-care standards for puppy-mill animals, but puppy mills can get around these laws, either by selling directly to consumers (thereby avoiding U.S. Department of Agriculture licensing requirements) or by simply avoiding the reach of law enforcement (with so few USDA inspectors and minor fines, it’s easy to stay in business).



THINK ABOUT IT

Think about life for the dogs in your home and your friends’ homes. Then think about the things they need to be healthy and happy—food, water, shelter, veterinary care, grooming, training, exercise, toys, bedding, and love and attention. As you learn about puppy mills, consider how they measure up with how life **should** be for dogs. Do puppy mill dogs have their basic needs met? What are some of the first things that should change at puppy mills to make life better for the dogs?



GET A PUPPY ... WITHOUT SUPPORTING CRUELTY

- **Opt to adopt.** Animal shelters have a variety of dogs, many of them purebreds, just waiting for homes. There are also rescue groups for every breed of dog. Shelters and rescue groups have many “designer” or “hybrid” mixes like Labradoodles and Puggles up for adoption. These and other mixed-breed dogs make wonderful pets.
- **See for yourself.** Those who choose to purchase a dog should find a compassionate breeder that provides a loving and healthy environment for their canine companions. But don’t take their word for it. Never buy a puppy without seeing where they and their parents are raised and housed with your own eyes.
- **Don’t be fooled.** While many pet stores will tell you otherwise, they do sell puppy mill puppies. Many newspaper classifieds and Internet sites are often accompanied by false claims such as, “We’d never sell puppies from a puppy mill” or promises that the puppies are “home raised,” “farm raised,” or “raised with kids/grandkids.”
- **Don’t “rescue,” report!** Even though your intentions may be good, don’t buy a puppy with the idea that you are “rescuing” him or her. Your “rescue” opens up space for another poor puppy mill puppy and puts money into the pockets of the puppy mill. If you see someone keeping puppies in poor conditions, alert your local animal control authorities instead of buying.

YOU CAN HELP!

Join **Mission: Humane** and do the “A Cause for Paws” project—promote improved conditions for dogs in puppy mills and raise community awareness about how to get a dog without supporting cruelty. Visit humanesociety.org/teens to sign up!

Photos by Michelle Riley/The Humane Society of the United States