



# PROD

## Promoting Responsible Ownership of Dogs

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## How Much is that Doggie in the Window Suffering? A Lot – But You Can Help

by: Katherine McGowan

- Most puppy mill dogs probably don't recall their first few weeks of life. They're usually sold to a broker and transported across the country in early puppyhood, arriving at pet stores to be sold for anywhere from \$300 to \$2,000 to families who don't know what kind of animal they're buying - or what kind of industry their purchase supports.
- A "puppy mill" is a commercial breeding operation that produces puppies en masse for profit. ...puppy millers focus on generating high volumes of animals and selling them to distributors, who then transport them to pet stores throughout the United States. ...more and more puppy mill operators are selling directly to consumers (on the Internet).
- puppy millers often compel the dogs to be pregnant at every cycle. If they can sell the puppies, they will breed the dog - even if she's bald from mange and infested with parasites.
- Worse, though, is the suffering and neglect inflicted on individual animals who live within the environs of the puppy mill itself. Puppy mills may house as few as 50 and as many as 1,000 animals, often in cramped, filthy conditions with poor nutrition and minimal veterinary care. The worst of the puppy mills crowd hundreds of animals into wire cages. Dogs stand and walk on wire-mesh flooring: these dogs not only develop splayed feet but never learn to walk on grass or a regular floor. Dogs are often forced to drink green water and eat moldy food mixed with their own excrement. When injured, they're seldom given adequate veterinary care: instead, they will self-medicate by chewing on their wounds. Some have even been known to chew off a limb.
- USDA's inspection of puppy mills is spotty at best.

- **Mostly through ignorance, the public encourages the continued existence of puppy mills by purchasing animals from pet stores.**
- Consumers want small dogs - and puppy millers deliver.....small breeds are easier for mass-breeding facilities to house; they can crowd several dogs in one cage and stack cages on top of one another.
- Historically, puppy mills have been located in farming states because puppies were viewed as an agricultural commodity.....But mass breeding facilities are beginning to crop up in places where they haven't been before, and the cross-country complaints show that while these animals may come from a "puppy mill state", they don't stay there.
- Missouri is the most notorious of all the puppy-producing states, leading the nation in puppy exports with more than 1,400 licensed commercial breeders. And if that number sounds high, it pales in comparison to the estimated 2,500 unlicensed breeders in the state.....Pennsylvania carries the nickname "Puppy Mill Capital of the East".
- **Stop Puppy Mills!** Want to fight puppy mills in your community or enlist public support for the cause? Order the new Dog Saver's Kit from The Humane Society of the United States. The \$3 kit contains printed materials, letter templates, model legislation, and other tools to help advocates get started. For more information, visit **[www.StopPuppyMills.com](http://www.StopPuppyMills.com)**, or contact your regional representative for the Humane Society of the United States through [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org).