

7 Things You Didn't Know about Puppy Mills

By Elizabeth Brinkley

1. There is no such thing as a "puppy mill". "Puppy mill" is not a legally defined term, it is slang used by the animal rights community to denigrate any and all breeders -- small or large, standard or substandard. It's the "N-word" of breeders. The phrase "puppy mill" has been promoted in the media by the animal "rights" movement, people who want to end all animal ownership. It is applied indiscriminately by these fanatics to anyone who breeds dogs.
2. There are three types of breeders: Commercial (aka USDA breeders); Pet (aka backyard breeder); and Hobby (aka show breeders). Every one of these can be a large-scale breeder, every one of these can be a substandard breeder. Commercial kennels are subject to state and/or federal oversight. Substandard care can be found with all types of breeders. It is about the standard of care, NOT the numbers.
3. Most commercial breeders have state of the art kennels that meet USDA standards and the standards of their state laws. They are inspected at least yearly and must meet or exceed standards far higher than those expected of the average hobby breeder.
4. "Sick" puppies do not sell. It is counterproductive for any industry to produce a defective product and expect to stay in business.
5. Passing laws to outlaw "puppy mills" will not solve the problem. Most substandard breeders are already in violation of existing laws. New, stricter laws will only affect those who are already working to follow the laws. The only way to have any affect is to enforce the laws that are already on the books.
6. All the hobby breeders in this country cannot produce enough puppies to meet the demands of the American market.
7. Neither commercial breeders nor hobby breeders are responsible for the presence of mixed breed dogs in shelters.

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