

Puppy Birth Certificates Mandating Licensing of Animal Breeders

A proposed legislative bill for PA to enact that would limit pet stores to purchase stock only from licensed breeders

Tag words: dog, puppy, birth certificate, puppy mills, breeders, breeder licensing

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Summary

The puppy birth certificate would make the pet selection process easier for prospective pet buyers by letting them know exactly where the animal is coming from and any genetic defects or diseases the animal might have. This is necessary because many pet stores purchase their animals from puppy mills, which are known for being unclean, unhealthy facilities. The birth certificate would include proof that the breeder/pet store you receive the animal from is indeed licensed, and also that the place where the seller bought the animal is licensed as well. We contacted Pennsylvania legislators seeing if we can try and pass a bill making this birth certificate possible. We are focusing on Pennsylvania, specifically Lancaster County, because this state (and county) is known for having hundreds of puppy mills. (RG)

Video Link

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBxhCevt5tM&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL

The Issue: Pet Stores Purchasing Animals Not Suitable For Sale From Unlicensed Sources

The Problems Associated with Puppy Mills

Many pet stores purchase their puppies from puppy mills. They do this mostly for profit. Pet stores want to receive dogs "in bulk" for the lowest possible price, which is what puppy mills are in business to provide. Puppy mills also want to maximize profit. They are commercial enterprises whose sole purpose is to breed dogs in great numbers to increase profit. Since veterinary care for a large group of animals can be quite expensive, care is minimal or nonexistent in most puppy mills. There is no screening of genetic diseases and dogs are kept in small, uncomfortable wire cages 24 hours a day. Not only are these puppies prone to illness, but behavioral problems too. The worst part is that some of these puppy mills are not even licensed. When you get a dog from a puppy mill you are taking a chance of receiving an animal with any

of a wide range of health conditions. Some pet stores even buy puppies from unlicensed breeders, or "backyard breeders". Who knows what kind of conditions these dogs are growing up in. These dogs are most likely not receiving any veterinary care and with large amounts of inbreeding, these dogs are also prone to developing genetic disorders.

Sources: Buyer Beware. *United Against Puppy Mills*.
<http://www.unitedagainstpupmills.org/beware.html>

Common Genetic Defects Originating from Puppy Mills

To maximize profit, puppy mill operators do not apply proper husbandry practices in their puppy mills. Sick dogs are not removed from the mill's breeding stock, since buying new, healthy animals can be costly. To also avoid purchasing new animals for their breeding pool, puppy mills practice inbreeding. Inbreeding can increase the chances of the offspring having congenital and hereditary conditions. If two siblings both carry the recessive gene for a genetic defect and they mate, some of the offspring of their litter are bound to have this defect. The incidence of genetic conditions also increases when a bitch is having litters past the age of 6 and more than one litter a year. Sadly, this is the case in puppy mills. Puppy mills want to maximize the reproducing capacity of their older females before they move on to younger females. Here is a list of the most common genetic conditions resulting from poorly run puppy mills:

- Epilepsy
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Musculoskeletal disorders (hip dysplasia, luxating patellas, etc)
- Endocrine disorders (diabetes, hyperthyroidism)
- Blood disorders (anemia, Von Willebrand disease)
- Deafness
- Eye problems (cataracts, glaucoma, progressive retinal atrophy, etc)
- Respiratory disorders

Sources: Puppy Scams & Cons. (2011). *ASPCA: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*. <http://www.asPCA.org/fight-animal-cruelty/puppy-mills/puppy-scams-cons.aspx>

Puppies Being Sold Too Young

(DB) Puppies are being sold from puppy mills at far too young an age, which is proven to cause behavior problems. Puppies are not supposed to be sold (separated from their mother and the litter) until at least 8 weeks of age, however the younger puppies sell for far more money so breeders continually sell them way too early. A puppy's fundamental period is from birth to 16 weeks, and it is important that the puppy learns social skills from its siblings and mother during that time. When young puppies are separated from the mother early, they often result in behavior problems such as anxiety, depression, and also health problems.

Source: STILWELL, V. Puppy Mills-the Devastating Consequences. *Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project*.

<http://www.nowisconsinpuppymills.com/victoriastilwell-factsheet.pdf>

Where Are Puppy Mill Dogs Sold

In general puppy mills are known to be very unclean and unhealthy places for breeding dogs. With that in mind, most consumers would prefer to not purchase their new pets from a puppy mill. However, puppy mills are still in business and very profitable because consumers are unknowingly purchasing puppy mill puppies. Most of the dogs found at a pet store are from puppy mills and are also commonly sold online, however, most consumers are unaware of this and believe they are purchasing their pet from a reputable breeder. No pet store would openly say that they get their dogs from a puppy mill but this is most always the case. Puppy mills try to breed as many puppies as possible while spending the least amount of money on them. Therefore, at puppy mills there is little to no vet care, horrible conditions, and little food. The pet stores are also all about maximizing profit and so they would prefer to purchase cheap dogs from puppy mills. Puppy mill owners may also find it easy to sell their dogs online so that the consumer will not come to the puppy mill and see the conditions.

Hamilton, Anita, and Sean Scully. "Curbing The Puppy Trade." *Time* 166.24 (2005): 62-63. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 14 Nov. 2011.

(RG) Standard Registration Papers

When you purchase a dog from a respectable kennel/breeder, you should receive a number of papers about the animal you have purchased. These papers make up the dog's "birth certificate" and the number of documents vary depending on where you receive your animal. The American Kennel Club and the International Kennel Club have kind of set the standard of what documentation a customer should receive after buying an animal. These documents include:

- The animal's pedigree. The American Kennel Club is a not-for-profit organization whose goal is to maintain a purebred dog registry. A pedigree is a family tree of sorts that proves that your dog is 100% the breed you are paying for.
- An American Kennel Club dog registration application. When you buy a dog registered by the American Kennel Club, you should receive an American Kennel Club Dog Registration Application form properly filled out by the seller. After the form is completed and submitted with the proper fee, this form will allow you to register the dog. This is only important if you wish to breed your dog or plan to enter him/her in dog shows. After the application has been processed, you will receive an American Kennel Club Registration Certificate.

- The conditions of sale containing information on refunds
- A puppy health certificate including past illnesses, treatments, vaccinations, and wormings
- A statement governing the sale of dogs and cats by the Division of Consumer Affairs
- A document on healthcare containing common puppy illnesses and local veterinarians
- A warranty contract. This Limited Warranty Contract provides the benefits, conditions, and exclusions outlined in the contract for 90 days following the date of purchase. This is one of the most important documents received when purchasing a dog.

Benefits:

1. Reimbursing the purchaser for veterinary expenses as the result of a covered illness that is medically necessary.
2. Reimbursing the purchaser for veterinary expenses as the result of hereditary and congenital defects that affect the general health of the pet.
3. Reimbursing the purchaser's actual expenses for necessary procedures relating to the diagnosis of the illness. Maximum benefits are \$1000. The purchaser is responsible for all non-covered expenses.

Conditions:

1. Within 10 days after purchase, the purchaser must take the pet to a licensed veterinarian for a complete examination and have the veterinarian sign and complete an attached Initial Exam Form. If the pet is found "unfit for purchase" by the veterinarian, the pet store is to be informed immediately. **IF THE DOG IS NOT BROUGHT TO A LICENSED VETERINARIAN 10 DAYS AFTER PURCHASE FOR HIS/HER INITIAL HEALTH EXAM, THE ENTIRE WARRANTY CONTRACT IS VOID!**
2. If an illness is diagnosed by the veterinarian, promptly pay or arrange for the payment of all veterinary medical bills. Also have the veterinarian sign an itemized statement of procedures and the diagnosis of the treated illness and have this sent to the administrator of the pet store no later than 60 days after the diagnosis.

Exclusions-the warranty contract does not provide coverage for:

1. Routine care, physical examinations (including the initial examination!), and allergies.
2. Preventative vaccinations and preventative treatment for external/internal parasites.
3. Illness intentionally caused by the negligence or cruelty of the purchaser.
4. Medical treatment for spaying, castrations, breeding or pregnancy, cosmetic surgery, grooming, bathing, nail trims, routine anal gland expressions.
5. Dental care
6. Boarding and kenneling
7. Nonprescription drugs such as tranquilizers, special foods, vitamins, and shampoos.
8. Psychological conditions and behavioral problems

Sources: (2011). About Registration. *American Kennel Club*. <http://www.akc.org/reg/about.cfm>
International Kennel Club. (2010). <http://www.internationalkennel.com/>

(DB) More about AKC papers

AKC or the American Kennel Club was set up to provide a database of dog family trees back in 1859. Hundreds of thousands of dogs are registered with the AKC each year. Many people believe that having AKC papers means that their dog is indeed a purebred and healthy, however AKC papers only show that the parents of the dog were also registered with AKC. Essentially, AKC papers are subpar because back in 1859 any dog could get registered and present dogs with AKC papers are simply the descendants of the previously registered dogs. The papers an owner receives from AKC are basically the present form of a birth certificate. However, these papers could provide much more information.

Later on it became apparent to AKC that puppy mill breeders were obtaining AKC papers by saying a puppy's parents were ones that they were not and so AKC began DNA testing to check a dog was the offspring of the told parents. Puppy mill breeders were then denied papers when the DNA testing was not accurate. Other pet registration clubs formed and now puppies from a puppy mill can be registered from numerous different clubs. However, no matter what club the puppy is registered with, the papers for this registration are not that important.

Source: The American Kennel Club And Other Breed & Club Registries. *NPPMWATCH: North Penn Puppy Mill Watch*. <http://www.nppmwatch.com/AKC.html>

(RG) The Dog Purchaser Protection Act (Puppy Lemon Law)

Some laws are designed to protect purchasers who are not given a warranty contract. This law mandates refunds or reimbursement of veterinarian expenses within a specified period of time after a sale, usually within 10 days of purchase. If the dog is ill or has died from an injury on the day you bought the animal, then there are 3 options:

1. Return the dog for a complete refund
2. Return the dog for a replacement dog of equal value.
3. Retain the dog and receive reimbursement for medical bills not exceeding the purchase price.

Sources: Buyer Beware. *United Against Puppy Mills*.
<http://www.unitedagainstpupmills.org/beware.html>
Pupmills - A National Disgrace. *Prisoners of Greed*.
<http://www.prisonersofgreed.org/Commercial-kennel-facts.html>

(DB) How reliable are American Kennel Club papers?

When a dog has AKC papers, this simply shows that the dog's parents both had AKC papers. AKC papers in no way show that the dog is not from a puppy mill. Hence many dogs from puppy mills do have AKC papers. The problem here is that there is no regulations on which breeders are allowed to have AKC papers. If AKC did regulate this and did not give papers out to puppies from puppy mills then having a dog with AKC papers would be reputable source of information.

Source: Puppy Scams & Cons. (2011). *ASPCA: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*. <http://www.aspca.org/fight-animal-cruelty/puppy-mills/puppy-scams-cons.aspx>

Are most breeders licensed?

Some breeders are originally licensed as they should be, but after failing an inspection the breeders may choose not to renew their license so they will not get inspected by the state anymore. The breeders continue to breed dogs in unlawful conditions and are not getting fined by the law. When a breeder is not licensed it is easy for the breeder to keep their puppy mill secretive. Without being licensed and hence not inspected, a puppy mill could sustain whatever horrible conditions they wish. Most puppy mills will not let the public or police see the conditions of their puppy mill because they are aware that the conditions are against the law. However, in order for police to take action they would need a warrant to search the property of the puppy mill which is very hard to get without probable cause which is unattainable without first seeing the unlawful conditions of the puppy mill. Therefore, unlicensed breeders are capable of continuing to operate puppy mills and sell these puppy while making a significant profit. In one case, when a puppy mill owner in Pennsylvania was found to not have a license he was only charged \$35 for not having a license. However, PA state law states that the fine for being unlicensed is between \$500 and \$1000 each day while unlicensed. The law is not being enforced and therefore there is not much encouragement for breeders to get licensed. Judges need to stick to the strict fines for being unlicensed to ensure that breeders renew their license every year. However, the fines for not having a license need to be more than the fines that would be inquired from having a breeding kennel that does not meet law conditions. To quote Hurdle, "Pennsylvania officials estimate that 84,000 dogs and puppies are kept in kennels or sold each year, the majority of which are kept in facilities with 250 or more animals" (Hurdle, 2009). These facilities with over 250 animals are most definitely puppy mills because it is rather impossible to properly care for so many dogs at a sole kennel. Responsible breeders do not house such an extreme amount of dogs because they are aware that the welfare of the dogs would be compromised if the breeder have to care for so many animals at once. In Lancaster County, PA alone, there are 277 licensed breeders, but the state estimated that there are another 600 unlicensed dog breeders. With roughly two-thirds of Lancaster County's breeders not licensed it is evident that heavier regulation is required, knowing that these unlicensed kennels are most likely breaking animal cruelty laws.

Sources: Quarryville, Pennsylvania—February 2008. (2011). *ASPCA: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*. <http://www.asPCA.org/fight-animal-cruelty/asPCA-in-action/quarryville.aspx>

WISCH, R. Table of State Laws Concerning Breeders, Kennels, and Pet Dealers. (2011). *Animal Legal & Historical Center*. <http://www.animallaw.info/articles/ovuspupmymilltable.htm>
<http://www.learningtogive.org/papers/paper351.html>

HURDLE, JON. "2008 Law Leading to Crackdown on Pennsylvania Puppy Mills." *New York Times* 18 Aug. 2009: 12. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 14 Nov. 2011.

Herbst, Diane. "The Puppy Saver." *People* 70.13 (2008): 163-167. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 14 Nov. 2011.

Problems with Backyard Breeders

Backyard breeders are not considered reputable breeders because they are not registered to breed and so do not get inspected and often are ignorant of how to properly breed dogs. Inbreeding is an issue common among backyard breeding. Inbreeding can result in many genetic disorders which will then be passed on generation to generation. Backyard breeders are usually just pet owners who want to breed their dog and sell the puppies for extra cash. Often backyard breeders will excessively breed a certain female which is very detrimental to the health of the mother dog and therefore also to the puppies.

Furthermore, backyard breeders (and puppy mills for that matter) cause the population of dogs to increase above the limiting capacity of the species. Many dogs have to be put down because there is no home (resources/shelter) for the dog. These breeders are breeding far more puppies than necessary because it costs them so little to produce the puppy and they receive so much money for the puppy when sold.

Breeder Loopholes

The Pennsylvania law states that a kennel must be licensed if it keeps, harbors, boards, shelters, sells, gives away or transfers a total of 26 or more dogs in any one calendar year. Giving a specific number of 26 dogs provides a loophole for breeders because they can intentionally only have 26 dogs in a year. This unlicensed breeders are difficult to find because the business is essentially "under the table" and even if they are found it is difficult to charge them because they can simply not have more than 25 dogs. An unlicensed breeder may also only keep less than 26 dogs at a time, but sell numerous puppies throughout the year and not document the sale so it appears that they only housed/sold 25 dogs a year. In these situations, charges for being unlicensed cannot be applied and only animal cruelty charges can be applied if that is occurring.

Sources: PA Dog Licensing. (2011). *Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture*.

http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_24476_10297_0_43/http:/10.41.0.36/AgWebsite/ProgramDetail.aspx?name=PA-Dog-Licensing-&navid=12&parentnavid=0&palid=100&

Economical stand point on unlicensed breeders

It is estimated that the larger scale puppy mills in Lancaster, PA can profit around a half a million dollars annually. If these major companies are not licensed by the state then there is no documentations of their profits. The puppy mills can sell their puppies secretly and not pay the appropriate income and sales taxes. With these huge estimates of income for puppy mill owner, the state in turn must be losing a large amount of tax revenue. Breeders committing tax evasion is yet another reason why breeders need to be licensed and it provides another pathway to mandate that breeders get licensed.

Sources: Herbst, Diane. "The Puppy Saver." *People* 70.13 (2008): 163-167. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 14 Nov. 2011.

Bell, K. Indiana targets tax-evading puppy mills. (2010). *MSN Money*.
<http://money.msn.com/tax-tips/post.aspx?post=835584ff-94bf-4d99-93ed-b6c53099fe77>

(RG) Problems with the Current Birth Certificate System

There are many problems with the current puppy purchasing documentation system. The main problem is dealing with genetic defects. If within 30 days of purchase a veterinarian diagnoses a congenital or hereditary defect, or if the dog has died from said defect, then the owner has the power of the warranty contract. This may seem fine, but what if a genetic defect appears much later in life? Genetic screening would let a potential buyer know of any genetic disorders before they even buy the dog. Genetic screening is very important because if the dog came from a puppy mill and has a history of genetic disorders, this will be brought to the potential customer's attention. If a dog has a pedigree, the family tree should be expanded on including genetic conditions of family members. If the dog's background is unknown, it should still undergo genetic screening. Another issue is that most owners may not want to get a refund or trade in their dog after having it for awhile (see Puppy Lemon Law). They may have already become attached. A revised birth certificate would solve this problem too, before the owner has the chance to become attached to his/her new pet. Another big problem deals with the validity of the breeder from which you bought the dog. Breeders registered and affiliated with the American Kennel Club and the International Kennel Club are good, but how about independent breeders or hobby breeders (backyard breeders). It is relatively easy to get away with being a crooked breeder (see Breeder Loopholes). A revised birth certificate would require all breeders to be licensed under a state/federal agency.

(DB) Why do breeders need to be licensed?

Ensuring that all breeders are licensed is an important issue so that the kennel will be regularly inspected. Although some breeders now are intentionally not licensed to avoid inspections and the fines that they would incur due to not meeting standards set by law, with the enactment of birth certificates the breeders would have to be licensed. Each birth certificate would list the name of the breeder's company and the certificate would not be approved if the breeder is not licensed. With all the puppy mills being licensed, they will get inspected and would have to close down if they refuse to meet the appropriate health conditions for the puppies. The birth certificates will tie up the loophole that exists now where the breeder can simply not be licensed and therefore not inspected and still sell puppies without any trouble.

How do breeders get licensed?

A kennel becomes licensed by filing out an application that can be found online and submitting it. The kennels have to renew their license at the end of each year. PA state law requires that there are semiannual inspections and the result of these inspections must be listed on the application.

Sources: Kennel Licensing. (2011). *Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture*.
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_24476_10297_0_43/AgWebsite/ProgramDetail.aspx?name=Kennel-Licensing&navid=12&parentnavid=0&palid=62&

The Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act (PUPS)

The PUPS Act was introduced for the third time on March 31, 2011, following earlier introductions of the bill in 2008 and 2010. The bill has yet to move further to becoming a bill. This federal bill would require that all large scale dog breeders be licensed and be inspected by veterinarians. As of now, most dogs at puppy mills receive no veterinarian care because this would cost the breeder money and puppy mill owners are trying to maximize their profits. The PUPS Act was introduced in reaction to online sales of pets. Puppy mills are able to directly sell puppies to consumers online and these transactions are not being regulated. An increasing amount of puppy sales online are happening each day which further supports the actions of puppy mill owners and the suffering of dogs at puppy mills. The Animal Welfare Act does not regulate direct sales between breeders and consumers because it was thought that consumers would not buy pets from kennels with unfit conditions. The Animal Welfare Act was enacted back in 1966 and did not take into account online sales of pets. It was thought that direct sales from breeders would require consumers to visit the kennel, however consumers buying online rarely see the puppy they are purchasing in person or for that matter the puppy mill that it came from before the puppy is shipped to their home. In essence, The Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act will close the loophole currently existing within sales of puppies and protect consumers that wish to purchase pets online.

Federal legislation calls for veterinary inspections of dog breeders selling over the Internet. (2011). *DVM: The Newsmagazine of Veterinary Medicine*, 42(6), 38.

<http://www.learningtogive.org/papers/paper351.html>

Service Project: the Puppy Birth Certificates Mandating Licensing of Animal Breeders Act

(AM) How A Bill Is Passed

A bill must go through many steps and pass through many hands before they can be made into law. The following lists the steps that a bill must go through before it can be a law 1. Initiation of the desired legislation: this can be done by any of the following persons or groups (the government itself, elected officials, lobbyists or citizens just to name a few) 2. Drafting the bill: this step is done by a staff attorney from the state legislature 3. Introduction of the bill: the bill can be introduced into the desired legislature by either a Senate, House, or Assembly Member 4. The bill must be seen by a committee-during this process a bill is evaluated and suggestions are made about what is good, bad or what parts of the bill need to be changed.

It must be noted that although there are four basic steps a bill must go through, these steps are almost always repeated, hence why some bills take years to be made into law. A bill must go through all steps in both the House and the Senate and if the bill does not pass a particular step it cannot move on and must start the process all over again.

Source: How A Bill Is Passed. (2010). *American Society for Dermatologic Surgery*.
<http://www.asds.net/HowABillIsPassed.aspx>

(RG) The reasoning behind our bill

Our group's goal is to pass some sort of law requiring that all animals sold by pet stores are coming from licensed sources ie puppy mills or breeders. Licensed sources are better than unlicensed sources because their facilities are kept to a certain standard of cleanliness, care, and comfort. A potential buyer of an animal would receive the animal's 'birth certificate' letting the customer know where the animal was coming from (puppy mill/breeder, both would have to be certified). This birth certificate would also inform the owner of any genetic diseases the animal may inherit or already have, the parents of the animal, as well as the breeder's contact information. With this law in effect, pet stores would have to make sure that their animals are coming from a reputable source if they hope to make business.

Our target

Since we do not have the resources to pass a federal law, we are starting small. Pennsylvania (one of the 7 puppy mill states) is especially huge with puppy mills. Lancaster County is valued at 4 million dollars a year. We are sending our bill to two individuals. One is Congressman Jim Gerlach : 6th District of Pennsylvania, who was a major cosponsor of the PUPS act (see Section A:16). The other person is P. Michael Sturla, a representative of Lancaster, PA.

(AM) The cover letter

Dear Congressman Gerlach/Sturla:

We are Rutgers university students working with Dr. Julie M. Fagan, Associate Professor of Animal Science. The proceeding pages document a bill that has been drafted under the Animal Breeder Act. The bill, entitled the Puppy Birth Certificates Mandating Licensing of Animal Breeders Bill, will ensure that all puppies that are sold in pet stores have proper documentation. This documentation being the birth certificate would make prospective buyers aware of where their puppy came from and any genetic conditions the animal may have. Also present would be the breeder's license information. This would alleviate the problem of people buying unhealthy animals.

The Puppy Birth Certificate Bill is important because it will control the buying and selling of dogs from puppy mills. There are 4,000-5,000 puppy mills scattered throughout the United States that rely on pet stores to make their profits. These facilities produce 5,000 puppies every single year. The puppies and dogs in these facilities live in horrid conditions where they are neglected and denied socialization.

The passage of this bill is therefore important because it will limit pet stores to purchase puppies only from puppy mills/breeders that are licensed. As previously mentioned these facilities rely on pet stores to purchase the puppies they produce. Hence, if customers are only buying puppies that come from licensed puppy mills, puppy mills will be pressured to improve their conditions and become licensed.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY: ISSUES IN ANIMALS AND AGRICULTURE 2011

Committee: N/A

Principal Authors: Ryan Gallagher,
Danielle Bair, Aimee Maiorino

Bill No: N/A

Delegation: N/A

Title of Bill:

Puppy Birth Certificates Mandating Licensing of Animal Breeders Act

BE IT ENACTED BY THE RUTGERS ISSUES IN ANIMALS AND AGRICULTURE

(DB) Preamble: Whereas, there is already adequate laws put in place to ensure the health and well being of dogs being breed at puppy mills; however, these laws are not being enforced; and it is being proposed that every puppy sold must have a certified birth certificate which will include information such as the parents of the puppy, the breeder's information, and any genetic problems of the puppies' family; and breeders must be licensed in order to have their information on the birth certificate which would ensure that every breeder must be licensed; and the current laws will take place, such as renewing one's license each year and periodic inspections of the kennels to ensure the health and environmental conditions.

(RG) Body :

SECTION 1: Let the consumer always receive the animal's birth papers and record forms.

Sub-SECTION A: a health certificate including past illnesses, treatments, vaccinations, and wormings

Sub-SECTION B: a warranty contract

Sub-SECTION C: a conditions of sale containing information on refunds

Sub-SECTION D: a statement governing the sale of dogs and cats by the
Division of Consumer Affairs

Sub-SECTION E: a document containing breeder information, including the
license number of the breeder

SECTION 2: Let Pennsylvania state law requiring that a kennel must be licensed if it keeps, harbors, boards, shelters, sells, gives away or transfers a total of 26 or more dogs in any one calendar year be switched to 4 or more dogs in one calendar year.

SECTION 3: Let there be regulations on which breeders are allowed to possess dog registry papers ie. American Kennel Club papers, being that having papers just states that the dog's parents are registered under the dog registry.

SECTION 4: Let the dog registry, as defined in SECTION 3, monitor the distribution of registration papers.

SECTION 5: Let pet stores/kennels only be allowed to purchase stock with complete birth certificates.

SECTION 6: Let the birth certificates, as defined in SECTION 5, include the breeder's license number, thus allowing the consumer to verify the validity of the breeder under the dog registry.

SECTION 7: Let the birth certificate, as defined in SECTION 5, include the breeder's contact information.

References:

Buyer Beware. *United Against Puppy Mills*.

<http://www.unitedagainstpupmymills.org/beware.html>

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Appendices:

What the birth certificate would look like:

Certificate of Pedigree

REG. NAME _____ REG. NO. _____ SEX _____
 BREED Yorkshire Terrier COLOR _____
 BREEDER Sandra K Ryel WHELPED August 5, 2002

Breeder: Sandra K Ryel
 Address: 123 Hudson St., Hoboken NJ, 07030
 Contact # 551-232-4567
 Breeder registry: International Kennel Club
 License/registration # 123-45-6789

Known genetic diseases appearing within four generations and carriers:
 Cricket's Paddi- patellar luxation
 Hunt's Sebastian- retinal dysplasia

Place of whelping: 123 Hudson St., Hoboken NJ 07030

Monroe's Edgar b/w/d _____ Brown's Bouncer b/w/d _____
 Maek Holly b/w/d _____
 Gianni's Jasper b/w/d _____
 Blue Doll b/w/d _____
 Hunt's Candy Man By Ernie b/w/d _____
 Hunt's Trisha Babe b/w/d _____
 Caro's Smokey b/w/m _____

Kyle's Spotted Pudd on SKR b/w/m
 GIRL REG. NO. EUC-ZAAB-36459T

Blue Doll Kiley of SKR b/w/m

Hunt's Sebastian of SKR b/w/m

Cricket's Paddi b/w/m
 ZIM REG. NO. A01-ZX-AB-36379B

Smokey's Cricket b/w/m

Ginger of Yvette b/w/m
 I hereby certify to my knowledge and belief that this Pedigree is true and correct.
 SIGNED Ruth Minchew DATE 10-4-2002



DOG BUYERS BEWARE

(RG)

(sent to the Daily Targum)

Purchasing a pet is always an exciting time. Although this may be a momentous and joyous occasion, prospective pet buyers should still exhibit caution when purchasing an animal, especially when buying a dog. Did you know that most pet stores purchase their puppies from puppy mills? They do this mostly for profit. Pet stores want to receive dogs "in bulk" for the lowest possible price, which is what puppy mills are in business to provide. Puppy mills also want to maximize profit. They are commercial enterprises whose sole purpose is to breed dogs in great numbers to increase profit. Since veterinary care for a large group of animals can be quite expensive, care is minimal or nonexistent in most puppy mills. There is no screening of genetic diseases and dogs are kept in small, uncomfortable wire cages 24 hours a day. Not only are these puppies prone to illness, but behavioral problems too. The worst part is that some of these puppy mills are not even licensed. When you get a dog from a puppy mill you are taking a chance of receiving an animal with any of a wide range of health conditions.

Some pet stores even buy puppies from unlicensed breeders, or "backyard breeders". Who knows what kind of conditions these dogs are growing up in. These dogs are most likely not receiving any veterinary care and with large amounts of inbreeding, these dogs are also prone to developing genetic disorders. Inbreeding can increase the chances of the offspring having congenital and hereditary conditions. If two siblings both carry the recessive gene for a genetic defect and they mate, some of the offspring of their litter are bound to have this defect. The incidence of genetic conditions also increases when a bitch is having litters past the age of 6 and more than one litter a year. Sadly, this is the case in puppy mills. Puppy mills want to maximize the reproducing capacity of their older females before they move on to younger females. The most common genetic conditions resulting from poorly run puppy mills include epilepsy, heart disease, kidney disease, musculoskeletal disorders (ie. hip dysplasia and luxating patellas), endocrine disorders, (ie. diabetes and hyperthyroidism), blood disorders (ie. anemia and Von Willebrand disease), deafness, and eye problems (ie. cataracts, glaucoma and progressive retinal atrophy).

Thankfully, laws are being passed controlling business between pet stores and puppy mills. One such law is The Dog Purchaser Protection Act (Puppy Lemon Law), which mandates refunds or reimbursement of veterinarian expenses within a specified period of time after a sale, usually within 10 days of purchase. These kinds of laws are designed to protect purchasers who are not given a warranty contract, which surprisingly is not always given when purchasing an animal. Actions are also being taken to combat backyard breeders. Respectable kennels like the American Kennel Club and the International Kennel Club require that their breeders are licensed, which is maintained via routine inspection checks.

Even though there is some regulation in the pet business, it is still very easy to get ripped off when purchasing a pet. When buying an animal, whether it be a cat or a dog, you should always request the animal's papers or "birth certificate." This should include a health certificate including past illnesses, treatments, vaccinations, and wormings; a warranty contract; the conditions of sale containing information on refunds; and a statement governing the sale of dogs and cats by the Division of Consumer Affairs. Also, please note that just because an animal has registration papers does not mean that the animal is not from a puppy

mill. It just means that the animal's parents both had registration papers. Another thing you should watch out for is the quality of the breeder. Even though most respectable kennels require that their breeders be licensed, it is still relatively easy to slip under the radar. For example, Pennsylvania state law requires that a kennel must be licensed if it keeps, harbors, boards, shelters, sells, gives away or transfers a total of 26 or more dogs in any one calendar year. Selling exactly 26 or less dogs provides a loophole for breeders because they can get away without being inspected. To avoid being scammed when purchasing a pet you should appear knowledgeable, confident, and you should ask many questions!

Letter to the Editor:

(DB)

Sent to the Philadelphia Enquirer

Many people are aware that the conditions at puppy mills are horrendous and these conditions contribute to the death of many puppies. However, these same people are unknowingly supporting puppy mills. Many people buy their puppies from pet stores or online and those puppies come from puppy mills. A significant problem with puppy mills is that many are not licensed and therefore do not get inspected. In order to crack down on breeders not meeting the conditions required by law, breeders need to all be regularly inspected so pet laws can be enforced. The birth certificate bill I am proposing would require all puppies sold to come from a licensed breeder. The birth certificates will include information such as the parents of the puppy, the breeder's information, and any genetic problems of the puppies' family. This would insure that the kennels would be regularly inspected. The bill is to be passed in Pennsylvania because Lancaster County has many puppy mills, many of which are not licensed.

When a breeder's kennel does not pass an inspection, they have to pay a charge and fix the issue in order to renew their license which must be done each year. Puppy mills that choose not to fix the conditions of the kennel continue to sell puppies because there is no regulation on this currently. Puppy mill owners may even prefer to be unlicensed so they are not bothered with inspections and fines. I believe if all breeders were required to be licensed then the conditions at kennels would be collectively improved since every kennel would get inspected. With this bill passed, families will be able to happily purchase puppies without having to worry that the puppy came from a puppy mill and may have many health problems

Letter to the Editor:

(AM)

Sent to Dog Fancy

Dear Editor,

I am fully aware that your magazine is geared toward the health, happiness and well being of all dogs regardless whether they are purebred or mixed breed. I understand that your magazine's target audience is those who care deeply about the health and well being of dogs. Keeping the above mentioned in mind, I am writing this because I feel that your audience would be very susceptible to this idea of a puppy birth certificate documenting the health and origins of each puppy that is sold in a pet store.

Seeing as they want to ensure the health and well being of their four legged family members,

I propose that a Puppy Birth Certificate Bill is passed. This bill would ensure that potential dog owners knew where their dogs, more specifically puppies came from, whether they were born at puppy mills or came from reputable breeders. The birth certificate bill is written in a way to make it mandatory that all existing or potential health problems the puppy may currently have or develop later in life are documented on the birth certificate. The most important aspect of these birth certificates lies in where the puppy came from, as the goal is to educate potential buyers about the irresponsible breeding and treatment of dogs that are born as a result of the puppy mill industry.

Sincerely,

Aimee Maiorino