



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Some of the Worst Puppy Mills in Missouri Found Shipping to California

October 6, 2010

Researchers at The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) recently spent weeks poring over state and federal inspection reports, investigators' photographs, and enforcement records received via the Freedom of Information Act and state Sunshine Law requests to compile a list of some of the worst puppy mills in Missouri. Many of the puppy mills on the list were found on shipping documents providing puppies to California pet stores and consumers.

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate current problems that could be addressed by the passage of Proposition B, which Missouri citizens will vote on in November. Under Proposition B, the Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act, many of these dealers' horrific violations would be backed by stronger enforcement opportunities.

While Proposition B will be on the ballot only in Missouri, this report shows that Missouri's puppy mills affect states and consumers across

the country. They also affect the health of dogs across the country, as sloppy breeding practices lead to genetic and inherited conditions that can affect generations of purebred dogs. Missouri exports most of the puppies it produces, supplying approximately 40% of the puppies for sale in pet stores nationwide.



A matted, filthy poodle at S & S Family Puppies in Milan, Mo. 2008/USDA

How we selected some of the worst kennels in Missouri

The puppy mills listed here were selected as examples of some of the worst licensed kennels in the state, based upon the number and severity of state and/or federal animal

welfare violations. Availability of photographs to verify the conditions was also a factor in some cases.

Some of the violations described in federal and state kennel inspection reports include thin-coated breeds like Italian greyhounds shivering in the cold in below-freezing temperatures, dogs with open oozing or bleeding sores, underweight dogs with their entire skeletal structures showing, and sick or dying puppies who had not been treated by a vet.

At least one violator has more than 500 pages of Animal Welfare Act violations and enforcement records on file with the USDA, yet she remains licensed. At least one repeat violator has stayed in business despite more than a decade of repeated citations. Even among puppy mills that have dropped their USDA licenses, many continue to advertise puppies for sale on websites like www.PuppyFind.com, www.BreedersClub.net, and local online classified ad sites. Puppy mills that sell directly to consumers are not required to be federally licensed.

More than 500 Pages of Enforcement Records, Yet Still Licensed?

Brandi Cheney and Diana Stephenson, S & S Family Puppies and other facilities:

- **S&S Family Puppies:** Milan, MO; USDA license: 43-B-0435 – USDA licensed from July 2001 through July 2011, MDA license #: 397 – MDA licensed through 2010



A photo from USDA enforcement records shows a thin, “unresponsive” poodle lying listlessly in her cage at S&S Family Puppies. 2008/ USDA

- **CC Family Puppies (Cheney):** Huntsville, MO
USDA license: 43-B-3656– USDA licensed from Aug. 2008 through Sept. 2009. MDA license #: 3736 – MDA licensed through 2010

- **Brandi Cheney shipped at least 19 puppies to directly to CA in 2009 and Stephenson shipped at least one.** Many other puppies may have been sold to CA indirectly from this facility via brokers.

After receiving consumer complaints about S &S Family Puppies and CC Family Puppies, The Humane Society of the United States submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to The USDA, and received more than 500 pages of recent federal enforcement records, yet according to the most recent information available, S & S Family Puppies remains both state and federally licensed in 2010.

The USDA enforcement records for these dealers include photos of dogs with oozing or encrusted eyes, dogs with bleeding lacerations, puppies attempting to stand on wide-spaced wire flooring, an underweight and “unresponsive” poodle, and some dogs so badly matted with feces-encrusted hair that it was difficult to determine what gender or breed they were.

Recent investigations found the duo selling puppies over the Internet using vague names and locations. Several pages of puppy ads linked to email addresses used by Cheney and/or her mother, Diana Stephenson, were found on www.buysellpuppy.com.

http://www.buysellpuppy.com/mini-bulldogs-525_23961_PD.html

Dozens of pages of USDA inspection reports detail repeated Animal Welfare Act violations for dogs exposed to the cold without adequate weather protection, problems with seriously ill, injured or malnourished dogs not being treated by a vet, housing problems, filthy, feces-laden conditions and more. Direct quotes from the reports include:



ABOVE: A small Sheltie in an outdoor pen appears to have no protection from the cold and snow at S&S Family Puppies. 2010/The HSUS

BELOW: A Beagle was found with multiple untreated lacerations at S & S Family Puppies. 2008/USDA



“In the outdoor enclosures, the shelters do not have any bedding remaining in them. The owner stated that they put some in ‘about a week ago but the dogs drag it out’. The temperatures have been less than 35F during the daytime and close to 0F at night”. (Feb. 2010)

“In all outdoor enclosures and many of the inside part of the shelter buildings, there is an excessive amount of feces. Many of the dogs cannot avoid walking in the feces because it is matted throughout the surfaces.” (Feb. 2010)

“Maltese (chip 096589372) had fecal material caked over its anus. The block of fecal material had a dried appearance and measured approximately 4” by 4” and was completely covering the dog’s bottom. When the licensee trimmed off the fecal block, the skin underneath was red, raw, and inflamed around the anus and on the back aspects of the animal’s thighs.” (March 2008)

*“A female white poodle (Avid 086*543*359) was observed with severe matting covering approximately 80% of its body. Some mats were approximately 4 inches long. The dog had areas of exposed bare skin. The dog was shivering.” (Nov. 2007)*

“Outside this pen was noted a dead adult female boxer, covered with a feed sack, that had died the day before. This dog appeared very thin. Owner stated she had been treating this dog but no medical records were available.” (July 2004)

Brandi Cheney and her mother, Diana Stephenson, have owned breeding facilities under several different names. S & S Family Puppies is licensed by the USDA under both women’s names at the Milan address. A business of the same name is licensed by the Missouri Department of Agriculture under the names “Charles and Diana Stephenson” at the Milan address, while CC Family Puppies, which is now only state licensed, is under the name of Brandi Cheney and Clif Cheney at the Huntsville address. Meanwhile, a new business, Circle B Farms LLC, has been licensed by the USDA using the same Huntsville address as CC Family Puppies and is active through June 2011, according to the USDA’s website.

Dogs Licking at Frozen Water Bowls; Thin Shivering Dogs, Dying Puppies

Paul and Pollie Gingerich - Gingerich Farms

- Bogard, MO
- USDA license (# 43-A-3766) cancelled – was licensed from Jan. 2003 through Aug. 2010. (62 pages of violations)
- MDA license #: 5601 – MDA licensed through 2010
- 250 adult breeding dogs at last USDA count

- **Paul Gingerich shipped at least 5 puppies directly to CA in 2009 and many other puppies may have been sold to CA indirectly via brokers.**

While USDA licensed, the Gingerich facility was cited by inspectors dozens of times for grave repeat violations of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), including filthy conditions, dogs needing vet care, dogs without adequate protection from the cold, and underweight dogs whom inspectors described as shivering in the cold. In addition, they were cited by the USDA for repeat AWA violations for sick and dying puppies who had not been treated by a vet; severely matted dogs, housing issues, and veterinary issues. There were repeated "attempted inspection" violations in which federal inspectors were denied access to the facility. Before losing or dropping their USDA licensed just recently, the Gingeriches had amassed 62 pages of USDA violations since April 2008. Yet even though they are no longer federally licensed, they still hold a Missouri state kennel license in 2010. Excerpts from their USDA reports speak for themselves:



A dog at the Gingerich facility. 2010/The HSUS

“Two adult Italian greyhounds were housed in an outdoor enclosure.

The temperature, at the time of inspection, was approximately 29 degrees F. These dogs had no bedding in their shelter structure and were observed shivering and had prominent ribs, hip bones and vertebrae.” (Dec. 2009)

“There were two concrete water receptacles, with frozen water. One of the dogs was observed trying to break the ice with its paw and another dog was trying to lick the ice. ” (Dec. 2009)

“There were at least 5 dogs that had excessively long nails. These nails had approximately ½ an inch of overgrowth. These nails were inhibiting the dogs’ ability to stand and walk in a normal manner. The toes of these dogs were splayed while walking and standing and the angle of the foot was abnormal.” (Dec. 2009)

“In at least 7 enclosures, there was an excessive accumulation of feces. These feces covered approximately 75 percent of the total outdoor floor space. One dog was observed circling around the pile of fecal material.” (Dec. 2009)

“A puppy, approximately 6 weeks old was observed to have prominent ribs, dull eyes and hair coat and appeared to be weak, as it had difficulty walking. Upon closer observation, the puppy had a brownish colored substance along the muzzle. When the licensee placed the puppy back in the enclosure, the puppy started to retch with abdominal effort. According to the licensee the puppy had been this way for approximately three days.” (April 22, 2008)

“An unweaned, female ‘yorkie-poo’ puppy, born 10-11-08, was not moving. Upon closer observation, the puppy had dry, crusty, yellow exudates around both eyes. There was also a thick, moist, yellow to brown colored exudate around the nose and muzzle. The gums were extremely pale and the hair coat was in poor condition. This puppy had not been seen by a veterinarian and at the time of inspection the licensee was verbally instructed to have the dog examined by a veterinarian as soon as possible. During the inspection, the licensee informed the inspectors that before a veterinarian could be found, the puppy had died.” (USDA inspection on Nov. 2008)

A Decade of Problems

Mary Ann Smith - Smith’s Kennel

- Salem, MO
- USDA license: 43-A-2296 – USDA licensed from Aug. 1996 through August 2011
- MDA license #: 3258 – MDA licensed through 2010
- **Mary Ann Smith shipped at least 3 puppies directly to CA in 2009; many other puppies may have been sold to CA indirectly via brokers.**

Smith’s Kennel has a history of repeat USDA violations stretching back more than a decade, including citations for unsanitary conditions; dogs exposed to below-freezing temperatures or excessive heat without adequate shelter from the weather; dogs without enough cage space to turn and move around freely; pest and rodent infestations; injured and bleeding dogs, dogs with loose, bloody stools who had not been treated by a vet, and much more.

Quotations from federal inspection reports include:

“In the big dog barn there is one dog that had a cherry eye on the right eye. There was one other dog that was noted to have multiple large interdigital cysts bilaterally in front paws and on the hind left paw.” (USDA inspection June 2010)

[Note: interdigital cysts are a common malady in dogs who are forced to stand continually on wire flooring. The cysts are painful and can lead to disabling infections -- HSUS]

“In the adult building there are approximately 14 dogs with extremely long toenails. It is noted that some of these nails are turning the toes sideways as the dogs walk and hanging down through the wire flooring.” (June 2009)

“There is 1 bull terrier in a primary enclosure where bright red blood is noted in the feces [...] there are three English Bulldogs that have green matter in their eyes [...] There are five English Bulldogs that are noted to have hair loss.” (USDA inspection March 2009)

“In the outdoor housing facility, the housing units have very little bedding. The temperature the past 2 nights have below freezing.” (USDA inspection March 2009)

“There are 3 outdoor pens that have igloos for housing units that have no bedding material in them. The weather has been reaching temperatures of 20-30 degrees F at night for approximately the past week.” (USDA inspection Nov. 2008)

“The owner has issues with this facility that remain consistent with each inspection and more issues have surfaced since the last inspection.” (2008)

Sick Puppies, Dogs Exposed to Extremes of Heat and Cold

Peggy Ryan - For Heaven's Sake Kennel

- Reeds Spring, MO
- USDA license: 43-B-3651 – USDA licensed from July 2008 through July 2011 (19 pages of USDA violations on file since June 2008)
- MDA license #: 5091 – MDA licensed through 2010
- According to the most recent USDA records available, at last count this facility housed 100 breeding adult dogs.

- **Ryan shipped at least 8 puppies directly to CA in 2009; many other puppies may have been sold to CA indirectly via brokers.**

This USDA licensee has amassed nineteen (19) pages of Animal Welfare Act violations over the past two years. A June 2010 USDA inspection noted repeated veterinary issues with two Chows, one of whom had “mats hanging down” while another had patches of untreated hair loss. In February 2010 the kennel was cited for severely matted dogs, dogs with “very loose, greenish brown colored stool” who had not been treated by a veterinarian, animals in 36 degree temperatures who did not have enough protection from the cold, stacked wire cages where “puppies that were attempting to move around” were seen “falling through the openings in the wire”, dirty conditions, and more.



Dogs in outdoor pens at For Heaven’s Sake Kennel. 2010/The HSUS

Previous federal inspections noted a severe flea infestation throughout the facility, dogs in 93-degree buildings without adequate climate control, and puppies who were underweight and lethargic:

“There is a heavy flea infestation at the facility. There were live adult and larval fleas seen on the dogs.” (Aug. 2009)

“During the inspection the ambient temperature was measured in both the Chihuahua and Frenchie buildings. The ambient air temperature measured to be 92.6 degrees and 93.6 degrees F. The dealer stated the buildings did not have any electricity for approximately a week.” (July 2009)

“In the whelping building there was one nine week old cock-a-poo puppy, no ID, which was lethargic and lying with its limbs stiffly distended” (Oct. 2008)

Banned from USDA, Yet Still Licensed in Missouri after 38 State Violations

Wendy Laymon/ Layman aka Faith Laymon/Layman

Shadow Mountain Kennel (Shadow Mountain Ranch), MO

- Rogersville MO
- USDA license (Shadow Mountain Kennel) revoked
- MDA licensed as Shadow Mountain Ranch, #5866 – MDA licensed through 2010 (36 violations on file)
- Laymon **shipped at least 13 puppies directly to CA in 2009; many other puppies may have been sold to CA indirectly via brokers.**

Wendy Laymon (aka Faith Layman and other names) sells puppies, primarily French Bulldogs, over the Internet from MO to customers across the country for about \$2,000 each. The Humane Society of the United States has received complaints about sick puppies sold by this individual, who was once licensed in Washington state and was considered notorious in Snohomish County Washington before losing her WA kennel license and then moving to Missouri.

In Snohomish County, Washington, Layman reportedly lost her kennel license and was sued in small claims court approximately 15 times for charges related to selling sick puppies and misrepresentation issues. The majority of the cases were in the late 1990s and in 2000. Reportedly, she was convicted and sentenced to jail time in Washington state and was restricted from owning any animals as part of her release. She then moved to Missouri.

Most recently, on March 27, 2009 the USDA levied action against her (dba Shadow Mountain Kennel) under docket #08-0089: http://www.da.usda.gov/oaljdecisions/090403_AWA-08-0089.pdf. She was fined \$7,125 (held in abeyance) and banned from holding a USDA license for three years.

Although Laymon has been banned from holding a USDA license until at least 2012, while previously licensed as a B dealer she was cited for numerous violations of the Animal Welfare Act, including excessively matted dogs, dirty conditions, inadequate housing and records violations.

Despite her dishonorable history, Laymon currently holds a MO state kennel license. She has some of the most numerous MO Department of Agriculture ACFA violations of all state-licensed sellers (at least 36 violations since 2008).

HSUS investigators found that Laymon sells puppies (or has done business) under many business names, none of which are registered as fictitious business names in the state of MO as of April 2010, including:

- Shadow Mountain Ranch (name used on her current MO license)
- The Bulldog Connection (www.thebulldogconnecion.com/)
- Frenchie Babies (www.frenchiebabies.com/)
- Web Frenchies (www.webfrenchies.com/)
- Love My Bullie (www.k-designco.com/lovemybullie/)
- A French Bulldog (www.afrenchbulldog.com/)

During a routine state kennel inspection on 02/10/10, the Animal Health Officer inspecting Laymon's kennel noted that "the last inspection conducted by the attending veterinarian was January 2008," more than two years before.

Admitted Performing Invasive Surgeries without a Vet

John and Sharlette Tidwell, Ramblin' Spring Kennel

West Plains, MO

USDA # 43-B-0441; also MO state licensed

- **The Tidwells shipped at least 7 puppies directly to CA in 2009; many other puppies may have been sold to CA indirectly via brokers.**

In December 2009, Tidwell, a USDA-licensed breeder, admitted to her inspector that she essentially practices veterinary medicine without a license, performing surgeries on her own and brokered animals on her property, including surgical births and spay/neuter surgeries.* Other USDA violations include keeping an adult female Rottweiler with two puppies in a wire crate with only half the required space, and in 2007 a USDA inspection found 25 under-age puppies being sold to pet stores.

"The licensee stated that she performs surgeries on the brokered puppies and her own animals. Records indicate that she has performed surgeries such as ear crops, umbilical hernia repairs, inguinal hernia repairs, "nares snipped", neuters, dew claw

removals, ovariectomies, and Caesarian sections. The licensee is not a veterinarian and could not provide the inspectors with documentation indicating that she has received adequate training to be qualified to perform invasive surgical procedures in a manner that meets professional veterinary standards. The room that the licensee stated is being utilized to conduct invasive surgical procedures does not meet the generally accepted veterinary professional standards for surgical rooms. The floor has areas of bare wood that can not be effectively cleaned and sanitized, the licensee stated that surgical tools are soaked with alcohol between patients, and extraneous materials are present in the surgical room including a vacuum, animal enclosures, pictures on the walls, and boards.” (Dec. 2009)

MISSOURI BROKERS FOUND SELLING TO CALIFORNIA

Hunte Corp: Cited for Small Cages and Underage Puppies

The Hunte Corporation of Goodman, MO shipped at least 2,718 puppies to CA pet stores in 2009.

Hunte is a middleman animal dealer which the USDA has cited for keeping dozens of puppies in cramped cages that were smaller than the minimum requirement, repeatedly transporting underage puppies, and other violations. The Hunte Corporation sells about 80,000 puppies a year from hundreds of different kennels and puppy mills.

Mid-America: Cited for Small Cages and Incorrect Medications

Mid-America Pet Broker, LLC, Neosho, MO shipped 656 puppies to CA pet stores in 2009.

Mid-America is a middleman animal dealer in Missouri which the USDA has cited for buying from individuals without verifying whether they were licensed, expired and incorrect medications at the facility, too-small cages, and other violations.

Tracy’s K & J Pets: Cited for High Mortality Rate in Puppies

Tracy’s K & J Pets shipped 109 puppies to California pet stores in 2009.

Before dropping its USDA license in April 2009, Tracy’s K & J Pets was a middleman animal dealer which the USDA had cited for inadequate veterinary oversight, sanitation issues, a “higher than normal mortality rate” among puppies, and a dead puppy found in the “sick room” who had not been treated by a veterinarian.

CONCLUSION

Approximately 200,000 breeding dogs are confined for life in small wire cages in puppy mills in Missouri, many of them in conditions like those described above. These dogs produce up to a million puppies a year, most of which are sold out of state. Many of these puppies are sold via brokers, pet stores and Internet sales to consumers in California. This is simply unacceptable.

Proposition B requires access to nutritious food daily and continuous access to drinkable water, veterinary care for illness or injury, and adequate space and exercise. Proposition B will increase enforcement in general, and specifically increase and facilitate local law enforcement as compared to the existing vague and highly technical puppy mill regulations. The measure not only provides new, easily understandable criminal penalties for mistreatment, it does so without wiping out or eliminating the existing Missouri laws and penalties.

Proposition B will apply to all large-scale commercial dog dealers in Missouri, whether the owner is licensed or not, and ensures that dogs in such large-scale breeding facilities receive basic humane care. Dogs deserve no less than these basic protections, and dog lovers in every state should support Prop B.

Paid for by Missourians for the Protection of Dogs/YES! on Prop B, Judy Peil, Treasurer