

NOW **NOW IS THE TIME.** Minnesotans have the opportunity to pass a state law that will license and regulate commercial dog and cat breeders, protecting animals, consumers and communities.

Your help is needed. Please learn more and take action.

HEALTHY AND SAFE
healthy and safe

CAUTION: This publication contains graphic depictions of animal conditions in Minnesota.

ANIMALFOLKSMN

duty of care

Many Minnesotans consider dogs and cats to be part of the family. They are companions — loyal, giving, always there when we need them. To make sure dogs and cats are healthy and safe, responsible pet owners invest in the animal's well-being and expect the same high standards from businesses or other households who, too, assume a duty of care for an animal's life.

THE ISSUE

The well-being of each dog and cat should be the goal of all breeding; unfortunately, that goal is lost when "making money" becomes the priority.

Commercial dog and cat breeding is a multi-billion dollar industry in the United States made up of a well-established network, which includes breeders, dealers, auctioneers, carriers, registries, distributors (e.g., pet stores, newspapers, websites), and others.

The "product" produced and sold is a live animal — purchased as a companion to live in our homes and interact with our families.

Unlike other industries, the State of Minnesota does not require dog and cat breeders or dealers to obtain a license to operate. These businesses are not inspected by the state, nor are they required to follow any state standards of care.

Lack of industry standards has resulted in facilities that breed and keep dogs and cats in unsanitary and deplorable conditions. Lack of state oversight has created an environment that hides animal neglect and abuse, overlooks consumer fraud and tolerates unacceptable business conduct.

1.35 million

Approximate number of dogs owned and cared for by Minnesota households.*

1.6 million

Approximate number of cats owned and cared for by Minnesota households.*

10,000 +

In the 2009-2010 Minnesota legislative session, over 10,000 petitions were submitted to legislators from Minnesotans across the state who support regulation of dog and cat breeders.

79% in favor

In a survey conducted at the 2010 MN State Fair, 79.1% of respondents agreed that "commercial dog and cat breeders should be licensed by the State of Minnesota and their facilities inspected by state inspectors." (9% undecided/no opinion.)

* Estimates based on U.S. totals; formulas applied to Minnesota population in 2010.



“Dogs that are bred and intended to be kept as pets require a basic standard of care for their own well-being and to ensure they possess the temperament and good health necessary to become successful companion animals. The good news is that most facilities meet or exceed this level of care. Unfortunately, there are also substandard facilities that breed and keep dogs under deplorable and unsanitary conditions. During the past years, many states have considered passing bills regulating those who breed and/or retail dogs in an effort to address these substandard facilities.”

- American Veterinary Medical Association, 2010

ABOVE: Minnesota dog breeder. Example of mass production; operating for years with unlimited puppy production. This breeder has housed over 1,000 dogs and puppies with hundreds of breeding females caged for years. Still in operation.

RIGHT: Minnesota breeder. Example of stacked, wire caging. Feces and urine fall through wire flooring on to animals below, spreading disease and harming the dogs. No longer operating.



WHY regulation of commercial dog and cat breeders is needed

THE MARKET

The commercial breeding of dogs and cats started in the 1940s. Many puppies and kittens were sold through pet stores and most consumers were unaware of who was supplying the animals. Today, many consumers are still unaware of breeding conditions and continue to buy through pet stores and, now, the Internet. The demand for “designer dogs” has also re-shaped the market.

THE INDUSTRY

There are reputable dog and cat breeders in Minnesota who invest the necessary time, staff and money to properly care for animals. Some of these breeders breed for hobby or show; others breed to sell.

But Minnesota is also known for substandard kennels, referred to as puppy or kitten mills. These large commercial facilities mass produce unlimited quantities of puppies and kittens. While the puppies and kittens are sold to dealers, pet stores or directly to consumers, the adult breeding dogs and cats are caged for years and bred repeatedly until they are of no use and then killed, sold at auction or retired (e.g., kept within the facility, sold at discounted prices or given to rescue groups). Minnesota has some of the largest puppy mills in the nation, with 200, 500 or over 1,000 dogs in each kennel.



A breeding dog and a breeding cat from Minnesota breeders.

Smaller breeders with substandard conditions, known as backyard or basement breeders, are also located throughout Minnesota. Similar to high-volume breeders, these types of businesses are often hidden from view and don't allow the public into the sheds or back rooms to see the conditions. They might start with one litter by accident, and continue to breed without knowledge of animal genetics, health or care.

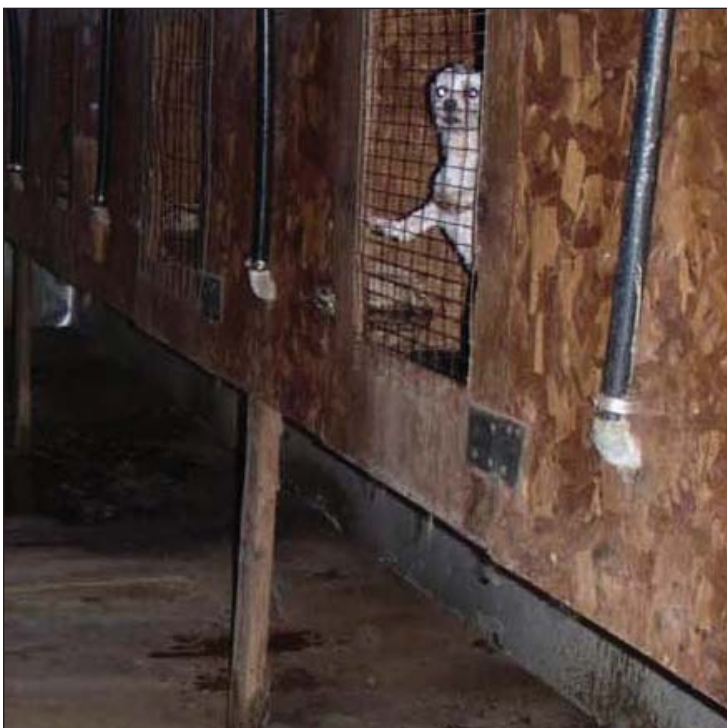
NOTE: For some, the term “puppy and kitten mills” has expanded to describe any breeder, big or small, who treats dogs and cats inhumanely. It has become a description of attitude, beliefs and behavior.

THE DIFFERENCE

There is a difference of opinion about how animals should be viewed and treated. Certain breeders and dealers view dogs and cats as inventory — to be bred and sold as products in order to generate income. Others view each animal as a life, capable of feeling pain and suffering. To be healthy (physically and psychologically), dogs and cats require proper food, shelter and veterinary care as well as socialization, human contact and exercise. Breeders and dealers motivated solely by money lose sight of this fact.



THIS PAGE: To maximize profits, some breeders and dealers cut corners in operations, providing improper care. Examples: Mass puppy production with no or limited exercise and socialization, no or limited veterinary care, inadequate caging and shelter, unsanitary conditions, limited or poor quality food and water, no or limited grooming, excessive inbreeding and over-breeding, and years of prolonged confinement of animals resulting in a behavior called "kennel crazy." All photos are from dog breeders located in Minnesota. Some breeders shown have been charged with animal cruelty.



BENEFITS OF REGULATION

Licensing and regulation are the legal means to hold businesses accountable for their actions. In Minnesota, there is no state law to license or regulate dog and cat breeders, which has negatively impacted animals, consumers and communities. A state law will help:

1. **Protect animals**

The goal must be the well-being of each dog and cat, puppy or kitten. Unlike many other businesses, the “product” produced is life — and that life must be treated humanely.

2. **Reduce burden on communities**

Relying on cruelty investigations and prosecution as a means to encourage ethical business standards is costly for local law enforcement, animal control and the courts. Regulation is based on compliance to standards — for efficient use of resources.

3. **Protect consumers**

Unscrupulous breeders sell unhealthy dogs and cats to unsuspecting consumers who then may incur thousands of dollars in veterinarian bills to treat their sick dog or cat. Regulation would help consumers differentiate between good and bad breeders.

4. **Protect taxpayers**

In 2010, Animal Folks MN conducted a study showing that 74% of sampled breeders did not hold a State sales tax permit. Licensing breeders will make it easier for Minnesota to collect sales tax from these businesses, contributing additional revenues to the State.

5. **Protect public health**

Unsanitary conditions (e.g., excessive feces, urine, improper disposal of carcasses) can spread disease to humans. Regulation protects the public through inspections.

6. **Reduce strain on animal shelters and rescue groups**

Many humane societies and rescue groups in Minnesota receive sick, neglected and abused dogs and cats from disreputable breeding facilities, in addition to handling stray, abandoned or other unwanted animals. These organizations must raise millions of dollars to provide animal care, shelter and adoption. Regulation will reduce the burden on nonprofits. Also: Humane societies and rescue groups, defined under Minn. Stat. Sec. 347.31, are already licensed and inspected.

7. **Raise standards overall**

Many breeders now sell dogs and cats through the Internet, hiding kennel conditions and offering discounted prices. Regulation provides transparency, raising standards overall.

8. **Make Minnesota a leader**

Other states (including Wisconsin and Iowa) have already passed breeder regulation. Some dog and cat breeders are moving out of regulated states into unregulated states.

MYTHS AND FEARS

“There are already laws on the books to prevent cruelty.”

Some people claim that Minnesota animal anti-cruelty laws are enough. While animal anti-cruelty statutes are vital, they kick in *after* the cruelty occurs—and only if a person sees the conditions and reports it, the sheriff investigates and the prosecutor prosecutes. Regulation is preventative—inspecting conditions so cruelty can be prevented *before* it occurs.

“Regulation will hurt the good breeders.”

Some people claim that regulation will put good breeders out of business. Responsible breeders are already in compliance by treating animals humanely and selling healthy dogs and cats to consumers. Suggesting that only “bad” breeders should be regulated is like suggesting only bad restaurants should be inspected. Regulation weeds out businesses that act improperly, improving standards overall.

“Regulation is big government and will take away my freedom.”

Some people define freedom in terms of self-interest—i.e., freedom to do whatever they want to animals, defined as property. But freedom can also be defined as **1.** animals free from abuse or neglect; **2.** consumers free from fraud; and **3.** communities free from having to clean up after businesses that hurt society. One role of government is to protect all freedoms.

“If puppies and kittens must be treated humanely, then pigs, cows and chickens will be next.”

Some people fear that requiring a business to treat animals humanely, even puppies and kittens, is a slippery slope that can spill over to livestock. Others believe that farmers of good conscience already treat animals well, so have nothing to fear. This issue is about regulating dog and cat breeders.

take action.

How we treat animals defines who we are as people and as a State. As Minnesotans, please act.

- **LEARN MORE.** Learn more about inhumane dog and cat breeding.
- **SIGN PETITION.** Sign the petition in support of dog and cat breeder regulation.
- **CONTACT LEGISLATORS.** Find out who represents you and ask your State legislators to vote in favor of breeder regulation.
- **TELL OTHERS.** Download materials to inform others.
- **ADOPT.** Never purchase a dog or cat from a pet store or without seeing breeding conditions. Save a life by adopting from your local humane society or rescue group.

Find all this information and more at: www.animalfolksmn.org

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