

Report on Pick of the Litter Kennels 5/14/08 – 5/28/08

Overall, conditions at Pick of the Litter Kennels are consistent with those noted previously. This report notes several of the many instances of what appear to be violations of Statute 343.21 Subd.1-Torture, and additional information on dipping dogs, including pregnant and nursing dogs, in the same manner as noted in earlier field notes which could violate Statute 343.21 Subd.7-Cruelty. Cases listed below are what I felt are the most obvious or egregious problems at the kennel, amongst numerous other possible violations listed in field notes entries.

The two dogs noted last in this report, a wounded Bichon and sick Bulldog named Maggie, are two dogs I am concerned may not survive much longer at the kennel, since other dogs I have seen in similar condition, including the English Mastiff noted first in this report, have died or been euthanized at the kennel after wasting away to a critical state.

English Mastiff

A female English Mastiff at the kennel became emaciated and had a deep open sore on her left elbow. Her condition deteriorated over time until she went into seizure and vomited blood before being put down by Alan with a gun, who delayed the euthanasia, as far as I can tell, by indifference to the situation.

5/14/08: This morning, Bill told me to take an emaciated male Mastiff out of his cage and put him in one of the large pens at the south end of the middle aisle of the Red Barn's western room. I did so, and later asked Larry if we were supposed to dip the dog while doing the Red Barn. He said we were, so we carried him out for Kathy to look at. The dog's front elbows had bloody sores on them, and the left elbow had what appeared to be a chunk of flesh about an inch wide and three inches long torn off of it, revealing a bloody hole about an inch deep in scar tissue. Kathy ripped the hanging chunk of dead flesh off the dog with her hand when I pointed it out to her. Kathy decided against dipping the dog, but squirted several pumps of Ivomec she had in a bottle that appeared to formerly be used for hand soap or lotion, and told Larry the dog needed a shot of "pen gen," meaning a penicillin antibiotic combination. I pointed out to her that the dog had a snotty nose as well.

(relevant footage: 5/14/08 07 0'2"; 5/14/08 10 0'1")

5/19/08: The emaciated English Mastiff in the Red Barn appears not to have gained any weight, and his front left elbow still has an open, bloody wound on it that does not appear to have healed. I tried to pull some wood shavings off the elbow and ear wounds. As I did so, skin came off with the ear shavings, revealing a pus-covered wound on the ear.

(relevant footage: 5/19/08 14 0'37")

5/22/08: The emaciated English Mastiff in the Red Barn does not appear to have gained any weight, and the sores on his left ear and front left elbow do not appear to be healing at all.

(relevant pictures: MN 5-22-08 05 emaciated Eng Mastiff; MN 5-22-08 06 emaciated Eng Mastiff's elbow wound)

5/24/08: After lunch, I heard Rhonda say that the Mastiff in the Red Barn was "still seizing." I noted the time as 12:21 when I saw the Mastiff was lying on the ground convulsing, a large amount of blood and saliva spilling out of her mouth. Much of the blood appeared congealed, indicating she had been vomiting it and convulsing for some time. Kathy said that Alan had to put the dog down, and told us to immediately find him. I found him in the Holding Barn, cleaning out a bucket at the bath tub. I told him Kathy wanted him to put down the Mastiff, and he said, "Yeah, I got to put it down." I waited for Alan until 12:38, when he put a towel over the Mastiff's head and had me help him carry her into the back of his truck. Kathy also had me get the Shih Tzu with the injured eye in a pen just south of him out, so that

Alan could kill it as well. I held the Shih Tzu outside the northern end of the Red Barn and waited for about 10 minutes, however, while Alan went over to talk to someone who was in a pick-up truck with a white trailer attached to it just north of the Condos. Alan then came walking up with a black Pug in a crate. I asked him if he was going to put the Pug down as well, and he said, "Yeah." He put the Shih Tzu in another crate and then drove off west of the Red Barn, though I do not know where he went after that. About 15 minutes later I saw his truck west of the New Barn while Kathy, Yvonne, and I were doing heat checks at the eastern end of the Hay Shed.

(relevant pictures and video: MN 5-24-08 Eng Mastiff seizing, MN 5-24-08 Eng Mastiff seizing 1-3)

5/26/08: This morning I asked Rhonda if the Mastiff that was seizing yesterday was seizing all morning, and she replied, "All day." At lunch break I asked Alan if he shot the dog, and he nodded. He then told me that the only time he's had trouble shooting dogs was when he shot a Chocolate Labrador, and his .22 bullet bounced off the dog's skull. He said he then shot the dog in its ear.

(relevant footage: MN 5-26-08 04 0'9"; MN 5-26-08 09)

Dipping Dogs

The dipping of dogs continued at the kennel as reported last, and included nursing and pregnant dogs. Huskies and particularly large English Mastiffs were doused with an insecticide powder called "Sevin-5" instead of being dipped.

5/14/08: We dipped dogs from the Red Barn, New Barn, Condos, and the barn just east of the Condos today. At Kathy's instruction we dipped all of the pregnant and nursing dogs on the property. The dogs were put right back in their pens, often jumping into their whelping tubs covered in insecticide. A Maltese that Larry carried out had a large pus-covered sore on the right side of her neck, and when Larry pointed this out to Kathy she told him she wanted to dip the dog anyway. The female German Shepherd in the northeast corner of the southern whelping room of the New Barn was dipped despite open sores on her ankles, though the black and white Husky with a gaping open wound on its side in an eastern cage of the southern New Barn whelping room was not dipped.

While working dogs from the barn adjacent to the Condos, I found a Bulldog mix with a hard, pink bulge near its left eye that had what appeared to be a bite wound on it. I told Corrine, who was observing the dippings, check dogs' microchip #s, and write down their breed, sex, and chip information in a spiral notebook as she did when dogs were dipped previously. Corrine said the dog's wound would be fine, and that "the dip will take care of that."

(relevant footage: MN 5-14-08 08 – 13)

5/16/08: I worked from about 8:30 to 16:30 today. I began the day by doing "outdoor chores" with Bill before dipping dogs with the rest of the employees, including Larry, Bill, Corinne, Kathy, Alan, Dan, and a woman named Shelly Hathaway (Caucasian female, about 5'6", 180 lbs, 35 years old, with shoulder-length red hair and bird and butterfly tattoos on her ankles and forearms). As usual, Corinne logged all of the dogs in a notebook in the same manner she did before, as the rest of us dipped dogs in the tank. We began at the Driveway Barn, and many of the employees, including Bill and Larry, said that the Huskies always bite the workers when they are dipped. Kathy bought three bottles of an insecticide called "Sevin-5," which is a powder we used instead of dip on the Huskies. We would enter the Husky pens and give them each four squirts of a soap bottle filled with Ivomec, and then pour the powder on their fur while rubbing it in to get to their skin.

We then dipped dogs from the Big Barn, located at the southeast corner of the kennel. We began at the southeast corner of the barn, where most of the German Shepherds are located. Most of the Shepherds would thrash on their leashes while employees dragged them across the ground to Corinne and then over

to the dip tank. One Shepherd bit Larry on his hand before falling out of the tank, at which point Kathy, Alan, and I herded the dog back into its pen. Another Shepherd bit Larry on his other hand as it thrashed on its leash in the tank. Bill hauled the dog onto a platform that ran off the tank for dogs to be set on while excess dip is wiped off their fur, where the dog tried to bite Bill. Bill then whipped the Shepherd twice with his end of the leash in full view of the other employees, including Kathy, Alan, and Corinne, and then pulled the dog by its neck with the leash. The dog fell back into the tank, hitting its side against the tank's lip, and was then dragged onto the ground before being dragged into its cage. The tank was placed within a foot of feces build-up that is about 2.5 feet wide and several inches deep, starting at the edge of the concrete slab the kennel building sits on. Dogs were set down in the manure after being dipped, and then walked or dragged through it to the concrete slab's edge to get into their pens.

An English Mastiff with a large open sore covered in wet pus at the front right part of her head was dipped by Kathy and Larry. Before they dipped the dog, I asked Kathy if they should dip it because of the wound on its head. She said that the dog used to have a huge abscess on its head, and that they wouldn't dip the dog's head anyway. After pulling the Mastiff out of the tank, dip was covering the dog's head and face, including its eyes, nose, mouth, and open wound. As with all of the other dogs with wounds or whose heads were submerged in the dip, nothing was done to get dip out of the dog's eyes or wound.

Several English Mastiffs were powdered with Sevin-5 at the request of Kathy, who said they were too heavy and large to dip. One of them got out of her cage near the northeast corner of the building, so Kathy dragged her by the dog's ears, with one hand on each ear, for about 20 feet as the dog whined and set her paws in the ground. Kathy then pulled the dog into her pen by the ears and let her go.

Dogs with USDA tags from dealer 45-A-0001 that were brought in yesterday were microchipped by Corinne, logged in her spiral notebook, dipped, and then put in cages throughout the kennel. The dogs were unloaded from the same trailer they were taken out of and then placed back in when the vet looked at them. I am not sure if these dogs were all left on the trailer while some were unloaded to the Hay Shed yesterday, or if some were placed back on the trailer at some point. It is unlikely anyone put them back in the trailer to be moved to the southern end of the property to be dipped.

I helped place these dogs in the elevated outdoor cages at the southeastern end of the Dollar Barn, while others were placed in the Dollar Barn, Freedom Barn, and Hay Shed. We then went out to a series of elevated cages and ground pens in the woods south of the kennel. There were about a dozen dogs of various breeds, including American Eskimos, Dachshunds, Shiba Inus, and Maltese mixes, in cages seemingly placed randomly in the woods. An outdoor pen with a galvanized wire wall around it had an empty water dish for the dogs, which I filled up from water in a plastic trash can in the nearby. About eight of the dogs were taken out of their cages and put back on the trailer which was parked at the northwest corner of the kennel just west of the Hay Shed. The dogs were still in the trailer when I left work today.

(relevant footage: MN 5-16-08 01 – 09)

Pug with infected eyeball

The Pug with an infected, injured right eye, first noted on 4/30/08, went into further deteriorating condition before being culled by Kathy while dipping dogs and the dog ultimately disappeared.

5/14/08: Kathy decided to cull the Pug with an injured right eye that was kept in the puppy room of the New Barn. The Pug's eye is more swollen than when I saw it on Monday, 5/12/08, and has what appears to be a pus-filled abscess about a quarter inch deep hanging off of its eyeball. The dog is also increasingly lethargic, similar to how it was when its eyeball was first injured. I saw Greg carrying the dog outside to the dip tank, and asked him on his way back what had happened with it. He responded, "She culled it."

Shih Tzu with injured left eye

Kathy found what appeared to be a Shih Tzu with its left eye hanging out of its head on 5/17/08. The dog was put in a pen in the Red Barn until the eyeball became dried up and the dog was finally killed on 5/24/08.

5/17/08: Katie and I did heat checks with Kathy after lunch. At one point Kathy found what appeared to be a Shih Tzu with its left eye hanging out of its head. She showed the dog to me as I peered through a doggie-door of an outside cage on the western end of the building to keep the dogs in that cage inside, and she carried it off north out of site.

5/22/08: The Shih Tzu with an injured left eye that I recognized as the same injured Shih Tzu showed to me while doing heat checks on 5/17/08 was walking and alert, though its eye is hanging out of its head and encrusted in a dried substance. The shavings below the water nipple in its pen were dry, indicating it is not drinking. I activated the water nipple to try to show the dog the water, but it simply paced back and forth at the opposite end of its pen, trying to stay away from me.
(relevant picture: MN 5-22-08 08 Shih Tzu eye wound)

5/24/08: Kathy also had me get the Shih Tzu with the injured eye in a pen just south of him out, so that Alan could kill it as well. I held the Shih Tzu outside the northern end of the Red Barn and waited for about 10 minutes, however, while Alan went over to talk to someone who was in a pick-up truck with a white trailer attached to it just north of the Condos. Alan then came walking up with a black Pug in a crate. I asked him if he was going to put the Pug down as well, and he said, "Yeah." He put the Shih Tzu in another crate and then drove off west of the Red Barn, though I do not know where he went after that. About 15 minutes later I saw his truck west of the New Barn while Kathy, Yvonne, and I were doing heat checks at the eastern end of the Hay Shed.

Wounded Bichon

5/26/08: This afternoon I saw a Yorkie had a Bichon pinned to cage flooring of a western outdoor Hay Shed cage. I jumped into the pen and pulled the Bichon out, who was bleeding from her mouth and had blood covering her neck and chest. I showed the dog to Kathy as the Bichon began to seize and spasm. Kathy looked at her and then said that fighting dogs have to be separated, asked what sex the dog was, and then put a hand on the Bichon while repeating "settle" over and over again. She then told me to put the Bichon in a cage in the New Barn, which I did immediately before giving her food. As I set her in her cage, she bumped her head against a cage wall and then lay down while shaking. I then walked out of the New Barn to see what Kathy was doing, and I found her planting flowers with Larry near the northeast end of her house. She did not give me any instructions to provide veterinary care for the dog, nor did she look at the dog's injuries or give any medical care to the dog at all before going gardening.
(relevant footage: MN 5-26-08 10; MN 5-26-08 13)

5/28/08: The wounded Bichon I found on 5/26/08 that began seizing after I took her out of her cage she was being attacked in was lying on her cage flooring when I went to scrub her cage out today. I began petting her, at which point she stood up and kept trying to walk in right-hand circles, though she continually stumbled and fell down. I observed her do this for about a minute before scrubbing her pen and leaving her alone.
(relevant footage: MN 5-28-08 03; MN 5-28-08 04)

Maggie – ear and skin infections

A brown and white female Bulldog named Maggie, noted earlier and described by Corinne as a dog with allergies that cannot be treated, was moved outside after her ears and face again became bloody from her rubbing them against her cage. Her condition has become worse and she is increasingly emaciated.

5/23/08: The female Bulldog in the southern room of the New Barn that always had bloody, raw ears was moved outside to a western pen of the barn near the Condos by Larry today. The Bulldog, named Maggie, had bloody ears that appeared to have recently been rubbed raw, and a bloody raw spot was just above her nose in a fold of skin. Blood smears and flecks covered the stomach of Larry's shirt after carrying Maggie out to her new pen. Larry said he thought that Maggie is allergic to the wood shavings placed below her cage in the New Barn.

(relevant footage: 5/23/08 09 0'1"; 5/23/08 12 0'1")

5/26/08: This morning I checked on Maggie, the female brown and white Bulldog previously moved from the New Barn to the barn near the Condos. Her ears were still swollen and scabbed over in dozens of places inside, and she had raw and bloody skin just above her nose in a crease of her skin as before. Within minutes of me looking at her, I saw her rubbing her ears against her chain link walls, and I then saw that she had rubbed her ears bloody. She kept shaking her head and rubbing her ears against her walls as I observed her.

(relevant footage: MN 5-26-08 02 0'14")

I worked from about 7:00 to 11:30 today. I began outdoor morning chores as usual. At the barn near the Condos, I saw that Maggie's eyelids were so swollen they were shut. Her ears smelled like they had a yeast infection in them, and were swollen and sticky under them. Maggie is emaciated, with her stomach sucked in and her hips and ribs starting to show. She also appeared lethargic, moving only a few paces back and forth before sitting down and lowering her head.

5/27/08: I was talking to Kathy while she sat in her van in her driveway this morning when she spotted dogs fighting in the barn near the Condos. I ran up to a pen containing two American Bulldogs and two Wheatons, where a Wheaton was attacking a Bulldog. It appeared as though the Wheatons had slid under broken chain link wiring to get into the adjacent pen. Kathy decided to have me move the Wheatons to their proper pen, then take two Ori Peis from the southernmost end of the western side of the barn and trade them out with the Bulldogs. Kathy stood in the Ori Pei pen's outdoor run, blocking the doggie-door so I could move the Bulldogs into the Ori Pei's indoor enclosure, and then carry the Ori Peis over to what was previously the Bulldog pen one at a time. The significance of this is that Kathy was standing one pen away from Maggie's pen, which was just north of her. Maggie was sitting outside, facing south without moving the entire time, and Kathy was facing north while watching me trying to catch the Bulldogs in their outdoor run, the doggie-door of which I blocked with a rock and pole. I felt it would have been impossible for Kathy to miss Maggie or not see her condition.

After the dogs were moved, Kathy said nothing about Maggie's condition. I then used wire to repair the chain link wall the Wheatons had gotten under.

5/28/08: I immediately noted Maggie's condition today. As before, she is emaciated with her stomach increasingly thinner, her eyelids are swollen shut, and her ears are swollen and sticky inside, with a strong odor like a yeast infection.

(relevant footage: MN 5-28-08 01; MN 5-28-08 06)