

# What Is a Puppy Mill?

A puppy mill is a large-scale commercial dog breeding facility where profit is given

Puppy mills usually house dogs in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions without adequate veterinary care, food, water or socialization. In order to maximize profits, female dogs are bred at every opportunity with little-to-no recovery time between litters. Puppy mill puppies, often as young as eight weeks of age, are sold to pet shops or directly to the public over the Internet, through newspaper ads and at swap meets and flea markets.

In a puppy mill, dogs are often kept in cages with wire flooring that injures their paws and legs—and it is not unusual for cages to be stacked in columns. When female breeding dogs reach a point of physical depletion and can no longer reproduce, they are often killed.

Because puppy mills focus on profit, dogs are often bred with little regard for genetic quality. Puppy mill puppies are prone to congenital and hereditary conditions including heart disease and blood and respiratory disorders. In addition, puppy mill puppies often arrive in pet stores and in their new homes with diseases or infirmities ranging from parasites to pneumonia. Because puppies are removed from their littermates and mothers at a young age, they also often suffer from fear, anxiety and other behavioral problems.

Because so many of these breeders are operating without oversight, it is impossible to accurately track them or to know how many there truly are. The ASPCA estimates that there could be as many as 10,000 puppy mills in the United States.

There is no legal definition of a “puppy mill,” so don’t be fooled by pet store owners who show you “papers” or licenses to prove that their dogs are from humane sources. The fact is, responsible breeders would never sell a puppy through a pet store because they want to screen potential buyers to ensure their puppies are going to a good home.

**The ASPCA encourages everyone to make adoption their first option.**

**Useful links for more information:**

[http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/puppy\\_mills](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/puppy_mills)

[http://www.petmd.com/dog/puppycenter/top\\_tens/evr\\_dg\\_ways\\_to\\_stop\\_a\\_puppy\\_mill](http://www.petmd.com/dog/puppycenter/top_tens/evr_dg_ways_to_stop_a_puppy_mill)