



## We Must Stand United: Support Dog Breeding

It's been a long day at work, you're tired and want to just relax, you get home, dreaming of putting your feet up, but your dog greets you with a tail wag, turning in circles, excited to see you. Suddenly, the weight is lifted off your shoulders, you aren't as tired, and you hook the leash to your dog's collar and take him for a walk. Did you ever wonder where this bond between humans and dogs came from?

### Back to the Beginning

Archaeological evidence shows dogs were the first animals domesticated by humans more than 30,000 years ago (more than 10,000 years before the domestication of horses and ruminants). This started when wolves began scavenging food scraps from humans, who then began to domesticate the wolves providing them with shelter and protection. In return, the wolves helped the human hunter-gatherers with hunting. As dogs were evolving alongside humans, they are able to connect with us on a deeper level than many animals today.

### The Importance of Breeding

Today there are 196 breeds recognized by the American Kennel Club (AKC), and most of them do not look like the wolves they're descended from. This is due to breeding over the centuries, through thousands of generations. Dog fanciers have been cross-breeding for specific traits for example, looks, color, size, temperament, hunting abilities, guarding livestock and property, tracking, herding and many more.

Due to purposeful breeding, specific traits are expressed which are emphasized in the different types of dogs. In fact, the American Kennel Club (AKC) recognizes seven distinct groups: Herding, (the newest of the groups), Hound, Toy, Non-Sporting, Sporting, Terrier, and Working. The different breeds that fit

each of the groups can vary in size, shape, hair coat and color, but all are bred to bring out those specific traits that are desired.

Within each group too, are behavioral variations. For example, a member of the Herding group is the Border Collie and watching one work a herd of sheep is something beautiful to behold. Another type of herding dog is a Great Pyrenees, a dog that will stay within the herd and only bark to warn off predators. Livestock guard dogs, like the Great Pyrenees don't chase, stalk or even attempt to play with livestock.

Herding dogs will express predatory motor patterns such as stalking. More advanced aspects of canine hunting like grabbing are expressed in dogs like Australian cattle dogs who will nip and grab at the cattle to move them.

## Preservation Breeding

Within the world of purebred dog breeders, the idea of "preserving" our breeds for the future has grown out of an awareness that many breeds are vulnerable to extinction. For context, there are a number of dog breeds, such as the Dandie Dinmont Terrier, with fewer individual dogs alive in the world than there are Giant Pandas. This is the impetus behind preservation breeding. Preservation breeding encompasses the concept of "preserving" these dog breeds as living history.

## Know the Breed You're Interested In

Due to the generations of selection, each purebred dog is born with instincts and genetic makeup that tell us what the dog will likely be and do. Dogs developed over centuries to move sheep from one place to another, quite predictably, will "herd" children, pets, and owners. And they might even nip a bit when they do it. This is part of who and what that dog is at its very core. While it is possible, with training, to shape these behaviors, expecting the dog NOT to have those instincts is like telling the dog to stop breathing.

Knowing the history of a breed's purpose and function, and the ability to rely on those traits, helps new dog owners select a breed that will be the best fit for their family. Purebred dogs with generations of health testing, conformation testing, temperament testing, and instinct testing are reliably the size, color, demeanor and coat type they are expected to be.

## Information About Breeding

No matter the size of kennel, those who breed dogs are dedicated to providing working animals and pets to families and individuals. We are listing information about dog breeding so that dog enthusiasts have a better understanding of the dog breeding world today.

According to the USDA website and the Animal Welfare Act, any Breeder with 4 or more breeding female dogs must be licensed with the USDA and follow Animal Welfare Act regulations, whether or not they are in a kennel facility or a private home. The USDA license is NOT required when the buyer, seller and dog are physically together in the same place so the buyer can observe the animal prior to purchase or taking custody of the dog.

Large Professional Breeders may sell dogs to research facilities, the military, police departments, and as pets. They are subject to unannounced inspections in addition to regular annual inspections. The

Animal Welfare Act regulations are particularly stringent, down to where pet food is stored. This means that at times, a breeder may be cited for a non-compliance issue that has little to no impact on the welfare of their dogs. However, no matter the item out of compliance, the issue must be remedied and signed off via re-inspection in a timely manner in order to keep their license and standing with the USDA.

All breeders benefit from producing high quality dogs. These days it is highly common to have waiting lists for purpose-bred puppies. High quality dogs with consistent breed characteristics are important for research, military and police training and for pet owners who are purchasing pets that come with a health guarantee. Breeders research bloodlines, conduct health screenings and work to strengthen characteristics and eliminating negative characteristics. Health screening can include orthopedic radiographs to rule out any abnormalities, and DNA and eye tests if needed. Both Large Professional and Small Breeders are willing to provide preventive care to ensure that their puppies are healthy before leaving with new owners. As a part of this they will provide health certificates showing the treatments the puppy has received. If the sire and dam are registered with the American Kennel Club (AKC), paperwork to register the puppy should be provided. Professional breeders try to make the best match between the temperament of the puppy and the new owner.

Breeders may show their animal against other dogs, do a sport with the dog or field trials or agility, to test their dog's quality against others of the same breed.

## Animal Welfare Act

The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) was originally passed by Congress in 1966 and set general standards for humane care and treatment required for certain animals sold at wholesale or through a broker, publicly exhibited, used in biomedical research, or commercially transported. Breeders who are licensed under the AWA must comply with its standards for housing, sanitation, nutrition, water, and veterinary care for their animals, as well as protect them from extreme weather and temperatures. Congress gave the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) the authority to administer the AWA and issue regulations under it.

If you are interested in learning about the animal welfare requirements USDA breeders must meet, follow this link to AWA standards for Commercial Breeders starting on page 111.

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/downloads/bluebook-ac-awa.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/bluebook-ac-awa.pdf)

If you're are interested in learning about USDA licenses for sellers read more here:

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/downloads/breeders/dogs/TechNote-QA-Dog-Activities-Requiring-a-USDA-License-or-Registration\\_04-16-2018.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/breeders/dogs/TechNote-QA-Dog-Activities-Requiring-a-USDA-License-or-Registration_04-16-2018.pdf)

## Animal Extremist Groups and Breeding

Animal extremists equate owning an animal with slavery. They believe dogs should be equal to humans and have the same legal rights. For years animal extremist groups have pushed the unfounded idea that breeding dogs is a horrible and inhumane practice. They've also equated breeding animals with sex crimes.

They call large, USDA licensed and inspected professional breeders horrible names. Smaller breeders

are equally disparaged. They use highly edited videos and exaggerated descriptions to manipulate the public and most of all, to generate donations.

## Animal Extremists Have Created a Hostile Environment for Dog Breeders

Animal Extremists make people feel guilty for owning or breeding a pure-bred dog, saying that every puppy born means another dog in the shelter will be killed. This horrifying accusation is simply untrue. “Adopt, Don’t Shop” and “Spay and Neuter” taglines are all part of our vernacular nowadays because of animal extremist groups and their misinformation campaigns. Their agenda is simple. They want to end breeding because they do not believe animals should be in human care. An end to breeding means eventually an end to dog ownership because there will no longer be any dogs left. The past CEO of the Humane Society of the United States, Wayne Pacelle has been famously quoted as saying, “One generation and done.”

PETA’s position is very clear, “When millions of dogs must die every year because no one will adopt them, breeding a dog even once is unethical. Instead, guardians should be having their animal companions spayed or neutered.” PETA owns one shelter in Virginia and has euthanized between 85-95% of the animals they’ve picked up, most within a few hours.

## Creating Havoc, Interrupting Business

Animal Extremists use many different tactics to interfere with pet owners, service dog owners, breeders, and handlers. Listed below are just a few examples of some of their tactics. The list of stories of threats and harassment is endless:

- In 2018, the Crufts Dog Show finale was interrupted and “descended into chaos” when an animal extremist stormed the arena claiming that the show promoted “canine eugenics.” PETA claimed responsibility for this action. Eugenics, according to the Oxford dictionary is “the study of how to arrange reproduction within a human population to increase the occurrence of heritable characteristics regarded as desirable.” Note the key word “human.” Animal extremists equate animals with humans hence using the word eugenics instead of genetics.
- Scotsman who is blind was verbally attacked by animal extremists for having a Seeing Eye Dog, a dog that had been purposely bred to aid his owner with day to day living and allowing that owner more freedom and to have a fulfilling life. The man was told by the extremist that his dog shouldn’t be “lying on the floor but should be out there playing in the fields.” Another blind man said he had been approached and asked why he felt “it was moral for him to have a guide dog.” This is another instance of their thought process that “owning animals is akin to slavery.”
- Animal extremists are known for going onto private properties and confiscating companion animals because they falsely believe the animal is being abused.
- Charity auctions have been threatened with protests because one of the auction items is a certificate for a future puppy to be raised and trained as a service dog.
- Owners of elderly horses on pasture being threatened with confiscation by humane officers who would turn around and sell the animals confiscated to the highest bidder.
- Protests in front of pet stores by extremists wearing dog costumes and saying they are representing the dog the shop owner’s family killed because they are selling puppies.

## Retail Pet Store Bans

In October 2012, Los Angeles passed an animal extremist backed ban on pet stores selling puppies, kittens, and rabbits from large professional breeders. This was the start of pet shop bans that would spread across the country, first in municipalities, then nationwide. An example of this is California's statewide ban AB 485. The driving force behind the movement was to shut down large professional breeders, whom animal extremist groups disparage. Once Los Angeles instituted the pet store ban, a large surge in the sale of puppies on the internet and importation of puppies from other countries occurred. Instead of puppies being sold with health guarantees and animal welfare protections from USDA breeders, storefronts opened up offering "rescue dogs" often with exorbitant sales fees (aka "adoption fees"). This trend has become so widespread that it has been given the name, "Retail Rescue." The negative side of California's AB 485 is that it exempts pet stores from consumer and pet protections as listed in this infographic from the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council in September 2017.

To view an interactive infographic of retail pet store bans across the nation, click here:

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?hl=en\\_US&mid=1Vcu1vQIFfGgbvkeMO05JReDkM4&ll=33.97247473124212%2C-105.26933894182866&z=2](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?hl=en_US&mid=1Vcu1vQIFfGgbvkeMO05JReDkM4&ll=33.97247473124212%2C-105.26933894182866&z=2)

## American Kennel Club – Harassment Task Force

The AKC's Legislative Action Center on their website provides resources for breeders to use to be effective advocates for responsible dog breeding and ownership. In addition to resources, due to increased attacks on breeders, the American Kennel Club (AKC) has implemented a task force to take reports of harassment or retaliation by animal extremist groups. A link can be found on the AKC website <https://akcgr.org/akc/harassment>.

## "Adopt Don't Shop" Has Been Too Successful

Adopt Don't Shop has become so successful that in most northern states, midwestern and west coast states, there is a real dog shortage. In recent months, the ASPCA and HSUS have toned down their websites somewhat and have included a section about how to know if a breeder is reputable or not. Perhaps this is because they have realized their aggressive campaigns are damaging their revenue streams.

Lists Showing Importation of Dogs Within the United States

States that send shelter dogs to other states

Alabama

Arkansas

California (LA county)

Florida

Georgia

Kentucky

Louisiana

Mississippi

New Mexico

North Carolina

Oklahoma  
South Carolina  
Tennessee  
Texas

States that receive shelter dogs from other states

Connecticut  
Kansas  
Montana  
Nebraska  
Nevada  
North Dakota  
Rhode Island  
South Dakota  
West Virginia  
Wyoming

*Source: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, "ASPCA Relocation Program," 2018.*

## Dogs Are Being Imported to the United States

If specific breeds are not available, then those seeking puppies turn to online outlets, often unknowingly purchasing from unscrupulous dealers. Most of these dealers are located outside the country in places with no animal welfare standards. The National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) has reported approximately 1.06 million live dogs are imported into the United States each year. While most are assumed to be personal pets traveling with or to their owners, many are from other countries bound for "retail rescues".

Why are so many dogs being imported to the United States? To put it in one word, demand. According to the American Pet Products Association, pet ownership has risen 56% over the past 30 years, with the trend continuing upward. The rise in ownership means a rise in demand. But as more states and localities have passed laws banning pet stores from selling puppies, kittens, and rabbits, it becomes harder to meet the demand for dogs.

The public wants certain breeds of dogs and shelters often don't have them due to demand. The idea behind banning pet stores from selling dogs was to stop them from selling animals from alleged inhumane circumstances. Breeders in the U.S. who sell pets to pet stores must have a USDA license and abide by strict animal welfare regulations as outlined in the Animal Welfare Act. Banning pet stores from selling dogs has severely limited the ability of families who are looking for a family dog.

## "Replacement" Dogs

According to the 2015 Moore Information survey of 1,500 households, 44% of U.S. households have at least one dog and the average number of dogs per household is 1.6. Using information from the 2010

Census Bureau data of the number of households, the dog population is established at approximately 88 million dogs. Once the number of dogs is determined, the “annual need” must be calculated.

Annual replacement factor is based on the number of dogs that pass away and assumes that the dogs are replaced. This does not take into consideration any growth in the percentage of Americans wanting dogs. The number of replacement dogs is roughly 9% of the total number of dogs, or about 8.1 million dogs. Based on population, that number of dogs is projected to go up to 9,288,316 needed for replacement by 2025.

With a shortfall of “replacement” dogs needed, where do we get the remaining 2 million dogs needed? Since there are not as many breeders in the United States as there were in the past, the answer is importation from other countries. These countries often have no animal welfare requirements, poor veterinary care, partially or non-vaccinated dogs, dogs with parasites and disease all coming into the U.S. on forged health records.

## **Black Market Puppies Are Big Business**

The motives behind illegal puppy importation are not immediately obvious. However, a closer look reveals a big business that does not consider the health and welfare of the animals they are exporting to the United States.

Banning pet stores from selling dogs from USDA regulated and licensed breeders has created the perfect storm of a black market for puppies. People want puppies, they’re cute, their breath is adorable, they’re fun to have but if animal extremists can stop breeding in the U.S., where do puppy-loving people get them? They import them. The problem is that there is an age limit on puppies being imported. A puppy must be six months old before it can be imported. Since younger puppies are more desirable, the result is illegal puppy importation.

Importers aim to get around age restrictions and other regulations. Profits decline by the thousands with each month a puppy ages. Some of the dogs imported are puppies only a few weeks old, not the legally required age for importation.

“Many dogs are bred in large numbers in inhumane conditions overseas, where the risk of congenital abnormalities and disease is high,” says a CDC blog “Importers then fly them as cargo in large batches, claiming them as ‘rescue’ dogs, valued at \$0 on their paperwork, which allows importers to evade entry and broker fees.” Because of lax laws in the country of origin, some of the dogs will not have received necessary vaccinations and may carry undetected illnesses such as rabies or antibiotic-resistant MSRA, the bacteria-born disease Brucellosis or foreign parasites. Health certificates accompanying imported dogs from these regions are commonly invalid or forged.

If these illegal puppies enter the U.S., they are marketed through social media or legitimate looking US breeder websites, then sold as well-bred American born puppies at the price of \$3-5,000 and more. Usually these are high-demand puppies like French Bulldogs and Yorkshire Terriers. If one is “lucky” enough to get a dog of an unusual color, say a lavender French Bulldog, that price can triple or quadruple.

Because the USDA is the only federal agency tracking the importation of dogs, and it is limited to dogs imported for resale purposes, (2,917 dogs in 2018), the USDA is only tracking approximately 0.28% of

the dogs being imported.

[https://www.naiaonline.org/uploads/WhitePapers/USDA\\_DogImportReport6-25-2019.pdf](https://www.naiaonline.org/uploads/WhitePapers/USDA_DogImportReport6-25-2019.pdf)

## American Dogs Are At Risk

When dogs are imported from other countries, they can bring in diseases and new strains of viruses that are not common in the U.S. This leaves our own canine population at a risk. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns of the estimated 1 million dogs imported annually into the United States, 113,000 originate from countries with “high risk” for rabies and other diseases. Several of these diseases can be transferred from animals to humans (zoonotic). High risk regions include Korea (famous Korean meat dogs which are now made up of very popular breeds in the United States), China, and countries in the Middle East, Africa, South America, Africa, Eastern Europe and other parts of Asia.

## Bill Calls for Stricter Controls on Imported Dogs

In June 2020, Veterinary Information Network (VIN) published a story about the issue of imported dogs. Representative Ted Yoho of Florida, himself a veterinarian, and two other veterinarians have sponsored a bill called the Healthy Dog Importation Act (HR 6921). If the new law is enacted, it would require that any dog entering the United States be permanently identified and have USDA-recognized health certificates. Reps. Yoho, Ralph Abraham of Louisiana and Kurt Schrader of Oregon drafted the measure in consultation with the American Veterinary Medical Association and APHIS.

Under the new bill, the USDA APHIS Veterinary Services would set import requirements, allowing the USDA to update and expand the regulations and give them the sole authority to make those changes. The Secretary of Agriculture would be in charge of approving a method of permanent identification, most likely microchip; mandating all necessary vaccinations and health check, and require the animals are examined by a U.S.-licensed Veterinarian after entering the country; and enforcing regulations.

[HR 6921](#)

## The Dog Shortage is Finally Getting Attention

According to an article dated 12/2019 in Today’s Veterinary News, author Mark Cushing, CEO of the Animal Policy Group, states that the summer of 2019, the US finally took seriously the issue of how many dogs, mostly puppies, were being allowed into the country illegally. Mr. Cushing brings up a 2015 Moore Information national survey and a 2016 Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine study, commissioned by the Pet Leadership Council, which confirmed there is a shortage of dogs in the US, despite those late-night commercials showing overcrowded shelters. There are certain areas in the southern states and in Los Angeles County in California, that do have excess unwanted dogs. Those dogs from California and the southern states are transported to the Pacific Northwest and the Northeast, because many states and high populated areas have few dogs to choose from.

## There is Talk About Breeding Shelter Dogs

Even more telling is that some states, like Vermont and Massachusetts shelters and even an ASCPA Vice president have considered breeding shelter dogs to get puppies to adopt out at a premium price. Consider that the people who have decided to purchase a pure-bred dog because they want the reliability of the traits exhibited by a particular breed are being vilified in our American culture. These

attacks are being made by the same folks who are now wanting to breed two dogs of unknown origins, without any information about personality, health, or genetic traits simply to be able to have puppies available for “adoption” and to provide a source of revenue.

## If You Love Dogs, You Should Support Dog Breeders

Based on facts and statistics, it is easy to see that even with U.S. shelters transporting dogs to other states, there is now an annual shortfall of available dogs. When dogs are being bred in large numbers overseas to meet American demand, there is no animal welfare oversight or guarantee that proper breeding practices, veterinary care and safe transport conditions are in place for these animals. If we love dogs and want to continue to have them in our lives, we must support dog breeding here in the United States. That way, we can be assured that breeders are focusing on the healthy breeding of dogs, using best practices. It doesn't matter whether the dog is pure-bred or lovable mutt, show dog or backyard pet, working/service dog or best friend, all dogs deserve to be treated humanely with their welfare a priority. Instead of the vitriol of “Adopt don't Shop”, we need to change the rhetoric to “Adopt OR Shop” and do what's best for our “best friend.”

## We MUST Stand United

Whether one is a breeder, groomer, dog lover, veterinarian, or veterinary hospital team member we must stand united and not vilify breeders or pet owners who purchase their dogs from breeders. Without breeders, veterinary hospitals would not have patients to treat, we would not have military working dogs, police K9s, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Canine Companions for Independence, hypo-allergenic dogs, emotional support dogs, therapy dogs to help comfort the sick and dying, PTSD dogs, medical alert dogs, or even beloved mutts.

Dogs are good for our health, both mental and physical; they teach our children empathy and caring for others as well as responsibility. Shelters provide a necessary service, but as has been shown, they can't fill all of the demand for dogs. We must stand together and fight those extremist groups who want to end breeding.