



Puppy Mills: The Disturbing Truth Behind the Cute

Many Nova Scotia residents remain uninformed about puppy mills and puppy brokers, and do not recognize that by acquiring puppies through such means, they are supporting the continued operations of these businesses. It is easy to be swayed by cute puppies peering out from behind the back of a truck or from behind the window in a pet store, but the disturbing truth behind these cute faces should not be ignored.

Puppy mills exploit dogs to make money by caging female dogs and breeding them constantly. They are continuously either pregnant or nursing puppies. They often do not receive vet care, human companionship or affection, and are kept in unsanitary conditions without protection from heat or cold. Since the mother receives no care, the puppies can be sick, sometimes dying with hours or days of being purchased.

Puppy brokers are “middle men” (or women) who purchase puppies from puppy mills and re-sell the puppies for a profit. Puppy brokers often set up shop in parking lots, selling puppies out of the back of a truck or van. With the increasing popularity of online classifieds, the market for puppy brokers has expanded considerably. Ads for purebred puppies abound on sites such as Kijiji, where it is easy to deceive potential buyers. Often a simple Google search of the seller’s name will reveal their history and reputation, but many people trust what they read in advertisements and do not conduct their own research.

Sadly, federal and provincial laws do little to prevent these businesses from operating unless

proof can be found of cruelty or neglect, the perpetrators found guilty in court, and bans or prohibitions ordered and enforced. The power to end the cycle of misery lies with an informed public: *if people stop buying puppies from pet stores and puppy brokers, they will be forced out of business.*

Pet stores that sell puppies and kittens inevitably acquire those animals from puppy and kitten mills, helping to keep the mills in business. Reputable dog breeders do not sell their puppies to pet stores and responsible pet stores do not sell puppies or kittens for profit, but rather partner with humane societies to serve as satellite adoption centres. The *Petcetera* store in Dartmouth Crossing is an excellent example of such a partnership, with their cat adoption program that enables the SPCA to find more homes for our adult cats.

The Nova Scotia SPCA encourages adoption as a humane alternative to purchasing pets. SPCAs are often overflowing with young and adult animals who deserve loving new homes. Often, adoption fees include vaccinations, microchipping, and the pet’s spay or neuter operation, making adoption not only a humane option, but an affordable one as well. For those interested in a specific breed of dog or cat, there are many breed-specific rescues that can help match adopters to lifetime companions.

The Nova Scotia SPCA also supports acquiring pets from reputable breeders who take responsibility for their animals for their entire lives, educate and screen potential new owners, and provide follow-up support after purchase or adoption.

To learn more about puppy mills, visit
<http://stoppupmills.org/> or
www.nopupmillsCanada.ca.