



# How Sad Is That Doggy in the Window?

**M**any dogs sold in pet shops, about 360,000 per year, come from puppy mills and breeding kennels found mostly in the Midwest. In puppy mills, female dogs are kept in crude, usually outdoor cages and are bred continuously. Their puppies are taken from them at an early age, packed into crates, and shipped hundreds of miles to dealers, often without adequate food, water, or ventilation. Both the mothers and their puppies often suffer from a lack of affectionate, attentive human care and socialization necessary for a well-balanced psyche in the adult dog. Physical and emotional problems are common in animals from puppy mills, which try to produce as many puppies as possible.

Once the animals get to the pet store, life in cramped cages adds more strain to their already stressed lives, and this increases their susceptibility to disease. No law regulates how pet shops dispose of their animals, and some stores have been caught killing unsold dogs on the premises and throwing them in the trash dumpster. Unwanted animals can end up in laboratories where they may be subjected to further abuse.

# Dog and Cat Overpopulation: A Tragic Cycle

While breeders manufacture millions of dogs and cats each year, millions of animals who already exist face a severe lack of homes. Approximately 2,500 kittens and puppies are born every hour in the United States, far more than can ever find good homes. Unwanted animals are dumped at the local pound or abandoned in woods and on city streets, where they suffer from

starvation, lack of shelter and veterinary care, and abuse by cruel people. Animal shelters can adopt out only a fraction of the animals they receive, and the rest—about 8 to 10 million—must be put to death.



Because of this overpopulation crisis, no breeding can be considered “responsible.” Those who breed animals for profit, as well as individuals who let their dog or cat have “just one litter,” however well-intentioned they may be, increase the problem. Every newborn puppy or kitten means one home fewer for a dog or cat desperately waiting in a shelter or roaming the streets.

Spaying and neutering is the only way to reverse cat and dog overpopulation.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Always spay or neuter dogs and cats.
- Adopt from shelters—and don't forget adult animals, who are often overlooked by people looking for a puppy or kitten.
- Take strays to humanely run shelters.
- Work within your community to legislate mandatory spaying and neutering.
- Speak up if you know someone is planning to breed an animal. People who desire the companionship of dogs and wish to do what is best for dogs do not breed them; they adopt from animal shelters.
- If you prefer a particular breed, check with shelters and breed rescue clubs. There is never a reason to support a breeder.

**PETA**

For more information, contact:

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