

Alliance Response to Springfield News-Leader Article

“Dog breeders respond to Humane Society’s puppy mill report” presents a false narrative of the commercial dog breeding industry in Missouri. There are over 800 licensed commercial dog breeders in the state and because ONE out of 800 plus is willing to allow the reporter into her kennel, we are supposed to believe that this is a reputable industry.

If the reporter truly wanted to give the readers a factual account of the industry, she should have visited a random sampling of commercial dog breeders and reported on how many allowed her inside. I believe the answer would be zero.

I find it ironic that the industry does not like the term “puppy mill” but then shuts its doors to the public. Most businesses take pride in their establishments and welcome the public with open arms. In fact, it is now newsworthy when a breeder permits a reporter access and I assume with plenty of warning.

It should be emphasized that the term “puppy mill” was never intended to be a pejorative term but rather a description of dog breeders that mass-produce a large number of puppies in contrast to a back-yard breeder. The term “puppy mill” only became derogatory after countless exposés on the cruelty of the industry and constant reports of dog breeders being shut down due to abuse.

In fact, the best evidence concerning the reputation of the industry is the person the reporter chose to quote in defense of the state dog breeders. Mr. Kevin Beauchamp, president of the Missouri Pet Breeders Association, is quoted as saying that “the substandard ones are not going to be in business in six months.” Yet, Mr. Beauchamp is still in business. Last year Mr. Beauchamp was issued a cease-and-desist order, a license suspension, and a fine of \$6,000 by USDA for chronic violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act. (see attached)

If an individual is thinking about acquiring a dog, I would recommend that they visit the breeder in person and inspect the entire breeding facility to ensure that they are obtaining a dog from a reputable breeder. Our first recommendation, of course, is to visit an animal shelter where one can rescue a dog that is desperately in need of a loving home.

Bob Baker, Executive Director

Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation