

Missouri Department of Agriculture Turning a Blind Eye to Animal Cruelty



Sick and injured dogs are being ignored by MDA.

The Canine Cruelty Prevention Act (CCPA) passed in 2011 was intended to close down the operations of inhumane dog breeders. This law greatly enhanced standards of care and mandated veterinary care for sick and injured dogs. The CCPA also granted new authority to the Attorney General to prosecute inhumane breeders.

After passage of the CCPA, the Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) acted quickly and began referring numerous disreputable dog breeders to the Attorney General's Office for criminal and civil proceedings. This resulted in successful legal action against multiple dog breeders. Recognizing that there were now consequences for their malfeasance and realizing that MDA was serious about enforcing humane laws, literally hundreds of Missouri puppy millers voluntarily shut down their dog breeding operations.

Unfortunately, during the Greitens' administration, MDA decided to turn a blind eye to cruel and unscrupulous dog breeders despite the severity of the violations and the number of dogs suffering from lack of veterinary care. Chris Chinn, who was appointed Director of Agriculture by former Governor Greitens, has steadfastly refused to refer substandard dog breeders to the Attorney General's Office for legal action.



Dog at a breeding facility that MDA has allowed to operate despite documented lack of veterinary care for five years in a row.

The Alliance presented a list of 30 of some of the worst dog breeders in the state to MDA's Director Chinn, along with a summary of violations documented in both MDA and USDA inspection reports. These are just some of the findings that federal and state inspectors have documented at various licensed dog breeding facilities across the state:

- Mounds of feces 10 inches high
- Dogs in need of moisture that were having to lick blocks of ice
- More than 30 dogs were found underweight, sick or injured; some limping or had open wounds
- At another facility, 23 dogs were found to be badly in need of veterinary care; some were very thin, and all were living in "extremely filthy conditions"
- Dogs with open wounds exposing bone
- Dogs shivering from the cold
- Walls and doors of kennel smeared with feces; a whelping building that smelled so bad that inspectors felt burning and stinging sensation in their eyes and nasal cavities
- Repeated refusals to allow inspectors access to the kennel, and subsequent loss of USDA license when sick and injured dogs were discovered yet MDA continues to license this breeder
- Poodle lying on her side, unable to rise and covered in blood; injured Shar-pei with severe lacerations
- Conditions so filthy that white dogs appeared to be brown in color
- Several dogs extremely thin, one dog so thin that she had no muscle mass and all of her bones were prominent
- Mother dog with puppies in a cage so small that she could not stand
- Dogs excessively matted; dogs with open wounds infested with live maggots
- Underweight, sick and injured dogs documented for five straight years at one facility
- Malnourished mother dog with loss of muscle mass who was trying to nurse her puppies
- Refusal to provide veterinary care even after being instructed to do so by MDA



Schnauzer so badly matted and infected with lice that dog is no longer recognizable.

At one facility, state inspectors reported serious veterinary care problems **for 11 straight years**. At another facility, the breeder was fined \$25,000 and permanently barred from breeding by USDA, yet MDA allows her to operate without any repercussions **even after she threatened a state veterinarian inspector with a gun**. Instead of reporting this breeder (along with numerous other inhumane breeders) to the Attorney General's Office for legal action, Director Chinn responded to the Alliance's concerns by stating that "**it is not our business to put breeders out of business . . . They are our clients.**"



MDA Director Chinn: "It is not our business to put breeders out of business."

The Alliance in response to these outrages, has reached out to the Legislature in the hope of pressuring MDA to start referring inhumane dog breeders to the Attorney General's Office for legal action. In addition, we have reached out to the media in the hope of bringing greater attention to MDA's malfeasance. As a result, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* has reported on this problem and followed-up with a critical editorial.

We are also reaching out to the new governor in an effort to address our concerns. We have already spoken with Attorney General Josh Hawley to encourage him to have his office take direct action against unscrupulous breeders in the absence of a formal referral from the MDA.

Our efforts have made some headway as we recently learned that MDA has finally referred one of the worst breeders to the Attorney General's Office for legal action. You can be assured that the Alliance will continue to aggressively fight to close down all of the inhumane dog breeders in the state.



Over the past two years, multiple dogs found to be underweight, sick, or injured at this MDA-licensed facility.