

Companion Animal Protection Society

Sunshine Puppies

09/28/2022

Link: [Sunshine Puppies - Companion Animal Protection Society](#)

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7500 Ulmerton Rd #15

Largo, FL 33771

(727) 333-7512

Date and time of CAPS investigation: 08/20/21; 1310

Approximate number of puppies observed at time of investigation: 36

There were about 24 metal crates in the stores, each containing one to two puppies. While most crates had doggie beds inside, about a fourth had bare wire floorings for the puppies to stand and lay on. Water bottles were attached to crate walls, metal bowls were inside crates with the puppies, and each crate had a clipboard of information on each puppy. The outside sheet showed puppies' breeds, pictures of their parents, and noted the name of the breeder. However, most breeders' locations were not listed, and USDA numbers were not listed, both violations of the Largo pet shop ordinance.

I asked an employee (Caucasian male, about 20 years old, 5'9", 180 lbs., with brown hair shaved on the sides, several inches high and highlighted on top and combed to point straight up, with a short moustache and beard) where the puppies come from, and he said, "select breeders." He added that the owner has operated for 20 years, and said the puppies are "hand-picked" for the store. He then said, "They're not from puppy mills. They're all from breeders."

He showed me a packet of info on a puppy, showing the breeder as Tim and Nadine Burnette, with no location or USDA number. Pictures of the Burnettes showed them with their baby and a dog, but did not show their kennel. I then asked the employee if the breeders have "a whole lot of dogs," and "breed 'em for years." He responded, "Oh no, that's what a puppy mill is. **We don't use puppy mills.**"

I then asked how many dogs breeders have, and how often they breed dogs, and he asked another employee (Caucasian male, about 20 years old, 5'8", 170 lbs., with short brown hair and a gold necklace). The second employee told me, "It just depends on the type of dog it is. So, Frenchies and Bulldogs specifically, **you can only breed them once or twice.** After that it actually gets harmful to the dog that's giving birth. So, it depends on the breed of the dog." He said that kennels with lots of dogs have "like a team, of basically employees."

I then asked the employees for USDA inspection reports for the breeder of a Corgi puppy in the store. The first employee handed me a veterinary exam on the puppy. He failed to provide inspection reports or USDA license number for the breeder, in violation of the city ordinance.

Evidence of false statements and misrepresentations of breeders by store

The employee's claim that you can only breed Bulldogs once or twice is not accurate for commercial breeders (puppy mills). CAPS has investigated more than 1,000 puppy and kitten mills, most of them USDA-licensed. In my 18 years with CAPS, I have been to more than 800 of these facilities. To maximize profits, commercial breeders breed female dogs on every heat, which is usually two times a year (some dogs skip a cycle). Mother dogs are usually bred on their first heat. Breeders typically kill mother dogs who are no longer fertile or producing small litters. Some puppy mills do give unwanted breeding stock to rescue organizations. CAPS has rescued some of these dogs during investigations.

French and English Bulldogs are artificially inseminated and require C-sections.

<https://www.ranker.com/list/bulldog-breeding-problems/mariel-loveland>

The employee's claim that Sunshine Puppies does not use puppy mills is false. It appears that some of these breeders are selling to Pinnacle Pets in Missouri, a USDA licensed "B" dealer (broker) listed on Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (CVIs) going to Sunshine Pets. Pinnacle Pets obtains puppies from mills (see below). The number of dogs and puppies listed next to the breeder names below also indicate that the facilities are puppy mills – commercial facilities that mass produce puppies for resale. Broker information must be disclosed under the Largo ordinance. Very few "A" licensed breeders sell directly to pet shop. When we see breeder names on CVIs, they usually go through a cyber broker, such as PBT or My Puppy Broker

Breeder information obtained during store investigation

Caroline Schulte, Tornado Alley Kennel LLC, listed in Freeberg, MO per USDA, 43-A-4748, 144 dogs and 77 puppies at 1/11/21 USDA inspection

Kenny Knepp, Loogootee, IN, 32-A-0478, 122 dogs and 101 puppies at 1/28/20 USDA inspection

Nelson Weaver, Cedar County Kennel, listed in Jerico Springs, MO per USDA, 43-A-6013, 90 dogs and 66 puppies at 12/1/20 USDA inspection

John Reiff, Meadow View Pets, listed in Versailles, MO per USDA, 43-A-6370, 64 dogs and 71 puppies at 1/6/21 USDA inspection.

Update: Reiff's 9/14/22 inspection had three violations: Removal and disposal of tags for reusing identification tags for dogs;; Record, disposition for not maintaining records for some of the puppies born at his facility; Primary enclosures for an enclosure with a Chihuahua and her three puppies in which the puppies' feet were passing through the flooring that had one-inch by one-inch openings. Reiff had 65 dogs and 38 puppies at this inspection.

Tim and Nadine Burnette, listed in Exeter, MO per USDA, 43-A-5826, 49 dogs and 10 puppies at 1/12/21 USDA inspection

Aaron David Martin, Countryside Kennels – unlicensed

Kristen Moser, Neosho, MO – unlicensed

Kenny Wagler, West Union, OH – only found a Jonathan Wagler in West Union, but this is a common name, so he may be unlicensed

Breeder information obtained in store by local activist on August 24, 2021

Kasey Herod, Booker, TX. CAPS found this address online for Travis and Kasey Herod: 13760 TX-15, Booker, TX 79005. It is likely that Herod sells puppies to the store through Pinnacle Pet (see below). A satellite image of this property show four large Sundowner type dog breeding buildings and another large building at the rear. This indicates that the Herods have many dogs but they have neither a USDA nor Texas license. CAPS reported her to USDA for selling puppies without a federal license. She still does not have a Texas state license.

Per Animal Welfare Act regulations, unlicensed breeders cannot sell directly to pet shops; they must sell through brokers. In addition, breeders who have at least five breeding females and engage in resale or sell over the internet must have a USDA license.

Update: Subsequent to our complaint to USDA, Kasey Herod obtained a license, 74-A-1568, under the name CH Ventures. She had 127 dogs, 60 puppies at her 11/15/21 pre-license inspection (this is a large number of dogs at a pre-license inspection, which indicates she was selling without one). At her 2/16/22 inspection she had 156 dogs, 61 puppies. The 2/15/23 inspection noted 171 dogs, 71 puppies (total 242).

Broker information obtained from June – September 2021 Certificates of Veterinary Inspections

Pinnacle Pet (Sobrad, LLC), Neosho, 43-B-3750 – Pinnacle Pet is broker that obtains puppies from mills to resell to pet shops. Subsequent to my investigation of Sunshine Puppies, I investigated three breeders who sell to Pinnacle Pets. All of these facilities are puppy mills.

[Sandy Wisdom](#), Adair, OK, 73-A-2733

[Gordon Everett](#), Moline, KS, 48-A-2225

[Ruby Shown](#), Antlers, OK, 73-A-2423

Other breeders that previously sold to Pinnacle include Marlin Bontrager in Missouri, Menno Yoder in Ohio and Irene Phillips in Kansas.

Bontrager's USDA violations include dogs in enclosures registering 90 degrees F, beetles in feces, fecal accumulation, and grime on whelping enclosures. Yoder's violations include gum disease in numerous dogs, excessively long nails, accumulation of stains and grime around drains and wash downs. Phillips' violations include exposed screws and sharp points, broken and protruding wires, chewed and worn enclosures, lack of wind/rain breaks, rusty metal and rotting wood.

City of Largo regulatory ordinance effective 9/7/21

The City of Largo passed a regulatory ordinance on 9/7/21, effective immediately (shortly after this investigation), that grandfathered in the two existing pet shops: Sunshine Puppies and All about Puppies. The law requires pet shops to buy puppies only from USDA licensed breeders

and brokers; those that also have a state license must also be in good standing. Breeder and broker names, USDA number, cities and states must be posted on or in close proximity to the cages. USDA inspection reports must be readily available. The store must have a poster stating that breeder information and USDA inspection reports are available.

Lack of USDA violations

The fact that few breeders and brokers have USDA violations does not mean that none exist. During our undercover investigation of USDA-licensed facilities, we document violations. USDA has made it very easy for licenses not to have violations. In response to regulatory ordinances, USDA started using teachable moments, self-inspections and a trial announced inspection program. Their recent guidelines also instructed inspectors not to cite ear, eye and dental diseases as veterinary care violations (this requirement was recently changed back). It is for these reasons that USDA Animal Welfare Act violations have significantly decreased.