

# New Jersey Pet Store Report: Puppy Mills and Poor Conditions

August 2016

Pet stores with poor conditions, pet stores that did not disclose the sources of their puppies in apparent violation of [state law](#); and pet stores that purchased from puppy mills cited for violations such as dead puppies or bleeding and injured dogs within the past few years, were just a few of the issues uncovered by a new Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) investigation in New Jersey.

In July and August 2016, HSUS undercover investigators visited every known pet store in New Jersey that sells puppies, 29 stores in all, to check on conditions and see whether they were posting required information about their puppies. In addition, HSUS researchers studied public records from townships across New Jersey that documented the reported origins of more than 1,400 shipments of puppies sent to pet stores in 2015 and/or 2016. Together these joint efforts yielded troubling details about where many pet stores in New Jersey are obtaining dogs.



The research shows that pet stores in New Jersey are buying from dozens of breeders with documented Animal Welfare Act violations, including more than 50

**PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE:** Numerous Animal Welfare Act violations were found at the facility of Pat Crabtree in Kansas (top photo) and Sarah Young in Arkansas (lower photo). The pomeranian in the lower photo had no teeth, and the jaw bone was partially missing with the bone exposed, according to a 2014 USDA inspection report. **Both facilities sold to the Furrylicious pet store in NJ in 2015. Sarah Young also sold to two other NJ pet stores, PV Pets and Shake-a-Paw. /USDA, 2014.**

facilities that have appeared in one or more of The HSUS's [Horrible Hundred](#) reports, an annual report on problem puppy mills.

At several stores, HSUS researchers also found apparent violations of [New Jersey's Pet Purchase Protection Act \(PPPA\)](#), which went into effect in June 2015. The PPPA requires pet stores to disclose breeder information on puppies' cages or enclosures and to purchase only from breeders who do not have certain recent, severe Animal Welfare Act<sup>1</sup> violations, among other rules. The HSUS found that many of the pet stores visited or studied appeared to be violating the PPPA by either failing to post breeder information, or by purchasing from breeders with severe violations. Even among stores that did not appear to be violating the PPPA, researchers still found evidence that many of them had purchased from notorious puppy mills.

**When The HSUS visited the NJ pet stores and/or reviewed the breeder lists that the stores are required to send to their localities annually, they found a number of issues:**

- An investigator noted that conditions at **CARMONA PET SHOP** in Union City and at least two other stores were crowded and dirty, with rusted



**ABOVE:** Some of the pet stores visited by HSUS investigators, such as **D & G's Petite Pups** in Paterson, had such troubling conditions that The HSUS reported the stores to local authorities. /HSUS, 2016

**BELOW:** One of seven dead puppies found scattered on the ground at the facility of Andy Yoder in Millersburg, Ohio by a USDA inspector in February 2014. Yoder is a repeat offender on The HSUS's Horrible Hundred list and sold to at least three pet stores in NJ: **D & G's Petite Pups**, **Village Pets** and **Whiteway Pet Shop**. /USDA, 2014.



<sup>1</sup> The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) is a federal law that requires basic standards of care for animals bred for the commercial pet trade, and requires licensing and inspections of puppy dealers who sell to pet stores and have four or more breeding female dogs. The [AWA and its regulations](#) are enforced by the United States Department of Agriculture.

cages and conditions that appeared inhumane. Some of the puppies pawed at their cages and seemed starved for attention. The poor conditions at **CARMONA PET SHOP**, **PASSAIC PETS** in Passaic, and **D & G's PETITE PUPS** in Paterson were reported to local law enforcement agencies for review.

- At other stores, such as **NY PUPPY CLUB** in Edgewater, the conditions were cleaner, but some of the puppies were in cages so small that they had barely enough space to turn around or lie down. Some of the puppies appeared to be extremely restless and in need of exercise and attention.

- Of the 29 stores visited by the investigators, six of the stores failed to disclose any breeder information to the potential buyer, in apparent violation of [state law](#). These stores included **CARMONA PET SHOP** in Union City, **OH MY DOG** in Kearny, **FASHIONABLE**

**PETS** in Paramus, **PASSAIC PETS** in Passaic, **ABSOLUTE FISHLAND** in

Newark, and

**PETS R US** in Newark.

Their refusal to disclose any breeder information begs the question of whether the stores' puppies could be from unlicensed or noncompliant facilities, however it was impossible to investigate further.

When questioned about the origins of the puppies, a man at Carmona's Pet Shop who appeared to be the

owner gave a few different answers, first claiming the puppies were from local breeders and then stating that he himself was the breeder. However, he was unable to answer questions about which



**ABOVE AND BELOW:** USDA inspectors repeatedly found filthy conditions and dogs in need of veterinary care at a puppy mill owned by John Nisley in Edgewood, IA. Nisley was given an official warning by the USDA in January 2016 for repeatedly failing to obtain proper veterinary care. Nisley sold to both of Shake-a-Paw's NJ locations and to The Pet Shoppe in 2015. /USDA, 2014



breeds of puppies would be coming into the store in weeks ahead, even though he claimed to be the breeder.

- The HSUS found that a total of 53 facilities that had appeared in one or more of The HSUS's [Horrible Hundred](#) reports had sold to pet stores in NJ.
- The HSUS found that some stores had purchased puppies from breeders with severe AWA violations, sometimes in apparent violation of the PPPA. Some of the breeders had received fines or warnings from the USDA in recent years.
- The puppy sources reported by several stores to their localities had errors and omissions, such as breeder names associated with an incorrect city, state or USDA number. These may have been inadvertent errors, or they may indicate a deliberate attempt to conceal that some stores were buying from unqualified breeders.
- The HSUS found some breeders with severe AWA violations that were published on the USDA's database just a few weeks or months *after* they sold puppies to pet stores in NJ, indicating that the law



**TOP PHOTO:** A dog with an eye disorder and injury was one of several dogs found in need of medical care at Samuel Beachy's kennel in Missouri. Beachy sold to Furrylicious, a pet store in NJ, in 2015, in apparent violation of the Pet Purchase Protection Act. Beachy had multiple Animal Welfare Act violations in 2013, 2014 and 2015. /USDA, 2014

**BOTTOM PHOTO:** USDA inspectors found filthy conditions and injured dogs at the facility of Cathy Speer, a breeder in Milton, IA who sold to The Pet Shoppe in 2015. Speer received an official warning from the USDA in July 2015 and appeared in The HSUS's Horrible Hundred report in both 2015 and 2016. /USDA, 2015



does not ensure puppy mill puppies aren't being shipped into the state. USDA inspections are not frequent enough to ensure that conditions remain humane over any significant length of time.

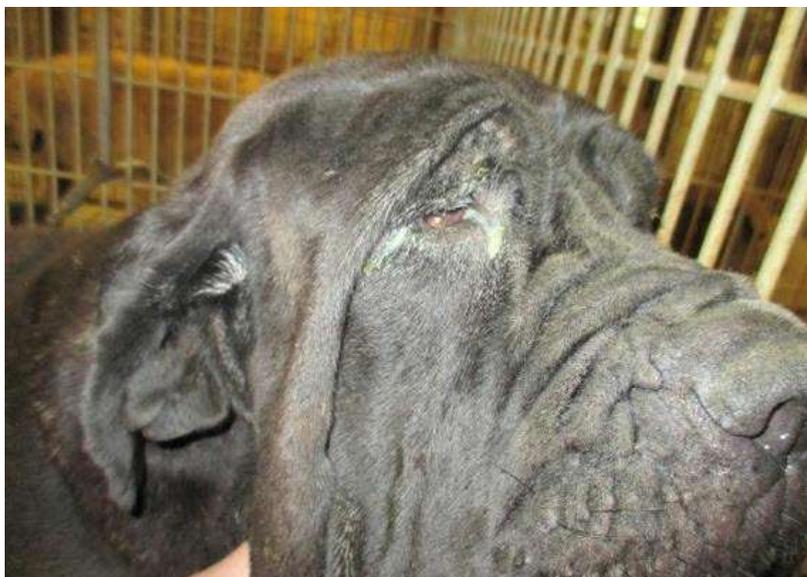
All of these problems seem to indicate that current NJ laws do not go far enough to keep puppy mill dogs out of NJ.

## EXAMPLES OF PROBLEM BREEDERS FOUND SELLING TO NJ STORES

- **BARK AVENUE** in Red Bank, **THE PET SHOPPE** in Middletown, **SHAKE-A-PAW** in both Green Brook and Union, and **WAYNE PUPPIES** in Wayne— five NJ pet stores – all purchased puppies from **Judy Maassen/ J Maassen Inc, in Rock Valley, IA** in 2015 or 2016. Maassen was cited by the USDA in August 2014 for listing “gunshot in brain at close range” as a routine method of euthanasia on the facility’s official program of veterinary care. Maassen was notified by the USDA that “gunshot is not an acceptable form of [routine] euthanasia.” Maassen was also cited during the same USDA inspection for a shar pei with a “large, red swelling” on her paw and for poor housing conditions.
- **D & G’s PETITE PUPS** in Paterson, **VILLAGE PET SHOP** in Williamstown and **WHITEWAY PET SHOP** in

**Elizabeth** all reported they had purchased puppies from **Andy Yoder in Millersburg, Ohio**. Yoder was listed as a “repeat offender” in The HSUS’s 2016 Horrible Hundred report due to a number of severe violations of the Animal Welfare Act, including seven dead puppies found on his property on a single day in February 2014, and a dog with a severe neck injury due to an embedded chain collar. In April 2015, the USDA issued an official citation and notice of penalty (\$7,714) to Yoder for the dog with the embedded collar and several other animals found in need of veterinary care. Yoder was also cited for repeatedly failing to make his property available for inspection. Although the USDA has not been able to recently inspect Yoder’s property, Ohio state inspectors were able to inspect on November 30, 2015, at which time they found a Scottish terrier puppy with an obvious open wound on the top of its head. Yoder cancelled his USDA license in March 2016.

- **FASHIONABLE PETS** in Paramus refused to give our undercover investigator any information at all about the origins of the puppies in the store, and no information



**ABOVE AND BELOW:** Many dogs with veterinary problems, including eye and leg injuries and open, bleeding wounds, were found at the facility of **Steve Kruse/ Stonehenge Kennel** by USDA inspectors in 2015 and early 2016. The kennel was also found with unsafe housing and dirty conditions. Stonehenge Kennel sold to the **Furrylicious** pet store and **both Shake-a-Paw** locations in NJ. /USDA, 2015



was posted on or near the animals' cages as required by law. However, information that the store provided to its township indicates that **FASHIONABLE PETS** purchased at least one puppy from **Johnny Dake (J & M Kennels) in Stover, MO** in December 2015. Dake was cited for several violations of the Animal Welfare Act regulations in early 2014, including a dead puppy who was found outside in the freezing cold "in a statue-like state [with] imprints from the wire flooring" across his body. Dake was also cited for repeat violations for several injured dogs who had not been treated by a vet, and several dogs who had no water. The lack of

water (March 2014) was a direct<sup>2</sup> violation, which should have prevented Dake from selling to any NJ pet store under the PPPA. **SHAKE A PAW in Greenbrook** also purchased at least one puppy from Johnny Dake.

- **FURRYLICIOUS in Whitehouse Station** reported that it purchased from **Brett Bonham/ Calvary Creek Kennels in Cordell, OK**, after

the passage of the PPPA. Yet Bonham had been cited for more than three violations of the Animal Welfare Act in 2015, including a repeat violation for a pug with a wound covering more than half of the top of her foot, another pug with a foot injury, and three shiba inus so "heavily infested" with ticks that the ticks could be seen all over their "face[s], ears and in between the toes of their feet." In January 2016, Bonham was cited by his USDA inspector for another veterinary violation for a pug with an untreated eye injury. It appears that purchasing from Bonham violated the PPPA. **SHAKE A PAW** also purchased from Bonham at least twice in 2015.

- **FURRYLICIOUS** reported that it purchased from **Jan Budden in Maurice, IA**, after the passage of the PPPA. Yet Budden had been cited for more than five different violations of the Animal Welfare Act in the previous two years, including a shih tzu with an injured eye and a miniature schnauzer with an abnormal-appearing jaw and swollen, red gums (March 2014); repeatedly keeping expired medications for use on the dogs (both March 2014 and June 2015); repeatedly failing to make the facility available for inspection (August 2015 and March 2015), and excessive feces and foul-smelling "puddles of liquid waste" in the dog barn (June 2015). **SHAKE A PAW** in Union also reported that it purchased from Budden earlier in 2015 (February 2015).
- **FURRYLICIOUS** records indicated that it purchased from **Samuel Beachy in Clark, MO**, after the passage of the PPPA. Yet Beachy had been cited for more than four Animal Welfare Act violations in the previous two years, which would disqualify him from selling to NJ stores under the PPPA. Violations found at Beachy's



**ABOVE: John Nisley** in Edgewood, IA was given an official warning by the USDA in January 2016 due to several dogs found in need of veterinary care, including this Chihuahua with one missing eye and one enlarged, abnormal eye. Nisley sold to both **Shake-a-Paw** locations and **The Pet Shoppe**. / USDA, 2014

<sup>2</sup> A "direct" violation is a noncompliance that is currently (at the time of the inspection) having a severe effect on the health and well-being of the animal, or has the high potential to have that affect in the immediate future.

kennel included a Yorkie with signs of advanced dental disease, dogs without enough cage space, a Maltese with an untreated lesion near his eye (see photo, page 4), grimy conditions, and greenish slime in some of the water bowls.

- **FURRYLICIOUS** also purchased from **Pat Crabtree in St Francis, KS**, after the passage of the PPPA. Crabtree had been cited for many Animal Welfare Act violations in the previous two years, which would appear to disqualify her from selling to NJ pet stores under the PPPA. Violations included excessive feces in some of the enclosures that had not been removed for at least three days, expired medications kept for use on the dogs, and unsafe housing conditions.
- **THE NEW YORK PUPPY CLUB in Edgewater** had a bulldog puppy in its store on July 28, 2016 from **Linda Baker, Okie Pets**, in Ketchum, OK, in apparent violation of the PPPA. Baker had a number of Animal Welfare Act violations in 2014 and 2015, including direct violations in September 2014 for numerous sick or injured dogs, including several dogs with swollen lesions and eye disorders. Under the PPPA, pet stores are not permitted to purchase from breeders who have had a direct violation within the previous two years.
- **THE PET SHOPPE in Middletown** and **SHAKE-A-PAW (both its Union and Greenbook locations)** purchased from **John Nisley in Edgewood, Iowa** in 2015. Nisley received an official warning from the USDA in January 2016 for a

repeated failure to provide adequate veterinary care and other violations. Dogs found in need of care at his facility included a poodle with loose, bloody stools for

whom Nisley failed to get adequate



**ABOVE:** Puppies were seen in stacked, rusty cages at **PASSAIC PETS** in Passaic, NJ. Some of them were panting heavily. It was a hot day, and the building appeared to have no air conditioning, according to the HSUS inspector. /HSUS 2016

treatment even after repeated citations in 2015, as well as a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel with “greenish colored discharge covering more than half of the surface of each eye” (December 2015), a severely matted lhasa apso mix (December 2015), very young puppies kept outside in the cold (December 2015); and a Chihuahua who was missing an eye and whose other eye appeared damaged (September 2014; photo, page 6). Inspectors also repeatedly found filthy conditions, including animal runs that were “completely wet with animal waste, water and mud.”

- **THE PET SHOPPE** also purchased at least one puppy from **Cathy Speer** in Milton, Iowa in 2015. Speer was cited for more than a dozen different violations of the Animal Welfare Act in 2015 and/or 2016, most of which were repeat violations. The violations included dogs in the cold without adequate protection from the weather, filthy and unsafe conditions, dogs standing on wire flooring that was “broken and bent” with holes large enough to injure or entrap their feet, and at least two dogs in need of veterinary care.

- **SHAKE-A-PAW** (both locations), **FURRYLICIOUS** and **PV PETS** in Pennsville, all purchased from **Sarah Young (Clear Springs Kennel, Hardy, AR)** in 2015 and/or 2016, according to documents submitted to their localities. Young was listed in The HSUS's Horrible Hundred report in 2013, 2014 and 2015 due to multiple dogs found in need of veterinary care during USDA inspections. The kennel passed one 2015 inspection, but was cited by USDA inspectors for veterinary care problems as recently as January 2015, when a Chihuahua was found coughing, and in June 2014, when a USDA inspector found five repeat violations, including a pomeranian whom they noted "did not have any teeth and the jaw bone on the left side was partially missing and detached from the gums leaving the bone exposed." Another pomeranian was found at the same 2014 inspection with "green goopy discharge from both eyes" and bleeding gums. A third dog was unable to bear weight on one of her back legs and had blood on her paw; a cocker spaniel was found with "goopy drainage" from her eye, hair loss and scabs; and a Yorkie was found with an eye injury.
- **SHAKE-A-PAW** (both locations) and **FURRYLICIOUS** both purchased from **Steve Kruse (Stonehenge Kennel, West Point, IA)** in 2015. Kruse was listed in The HSUS's Horrible Hundred report in May 2016 due to many dogs found in need of veterinary care, including some who had fresh blood and open wounds, and others who had eye or leg injuries, yet even after those citations, similar violations continued. In June 2016, three more dogs were found in need of veterinary care at Stonehenge Kennel, and Kruse received a repeat, direct violation for a shiba inu who could not put weight on her foot, a lhasa apso with inflamed, reddish eyes that had "greenish-yellow discharge coming from both eyes," and a bulldog with an abnormal growth covering 1/3 of the eye and discharge coming from the eye, according to the USDA inspection report.
- **SHAKE-A-PAW** in Union purchased from **Pamela Baldwin's Samples Creek Kennel**, a puppy mill in Missouri with more than a dozen 2016 AWA violations, including a basset hound with thick green discharge around her eyes; two other dogs with eye disorders; filthy conditions; feces smeared on surfaces of the whelping building; odors so strong that they caused a "burning and stinging sensation" in the eyes and nose of the USDA inspector; multiple severely matted dogs, and many other problems.
- A sales person at **WAYNE PUPPIES, LLC in Wayne** told our undercover investigator that all the puppies in the store were from local breeders, but labels on the cages clearly showed that some of the puppies had been shipped by a large broker in Iowa. In addition, when submitting paperwork to its locality, the store reported that it purchased from **Bob Mackey in Sayre, OK**. Mackey was cited for numerous violations of the Animal Welfare Act in January 2015 for issues such as a shih tzu with "red, blood-like liquid covering the entire sclera/white area of her left eye," several dogs with symptoms of advanced dental disease, and rodent feces in and around the area where the dogs' food was stored, according to a January 2015 USDA report.
- **WAYNE PUPPIES** also purchased from **Shonda Madison, Madison Kennels, of Cassville, MO**, according to records submitted to its locality. Madison was cited for an AWA violation in December 2015 for keeping small, short-haired dogs outside in the winter cold when temperatures had been as low as 29 degrees, and for dogs with inadequate protection from the wind and rain. Madison was also cited in December 2013 for a strong ammonia odor (due to excessive urine and feces).

## A BURDEN ON NEW JERSEY

In recent months, the state of New Jersey has had to lay out significant resources to address an array of problems with puppy-selling pet stores. In January 2016, the state's Division of Consumer Affairs cited many pet stores across the state for various [violations of the PPPA](#) when they discovered that the stores were failing to post information on their puppies' origins and information on consumer rights as required by law – an issue which, this report shows, continues to be a problem at many retailers. And in July 2016, the state filed an action against a [notorious pet store chain known as Just Pups](#) and its owner, Vincent LoSacco, who, as of August 25, 2016, was also facing [hundreds of animal cruelty charges](#) related to the alleged mistreatment of puppies at some of his stores. The state's action alleges that the Just Pups stores sold sick puppies and deceived consumers, selling them puppies who required costly medical care or in some cases died shortly after purchase.

The [closure of three of the four Just Pups pet stores](#) may have shuttered some of the more notorious retail puppy outlets in the state, but the fact is that puppies in puppy mills suffer long before they arrive at a store,

and many suffer on the journey to the store as well. Some of the animal cruelty charges facing LoSacco derive from an incident in April 2016, in [which 67 puppies were found crammed in dirty cages](#) inside a van parked near the Paramus Just Pups<sup>3</sup> store. According to news reports, police officers reported that the van did not have adequate temperature control or ventilation on the 38 degree winter night, and many of the puppies were covered in feces or had no food and water. Approximately 15 of the puppies required medical treatment at a veterinary hospital. The puppies had arrived from the store owner's own breeding operation in Missouri, which has since closed. When questioned about the incident, [LoSacco claimed it was typical](#) for pet stores to transport puppies in such conditions and sometimes leave them overnight in the vehicles, according to news reports.

Although many pet stores in New Jersey appear not to be violating any laws, and some are buying from breeders without recent Animal Welfare Act violations, the fact is that many USDA-licensed breeders without AWA violations can still be considered puppy mills. That is because the standards required of commercial dog breeders under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations are nothing more than bare minimum survival standards. Even breeders who are compliant with the standards can still keep hundreds of dogs in small, stacked wire cages for their entire lives, without ever giving them individual time and attention – conditions that many Americans would deem inhumane, even though they are not currently illegal. In fact, the AWA requirements are so low that [The HSUS and partner groups submitted a legal petition to the USDA](#) in September 2015, urging the agency to improve the regulations by banning the use of stacked cages and harmful wire flooring, and by requiring that breeding dogs be given an opportunity for daily exercise and positive human interaction, among other common-sense reforms. As of the date of this report, The USDA has not yet taken action on the petition, beyond acknowledging its receipt.

## NEW LEGISLATION

---

The notorious Just Pups cases, combined with consumer concern about puppy mills, have compelled [many boroughs](#) in New Jersey to pass ordinances banning the sale of commercially-raised puppies in pet stores. As of the date of this report, more than 60 localities within the state have passed such ordinances. In addition, a [state law](#), S.63, is also under consideration in the House. S.63 would address some of the concerns with problem pet stores by preventing pet shops that repeatedly violate humane sourcing laws from selling puppies within the state. The bill would also prevent any new pet stores in the state from selling puppy mill puppies, and it would address the issue of inhumane Internet-based puppy sellers by requiring all dealers, including Internet dealers who do not sell face-to-face, to be licensed and without certain severe AWA violations. S.63 overwhelmingly passed the NJ Senate in June with a bipartisan vote of 27-8, reflecting lawmakers' recognition of some of the problems described in this report.

The examples herein are not a list of all issues found during the investigation period; they are merely a few cases in point. Dozens of questionable breeders and confirmed puppy mills have been selling to New Jersey pet stores. It is clear that self-monitoring by pet shops alone does not keep puppy mill puppies from entering the state. The result is many misled consumers with sick puppies and staggering veterinary bills. Stronger and clearer laws are necessary to ensure that puppy mill dogs are not sold in New Jersey. New Jersey consumers can also help by ensuring that they consider adoption from a reputable shelter or rescue organization, or by purchasing only from a breeder they have [met face-to-face and carefully screened](#).

## METHODOLOGY

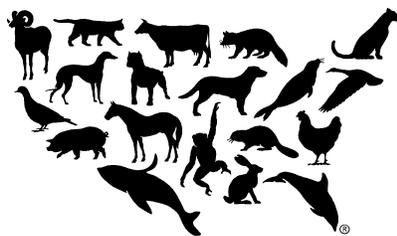
---

- In July and August 2016, HSUS researchers acquired public records from townships across New Jersey that documented the reported origins of more than 1,400 shipments of puppies received by various pet stores. New Jersey pet stores are required by state law to report the identity of the dog breeders they source from to their localities every year.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Paramus Just Pups store is now closed

- HSUS investigators visited all of the pet stores in New Jersey that are known to sell puppies. The visits occurred in late July and early August 2016. During these visits they obtained video and/or still photos to document the alleged sources of the puppies in many of the stores.
- The records obtained from the store visits and the documents obtained from the townships were compared to available federal inspection reports for 2013, 2014, 2015 and/or 2016 (if applicable).
- This report is intended to point out instances of problem breeders selling to pet stores; not every issue documented in this report is a known violation of the law.
- The issues noted in this report are a small, representative sampling of the problems found; many stores were not mentioned in this report due to lack of space.



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY**  
OF THE UNITED STATES

[humanesociety.org](http://humanesociety.org)