

ANIMALS IN THE NEWS

Petland uses puppy mills, group says

Concerned Citizens Against Petland and other animal advocates are protesting against Petland stores in Northeast Ohio and Columbus in the wake of a national investigation that revealed that the chain sells puppies purchased from puppy mills.

"Petland is perpetuating the abusive puppy mill industry, where dogs are treated not like pets, but like a cash crop," said Stephanie Shain, who helped track Petland's puppy purchases for the Humane Society of the United States.



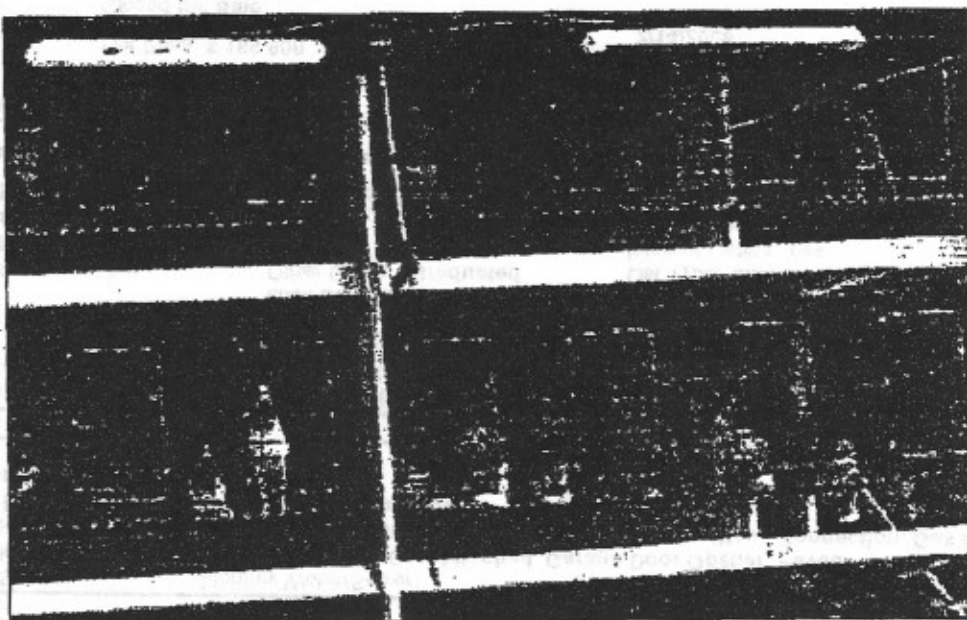
Donna Miller

Government records show that the Petland in Cleveland Heights, for instance, bought puppies from a mill in Minnesota that has been repeatedly cited by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for unsanitary conditions and failure to provide veterinary care. Get details at: stoppupmills.org.

Petland responds on its Web site: "Our pets come from professional and hobby breeders who have years of experience in raising quality family pets. Petland puppies are checked by two and, in many cases, three veterinarians before being offered to our customers."

PetSmart, a smaller chain, does not sell puppies and kittens. Rather, it welcomes into its stores nonprofit groups that offer rescued cats and dogs for adoption.

But don't think shopping at small, local pet shops will prevent you from supporting the secretive puppy mill trade. In order to keep a steady stream of different breeds on hand, most pet stores buy from large-volume



HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

Fletcher Creek Kennels in Minnesota supplies many of the puppies sold in Ohio Petland stores. About 800 dogs live in cages.

breeders. Your best bet: adopt from your nearest animal rescue group or visit the home of a low-volume breeder, if you simply must have a certain breed.

Learn more about upcoming peaceful protests in Cleveland Heights and Lake County by contacting Jenniferk@mercyforanimals.org, or go to marilynsvoice.org.

Puppy killed: Nolan P. Meinke, 27, is headed to Elyria Municipal Court Jan. 13, accused of killing his pregnant girlfriend's 3-pound Yorkshire terrier puppy Dec. 5. If convicted, he faces a maximum \$1,000 fine and six months in jail, a place Meinke knows well. His criminal history in Elyria begins in 2002 with possession of marijuana. It continues — drug trafficking, domestic violence, violating a protection order, criminal damaging, burglary, obstruct-

tion of justice, domestic violence, harassment, assault, failure to comply with police, criminal damaging, aggravated menacing, drunken driving — and ends with resisting arrest on Dec. 6, when he was hauled in on the cruelty to animals charge. Meinke was arraigned two days later, pleaded not guilty and was released on bond. His estranged 35-year-old girlfriend is expecting the birth of their child in March.

Millions more chickens: Residents of Union County and national animal welfare groups are fighting the construction of what would be Ohio's largest egg farm, confining 6 million hens in massive buildings.

Ohio is already home to more than 26 million laying hens — twice the state's human population — living in cages too small

for natural movement. Hi-Q Egg Products wants to build another egg factory that would produce 70,000 tons of chicken manure a year.

Many Northwestern Ohio residents have already seen the environmental effects of that much manure and don't want another factory farm in their region. Learn more at actionfarmsanctuary.org and mercyforanimals.org.

Low-cost neuters: Get your cats or your neighborhood strays neutered Jan. 3 at the NEFCO Building, 180 East South St. in downtown Akron. Surgery is \$35 for male cats, \$50 for females. Sign up by calling 330-724-6181.

Send animal news to djmill@plained.com, fax 216-999-6374 or 216-999-4852.