

# NOT JUST IN THE U.S.:

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The International Puppy Mill Problem and  
Efforts to Address It

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# GLOBAL ISSUES

- Global Issues:
  - Not just production of puppies for sale, puppy mills are involved in distribution of and trade in dogs for meat
    - South Korea: some bitches too old to whelp are sold for meat
    - Australia: evidence that dogs are being shipped to China and sold for consumption via the internet
  - Shipping long distances resulting in injuries, disease and death
  - Internet sales: one European estimate states that 1 in 5 dogs sold through social media die in first six months

# GLOBAL ISSUES

- Teacup Puppies: these tiny dogs have become popular with celebrities and there is a large market for these dogs
  - Often shipped from South Korea where there are estimated to be 3-4,000 puppy mills (compare this with an estimate of 10,000 puppy mills in the U.S., which has more than six times the population of South Korea)
    - Flight and related time to the U.S. is generally around 20 hours
    - Shipments are not infrequently based on falsified paperwork
    - There is evidence that puppies under the age of 6 months are imported in violation of U.S. law
    - Often have illnesses: one estimate states that up to 1 in 3 of these dogs imported into the U.S. dies within two months of arrival

# GLOBAL ISSUES

- The Hungarian Connection
  - Hungary and Slovakia are the main dog breeding areas in Europe due to lack of regulation in these countries (and generally in Eastern Europe)
    - Netherlands, due to lax regulation of the puppy trade, is a main transit point for dogs from Eastern Europe
    - Puppies are then sold through various channels, including the internet, to buyers around Europe including in Austria, Belgium and Germany
      - Frequently dogs are unregistered
      - Fake documents are sometimes used
      - Evidence of organized crime involvement in the trade
      - Often animals are too young and sick to be transported
  - Situation often blamed on lack of comprehensive regulation of companion animals and animal breeding in Europe

# GLOBAL RESPONSE

- International Response: as with most other areas of animal law (with the exception of some matters focused on environmental law) there are no comprehensive international treaties or conventions relating to puppy mills and dog breeding
  - The European Convention on the Protection of Pet Animals is one Convention that does touch on these issues but lacks detail
- Regulations by Individual Countries: there have been some efforts by some countries to specifically address puppy mills—the examples of Ireland and the United Kingdom are the focus here

# GLOBAL RESPONSE

- Ireland: news reports declared the end of puppy mills in Ireland after the enactment in 2010 of the Irish Dog Breeding Establishments Act and its becoming effective in 2012
  - This is something of an exaggeration
  - The new law actually just regulates the breeding of dogs (local authorities are the entities that actually administer the Act), does not limit the number of dogs that can be kept and provides a set of welfare related strictures, recommendations, etc., in the Act and Guidelines created pursuant to the Act, regulating things like:
    - Registration of breeders
    - Suitable housing and food, protection from elements, hygiene
    - Exercise
    - Bitches can have no more than 6 litters and no more than 3 litters in three years
    - Microchipping of dogs
    - Inspections

# GLOBAL RESPONSE

- United Kingdom: similar sort of regulation of breeders as in Ireland, primarily relying on a licensing scheme—but U.K. law is somewhat complicated since there are separate regulations established in Wales and Northern Ireland
- United States:
  - State Law: some states have enacted varying degrees of restrictions on puppy mills with the same “animal welfare” focus as seen in Ireland and the U.K., although some states go further than these European laws by limiting the number of animals that may be kept, providing engineering standards allowing more space than federal regulations require and requiring outdoor runs for dogs

# GLOBAL RESPONSE

- United States:
  - Federal Law
    - Domestic Dealers:
      - Licensing of “dealers”, but there are ways people can avoid licensing
        - Recently federal regulation was extended to those dealing in dogs over the internet
      - Inspections
    - Import Regulations:
      - Import permits, health certificates
      - Dogs must be at least 6 months old

# GLOBAL RESPONSE

- Steps Forward
  - Advances in federal and state law as well as in the laws of other countries
  - Trade Restrictions: Bans on imports? Requiring Imports to meet strict standards?
    - Problems:
      - How enforce?
      - WTO/GAAT trade issues
  - Ultimately, however, because puppy mills are a global problem there must be action at the international level to be effective