

SPOT SPEAKS

DR. NANCY KAY



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Dog Auctions

I wish I were a fiction writer and the details within this blog were simply a product of my imagination. Unfortunately dog auctions are a painful and despicable fact of life. As much as I dislike crafting blogs that are “downers” I’ve recognized the importance of educating as many people as I can about animal-related

issues that undermine our humanity. Dog auctions certainly fit the bill.



In case you are unfamiliar with dog auctions let me fill you in. Envision rooms filled floor to ceiling with crates and cages each housing dogs whose sole purpose in life is to make puppies. Every dog in the room is identified by the number on the auction tag hanging round his or her neck. There are purebreds of multiple varieties although some might not be recognizable as such given their lack of health care and horrifically overgrown hair coats. And, of course, there are plenty of “designer hybrids” the mutts that are purposefully planned because they are “all the rage” and their litters will garner thousands of dollars. One would think these rooms filled with dogs would be chaotic and noisy. In fact the quiet is eerie; these are dogs with broken spirits- too scared to vocally protest and too disassociated from their miserable existences to invite attention from the humans

peering into their cages.



Six auctions are held every year in Farmerstown, Ohio. In fact the next one is later this week on January 15th. If you happen to live near Farmerstown, I encourage you to attend. You will be surrounded by puppy mill proprietors who have come to socialize, discuss their trade, and buy and sell “livestock”. There will also be some representatives from breed rescue organizations, hoping to place some winning bids that will alter the dismal fate of as many dogs as is affordable. Don’t take a camera with you- it will be confiscated. You see, these are rather covert affairs- journalists and photographers are not allowed. The photographic images accompanying this blog were obtained via an undercover operation. At the upcoming Ohio auction 463 dogs are slated to

be auctioned. The dogs bringing the highest prices will be those with proven fertility records; already pregnant bitches are highly valued. Details about each dog's breeding behavior and previous litter sizes are provided, but information about basic temperament or breed-specific inherited diseases within the family tree will be unavailable.



If you attend an auction in Ohio, be sure to look for and meet Mary O'Connor-Shaver. You will find her at the peaceful protest that is a visible presence on each and every auction day. In my mind Mary is a hero, working tirelessly to convince Ohio legislators to ban dog auctions from her state. I hope you will visit her

website www.BanOhioDogAuctions.com. Mary has been a huge source of information and inspiration for me.

What can you do to help eradicate dog auctions and put an end to puppy mills? Here are some suggestions:

1. Boycott puppy mills. This means *never ever* purchasing a puppy from a pet store or from an on line source (site and sight unseen). Visit your local shelter (a surprising number of purebred dogs wind up there) and contact local breed-specific rescue organizations. If you decide to purchase a puppy from a breeder please take the time to read my article titled "A Dozen Simple Ways To Be Certain You Are Working With a Reputable Breeder"

(<http://speakingforspot.com/blog/?p=749>).

2. If you live in a state that sanctions dog auctions (Ohio, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Arkansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri) write your legislators and appeal to them to stop this madness. And if there are efforts within your state to create legislation banning dog auctions, please pitch in. This might involve organizing rallies, writing letters, and gathering signatures of support.

3. If you don't reside in a state that sanctions dog auctions, write letters to the governors and legislators of the eight states that do. Let them know you will no longer support their state in terms of travel and

commerce until their dog auctions cease to exist.

4. Let your veterinarian know how you feel about dog auctions and puppy mills, and encourage him or her to take a public stance against them. Goodness knows, they see first hand the horrific health issues and accompanying heartbreak produced by puppy mills.

5. If you are a teacher, educate your students about puppy mills and dog auctions. Teach them about responsible ways to adopt a dog. I firmly believe that educating children about these issues is the key success.

6. Please share this blog with anyone and everyone you know who loves a dog, and encourage them to take action.

My youngest child attends college in Athens, Ohio. During a recent Parents Weekend visit my husband, daughter and I checked out Petland, the pet store in Athens. We found no fewer than three dozen utterly adorable purebred and designer hybrid puppies- undoubtedly puppy mill progeny. There were plenty of customers in the store that day interacting with the pups and contemplating adoption. I chatted with the store manager about the Boxer pup on display and asked to see the paperwork documenting if Boxer cardiomyopathy existed in the pup's family tree. Boxer cardiomyopathy is an inherited heart condition that prematurely ends the lives of afflicted dogs. She responded by saying, "No, we don't have that

paperwork but no problem because Petland guarantees full refunds on any dogs that develop symptoms caused by an inherited disease." No problem for Petland that is.....

What are you willing to do to help stop this madness?

Best wishes,

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