



Companion Animal Protection Society



Why You Shouldn't Buy That Puppy on the Internet

Please do not buy a puppy over the internet. Many of these puppies are coming from puppy mills that sell directly to the public or that raise dogs, for the most part, for resale to pet shops (USDA licensed facilities).

Reputable breeders do not sell puppies to families they haven't met in person. They do a thorough screening of potential buyers of their puppies. They provide health guarantees and provide health clearances for genetic defects inherent in the breed. It is not common to see kennel cough, coccidia, giardia, ear and eye infections, upper respiratory infections and worms in puppies that come from reputable breeders.

Save a Life

Every year, animal shelters destroy millions of dogs -- including purebreds and puppies -- and cats. PLEASE adopt a companion animal from your local shelter, humane society, rescue organization or veterinarian. In addition, many pet supply stores, such as PETSMAST or PETCO, sponsor adoption days. You can also find animals to adopt at www.petfinder.com, www.pet-ark.com and www.pets911.com.

CAPS Complaints

CAPS receives consumer complaints from people who have purchased puppies over the internet. Most of these puppies have mild to very serious medical problems, including hereditary defects.

On May 11, 2006, CNN aired a lengthy segment entitled, "Sick Puppies Dog Some Online Purchasers." In this story on internet puppy sales, CNN Consumer Correspondent Greg Hunter interviewed CAPS President Deborah Howard, who addressed the issues involved with internet puppy buying and showed video footage of puppy mills that sell to The Hunte Corporation, the largest puppy brokerage facility in the country.

The story focused on Celebrity Kennels (aka Wizard of Claws) in Florida, who obtain many of their puppies from Hunte. Celebrity Kennels sells puppies both through a strip mall store front, where they show puppies to consumers who sit in a waiting room, and over the internet. Just because pet shops and online sellers have celebrity customers doesn't mean that these puppy merchants obtain puppies from reputable breeders.

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Summary of a few CAPS' Internet Puppy Complaints

North Country Pets (www.mixedbreedpups.com), Ironton, Minnesota
Multi-poo with Portacavel Shunt who died four days after purchase.

Pages listing litters and upcoming litters immediately arouse suspicion that this breeder has a puppy mill. There are numerous dogs and puppies at this facility. The owners deliberately cross breed their dogs to produce mixed breed puppies, also know as "designer" dogs. Another indication of a puppy mill: the owners do not allow prospective buyers on the premises, claiming that humans transmit diseases to puppies. In fact, the opposite is true. Dogs have certain worms and illnesses that can be transmitted to humans (for example, roundworms, sarcoptic mange and giardia).

The following information appears on North Country Pets' website:

Can we visit and see the pups? - We used to answer this with a resounding YES! However, we recently had an experience with a pup that became sick shortly after going to her new home. The pup recovered nicely, but the only way this pup could have been exposed to this virus was through casual contact with visitors, as we have NEVER dealt with this virus before. No, you don't need to worry about getting a pup from us, but we really do need to safeguard the health of our puppies, for the puppies' sake, our sake, and the buyer's sake. Unfortunately, even the most diligent, clean, well-meaning visitors can bring a disease to our kennel that can spell disaster for our puppies. Think of it this way - hospitals don't allow visitors into the nursery area. Baby and Puppy immune systems are not fully functional for months.

And yet another sign of a mill is the fact that the puppies are not raised in a home:

Are the pups raised in the house? - No. Frankly, no-one could have litters of puppies like this in a clean, healthy, environment in the house. And, we have a small grooming shop and boarding kennel, so we're at work in our kennel anyway. Mike and Lucy generally begin their day with the puppies at about 6 am, and finish up about 5 pm, with a final walk for the dogs at about 9 pm. The kids, Elizabeth (12), Charles (5), Rachel (3), and Eleanor (2) love to play with the pups. The babysitter has a scheduled time to bring the three little ones out the "shop" to play with puppies every day.

Next Day Pets (www.nextdaypets.com)

Breeders: **Tim and Stacy Brock**, Rocky Comfort, MO – 43A-3120

Cock-a-poo arrived with Upper Respiratory Infection, hookworm, coccidia, ear mites and runny eyes.

This website, like many other puppy sale sites on the internet, is nothing more than a place for sellers to post their puppy litter ads and websites. We have looked up the names of a number of breeders selling on this site on the USDA breeder and dealer directories, and most of them have USDA licenses. This means they are puppy mills that supply puppies to the pet shop industry. These are the types of facilities that CAPS investigates on a regular basis.

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Puppy Find (www.puppyfind.com)

Importer: **Celtic Cavaliers**, Palatine, IL

The importer, who is based in the Chicago area, specializes in Cavalier King Charles Spaniels that she imports from Ireland. She claims: **“Some of our pedigrees include top bloodlines...”** Ireland has numerous puppy farms (puppy mills).

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel in question had pneumonia, coccidia and giardia. The puppy has an open fontanel and is having seizures.

Here is what CAPS board member, Dr. Don Allen, DVM, wrote to the consumer who purchased the very sick Cavalier puppy:

The "breeder" you are dealing with is simply an unscrupulous puppy mill retailer who buys from any source she can find for a pittance and sells for enormous profit. She probably never even sees some of the dogs she buys and sells. I also doubt that her vet examined this puppy. The vet has a conflict of interest. Of course he is paid a fee for his services, and he values that extra income. So he passes nearly every pup. You should file a complaint with the Illinois State Board of Veterinary Medicine (search online) in that he has violated state veterinary code. Two vets in NJ had their licenses suspended for just this thing. It may be good to also file a complaint in Virginia with their veterinary board. You might also file consumer complaints with both states' attorneys general offices (also most are online). Too bad you can't also turn her into the IRS, because I have little doubt that she is claiming all her income.

The open fontanel generally closes shortly after birth on any animal. This is a major defect in your dog. Also, seizures are an indication of inherited epilepsy. There is no test for epilepsy, as it is generally diagnosed through the history of seizure events.

In any event, hang onto Cassidy. She needs your love and compassion. It's not her fault, and I'm afraid her mother will never see a gentle hand.

Sincerely,

Don Allen, DVM

A Google or Yahoo search of “puppies for sale” produces numerous puppy merchant websites. Please refer to the CAPS website for a current list of online puppy sellers.

The Companion Animal Protection Society (CAPS) is the only national organization dedicated exclusively to protecting companion animals. CAPS' foremost concern is the abuse and suffering of pet shop and puppy mill dogs.