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Animal Welfare Association Raises Awareness of Inhumane Breeding Practices at Puppy Mills

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Voorhees, NJ – In recognition of Puppy Mill Awareness Day on September 18, Animal Welfare Association (AWA) condemns the purchase of animals from puppy mills – large-scale, commercial dog breeding facilities that operate solely for profit – both directly and indirectly.

“Puppy mill breeders are skilled at hiding their poor breeding practices,” says AWA Executive Director Maya Richmond. “That’s why it is so important to know how to distinguish between a puppy mill and a reputable source for adoption.”

In an effort to decrease operating costs, puppy mills do not properly care for their animals. Puppies born in these facilities are subject to inhumane conditions like small wire cages, poor sanitation practices, overbreeding and early separation from their mothers. The poor conditions at puppy mills often result in parasites, kennel cough, pneumonia and behavioral problems like fear and anxiety. Prioritizing breeding numbers over genetic quality, puppy mill dogs are also more prone to health conditions like epilepsy, cataracts, heart disease and respiratory disorders.

Learning to identify a puppy mill helps to avoid unknowingly supporting their inhumane breeding practices. Red flags that strongly indicate an active puppy mill include:

- Refusal to allow you to visit their facility or meet the litter’s parents.
- Offering multiple types of purebred dogs or highly coveted breeds.
- Ability to buy online and have the dog shipped to you before meeting.
- Inability to provide veterinary records or references.
- Insufficient knowledge of the breeds they are selling, such as expected lifespan, common genetic issues, personality traits or average height and weight.
- Disinterest in your home life and plans to care for the dog.
- Lack of commitment to take a puppy back in unforeseen circumstances.

Do not purchase an animal from any breeder that exhibits one or more of the red flags above. Shelters and rescue groups are the best options to ensure that adopting a pet does not support the inhumane practices of the puppy mill industry.

If you encounter a suspected puppy mill, contact your local humane society, animal control office and police department.

For more information on how to adopt from a reputable source, visit <https://www.awanj.org/>.

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Animal Welfare Association, a private, non-profit, 501(c)3 animal welfare organization, serves the people and animals of southern New Jersey. AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the wellbeing of people. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education. AWA is South Jersey’s leader in progressive companion animal care.

