

# Just say “ NO “ to puppy and kitten mills!

by Donna of [Your Pet Pals](#)

( Options and pitfalls on bringing a pet into your family )

The use of words and terms is a funny thing when you think about it. Words and terms conjure up images in our mind that make us feel instantly comfortable or uncomfortable, happy or sad. If I say “ my dog is protective “ some of you will, in your minds eye, see a German Shepherd that stays close to it’s guardian, others will envision a snarling, charging pit bull ! Much of our communication is tainted with the same brush. My perception of something is likely to be different in some way to yours.

What does this have to do with pets you are probably asking ? Well .....lots !

Let’s say that you have decided to add a pet to your family. It is an exciting time. You have decided to get a new puppy or kitten ( or both ! ). In your mind’s eye you envision this cute little, sweet animal, clean, healthy, sleeping in a basket with his brothers and sisters, playing in a nice safe garden or house, watched over by his mother and his diligent caring breeders. For some, that “ Leave it to Beaver “ image is true. For others, it’s not quite that way but it is still fine; they may be kenneled, contained, but their environment is still clean and safe and they are still fed well, handled and cared for. These are our more reputable breeders; People who take up the hobby of breeding for the love of the breed or the species.

Then there is the more sordid reality of the business of breeding pets.

Before we go on, let’s go back to the beginning. When I say “ I got my pet from a local breeder “ or, “ I got my pet from a local pet store that got him from a great local breeder “ what does your minds eye conjure up for you ? .....the basket of kittens, the playful puppies in the garden ? .....or something else....

Here is the truth. An overwhelming majority of puppies and kittens found in pet stores come from puppy mills and kitten mills. I know.....that is not what they say. They will tell you that they obtain them from “ local breeders “. This is the clever new spin on their sordid secret. It makes everything sound so.....local and trustworthy. However, puppy and kitten "mills" and "backyard breeders" are in all communities....even yours and mine !

A " mill " by definition is an operation of any size that keeps animals , often in a sub-standard environment, often absent of vet care, good nutrition, love and attention and uses them to produce multiple litters in the interest of personal financial gain. They may be your neighbor, a member of your family, the " home raised " breeder. They are backyard breeders; they are " mills ". They do not care about breed standard, temperament or health. Genetic defects?.....not their problem, as they often take time to show up. They may sell to you directly bringing the animal to you or, they may sell though a broker; a middle man.....a pet store.

Everyday, many well meaning, kind but impulsive people are scammed by these parasites. They end up with sick animals, heartache and vet bills. They pay extortionate amounts of money for these pets. Padding the bank accounts of the "mills, breeders and brokers ".

Pet stores can buy "purebred" puppies for as little as \$75.00 delivered to their doorstep. They can re-sell those puppies for \$500, \$600.....\$1000 or more ? Kittens...even purebred, cost only a few dollars to obtain.

Tragically, many " breeders ", like the puppy and kitten mills, operate their kennels and catteries under deplorable conditions. It is important to remember that for many the breeding of pet’s has become a profit - making activity where the bottom line – rather than the quality ( health and temperament ) of the animal is sadly, the motivating factor.

The goal of many of these " breeders" is not to improve the breed, but to make money. It becomes a business and is not a hobby, a passion. They practice indiscriminate breeding of a variety of different breeds, without proper understanding of the science of genetics, and many of their litters are inbred. They do not screen for hereditary problems nor do they have the necessary pre-breeding health tests performed. They respond to market demand.

If you are contemplating adding a pet to your family choose your source very carefully. If you are looking for a breeder of a certain breed, contact the CKC or AKC and get a list. Then ask questions. Ask the breeder for contact with 3 or 4 people who have obtained puppies or kittens from them. Speak to those people. Find out their experience. Ask people at work, your veterinarian. Check with the Better Business Bureau or equivalent for complaints. **DO YOUR HOMEWORK.**

Consider a mixed breed from rescue. They are equally as loving as purebred pets. Contact your local pound and rescue organizations. You would be surprised how often a Labrador, a pug, a Siamese cat find themselves discarded to rescue.

Some reputable pet stores help well known rescue organizations re-home animals by fostering the organizations pets. This gives the pet a chance to meet many people. Love at first sight happens in many places....even pet stores. Just to be clear on this, the stores involved in these arrangements do not profit from the adoption fee. 100% of the adoption fee goes to the rescue organization to support their tireless efforts in animal rescue and care. The adoption fee often includes spaying/neutering and vaccines plus any veterinary care the animal required as it came into the rescue organization. When you consider the cost of these necessary procedures, you will see that your adoption fee is not a profitable fee to the organization. Be generous with your fee even beyond the requested amount. In donating a little more you will be paying forward your good will to save the life of another animal in need. You would not believe the work these fine people do and the struggle's they face financially....all in the interest of these saving these sweet little souls.

Remember, the only way to stop puppy and kitten mills, backyard breeders and brokers is to turn your back on their business. Turn your back for the sake of the pets. Tell your friends, your family, a stranger. Together we can make a difference to the un-necessary suffering of pets simply by not doing something....by not buying from these parasitic people and organizations.