

FLORIDA'S PUPPY MILL PIPELINE: TRACING THE SOURCE OF PET STORE PUPPIES



INTRODUCTION

A pipeline of out-of-state commercial dog breeders and middlemen moves truckloads of puppies to be sold in Florida’s pet stores.

Commercial breeders (a.k.a. puppy mills) profit by producing large numbers of puppies as quickly and cheaply as possible. Federal law allows dogs to live in cramped, filthy cages where diseases spread easily. Dogs receive minimal veterinary care and are forced to breed nonstop—even if they are sick, weak or have serious hereditary issues that could be passed on to their offspring.

The conditions in which these dogs are kept would be unacceptable to almost anyone. Typically, these facilities do not open their doors to consumers. Instead, they frequently ship their weeks-old puppies to pet stores or employ a network of brokers, or “middlemen”, to traffic puppies to pet stores in faraway states, where they are marketed as “responsibly bred” puppies from trusted breeders. The harsh transport conditions endured by these very young puppies can also invite the spread of disease, resulting in sick and dead puppies. This cruel system obscures transparency and traceability resulting in compromised puppies being sold to unsuspecting consumers throughout Florida.

Federal law requires certain businesses that use animals—like zoos, research institutions and commercial pet breeders and brokers—to meet minimal animal care standards found in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is tasked with licensing and inspecting these facilities but this system is ineffective. Federal standards are notoriously low and enforcement nonexistent.

In 2020, the Florida Attorney General filed a complaint against a pet store, Petland Orlando East/Waterford Lakes, for allegedly selling sick and dying puppies.

In response to this system of cruelty, Florida localities have enacted laws to keep cruelly bred puppies out of their pet stores.

METHODOLOGY

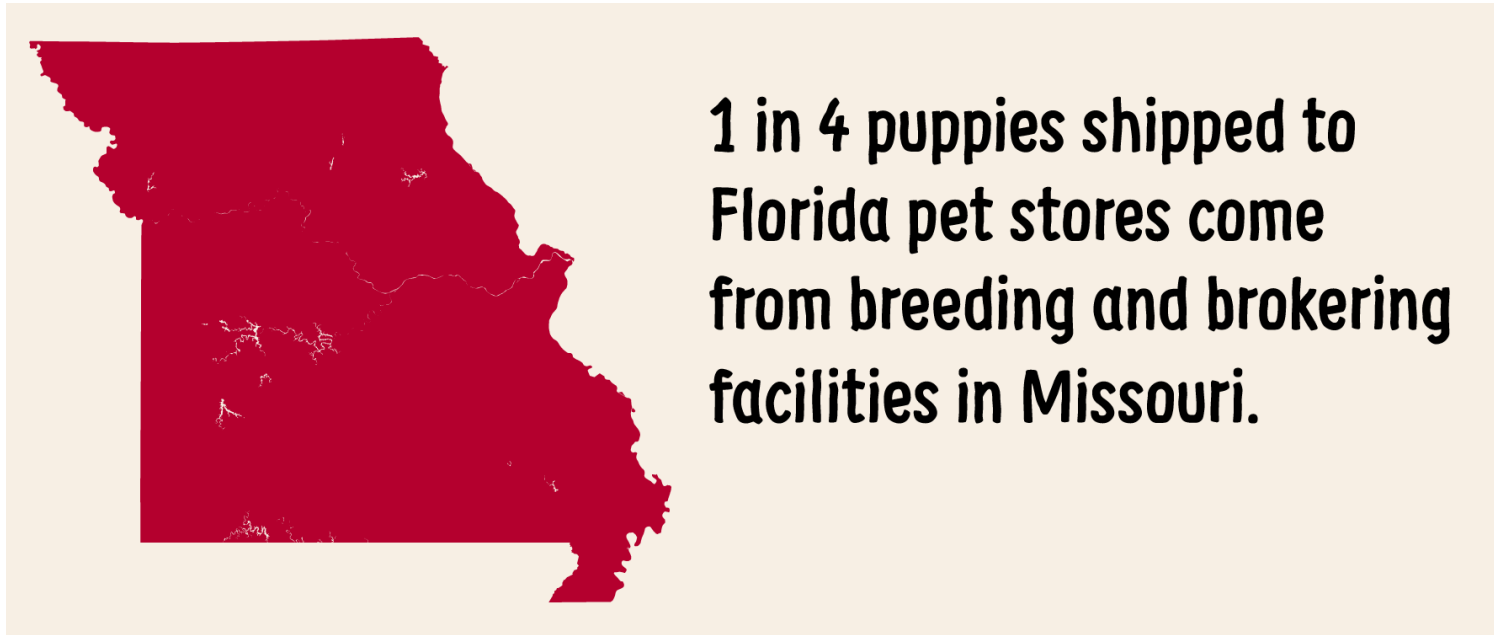
Through monthly public records requests via the Florida Sunshine Law to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/Public Records Division (FDACS), the ASPCA received over 5,000 puppy import records (i.e. Certificates of Veterinary Inspection, or CVIs) for the period of August 2019 through December 2020. According to Florida law, an Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection is required to be filed for all dogs imported into the state intended for sale. The CVI document includes information such as the age, sex, breed, color, and health record of the dog, the names and addresses of the consignor or seller, and the consignee or purchaser.

The ASPCA analyzed these 5,000+ import CVIs provided by FDACS, which details imports of over 12,000 puppies over the aforementioned period.¹

¹ The ASPCA's analysis is limited to only the documents supplied by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Records in response to the public record requests made in the time period. Further noting that the Division does not retain records for the intrastate transfer of puppies, meaning from an in-state source to another in-state entity, so those puppy transfers are not included in this data.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Over 80% of the puppies imported into Florida came from only 5 states: Missouri, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, and Kansas.** These midwestern states have the highest concentration of commercial dog breeding facilities in the U.S.²



- **More than 53% (6,500) of all puppies shipped into Florida were from commercial puppy brokers, who function as “middlemen” in the puppy mill pipeline.** When looking at the top 25 suppliers, 86% of pet stores imported puppies from brokers and they were 4 times as likely to be sourced from a broker than a breeder.
- **Blue Ribbon Puppies in Indiana is the single largest supplier to Florida pet stores.** The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) linked Blue Ribbon Puppies as one of the puppy brokers in a multi-state, multi-drug resistant *Campylobacter* disease outbreak caused by contact with puppies sold at pet stores. According to the CDC’s investigation, Florida had the second highest number of *Campylobacter* infections nationally.³ Blue Ribbon Puppies was a major supplier of Petland stores in Florida, and shipped to locations in Largo, Plantation, Pembroke Pines, Davie, Naples, Kendall, Fort Walton, Orlando, and Pensacola. Blue Ribbon Puppies also shipped puppies to Palm Beach Puppies, Puppy Avenue, Puppies Secret, and Nussy’s Puppies of Kendall.

FORT MYERS

Dozens of puppies heading to local Petland found in filthy conditions

Lee County Domestic Animal Services seized 24 puppies from a Petland store on College Parkway right as they were dropped off last week.

WINK Digital Media, February 23, 2018

² <https://aphis-efile.force.com/PublicSearchTool/s/>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/campylobacter/outbreaks/puppies-9-17/map.html>

● **Two major suppliers to Florida are also commercial brokers: J.A.K.'s Puppies in Iowa and Sobrad LLC d/b/a Pinnacle Pet in Missouri.** In 2019, J.A.K.'s Puppies, along with another Iowa-based business, was sued by the Iowa Attorney General for illegally transferring hundreds of designer puppies through sham Iowa non-profit "rescues" to out-of-state pet shops. The lawsuit accused J.A.K.'s Puppies of misleading consumers about the true source of the puppies and for abusing their Iowa non-profit status to circumvent state and local laws banning the sale of "puppy mill" dogs. In 2020, Iowa dissolved J.A.K.'s Puppies' phony rescue, Hobo K-9 and imposed a \$60,000 penalty against them.⁴ However, at the time of this publication, J.A.K.'s Puppies remains federally licensed to broker puppies. J.A.K.'s Puppies supplied to Bff Puppies, Breeders Pick, Chews A Puppy, Diamond & Doggies, Forever Love Puppies, Furbabies at the Mall, Glamorous Puppies, Love My Puppy, Nussy's Puppies of Kendall, Pet Kingdom, Petland Bradenton, Petland Orlando East, Petland South Orlando, Puppies and Rescues, Puppies Galore & More, Puppies To Go, Puppy Avenue, Puppies Secret, and Vanity Pups.

J.A.K.'s Puppies supplies puppies to over a quarter of Florida's puppy-selling pet stores.

Florida attorney general says Petland store sold sick puppies as 'high quality, healthy'

Miami Herald, May 20, 2020

A SAMPLING OF COMMERCIAL BREEDERS SUPPLYING FLORIDA PET STORES

Joyce Cairns (Kansas)

Joyce Cairns's facility had 140 dogs during the last inspection, and has a history of USDA violations, including dogs with dental disease, heavily matted and dirty coats, dogs living in jagged metal enclosures, screws protruding at dogs' eye level, food buckets without lids which could lead to contaminated food, floors wet and soiled with feces (resulting in "soiled dog coats"), a dog with hair loss and exposed skin that was "thick and scaly," a dog with green eye discharge, and a dog who was very thin with the spine "visually protruding." Pictured below are photos of dogs in this facility at a USDA inspection in 2020. Cairns supplied puppies to Puppies Secret, Puppies To Go, Palm Beach Puppies, Gorgeous Puppies and Kittens, Puppies World of Miami, Imperial Puppies, Beautiful Puppies & Boutique, and Nussy's Puppies of Kendall.



⁴ <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/puppy-mill-laundering-ring-rescue-settlement-california-chicago>

Lorilee Thomas/Puppies Extraordinaire (Kansas)

Lorilee Thomas' Puppies Extraordinaire operation had over 1,000 dogs at the most recent federal inspection and a history of USDA violations, including dogs with hair loss, puppies' feet passing through the floor of the enclosure, dogs with matting and eye injuries, wires poking into kennels, dogs with excessively long toenails, and evidence of mice in the facility. Thomas supplied puppies to All About Puppies Largo, All About Puppies Tampa, Breeder's Pick, Gorgeous Puppies and Kittens, Imperial Puppies, Lil Rascals Puppies, Petland Fort Walton, Petland Pensacola, Puppies To Go, and The Puppy Store.

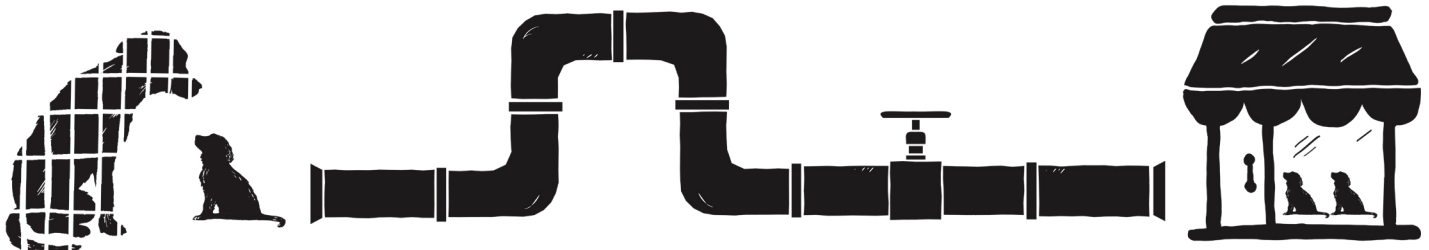
Justin and LaNae Jackson (Kansas)

Justin and LaNae Jackson's commercial operation had almost 600 dogs at their facility at the most recent federal inspection. The USDA has cited many violations, including both underweight and sick dogs, rusty kennels and broken floors, limited shade and shelter in housing, grime and rust in the feeders, a dog with an open ear wound, a dog with a swollen mass in between its toes, and expired medication. Pictured below are dogs at this facility at a USDA inspection. This breeding operation supplied puppies to Sunshine Puppies, Puppies To Go, Nessy's Puppies of Kendall, Breeder's Pick, Puppies Secret, Chews A Puppy, Beautiful Puppies & Boutique, Epic Puppies, Palm Beach Puppies, Glamorous Puppies, Puppies World of Miami, Gorgeous Puppies and Kittens, Quality Doggies, Imperial Puppies, and Lil Rascals Puppies.



CONCLUSION

Insufficient laws, coupled with the USDA's neglectful enforcement of its bare-bones welfare regulations, have proven to enable massive animal suffering. The cruel puppy mill pipeline is bringing puppies into Florida at an alarming rate, where they are sold to an unsuspecting public. By ending the sale of dogs in stores, we can shut down the puppy mill pipeline into Florida.



Pet Stores Contained in Import Records

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) provided over 5,000 puppy import records for the period of August 2019 through December 2020 which included information for the following list of pet stores.

All About Puppies	Tampa
All About Puppies	Largo
Barb's Pet World	Trenton
Beautiful Puppies & Boutique	Coral Springs
Bff Puppies	Orange Park
Bill's Birds	Davie
Breeder's Pick Orlando Inc.	Orlando
Chews A Puppy	Ocoee
Diamond & Doggies	Lauderdale-by-the-Sea
Epic Puppies	Miami
Forever Love Puppies	Pembroke Pines
Furbabies at the Mall/Happy Tails	Lake Wales
Glamorous Puppies	Miami
Gorgeous Puppies and Kittens	Miami
Heavenly Puppies	Boca Raton
Honey Pets	Davie
Imperial Puppies	Miami
Just Puppies	Orlando
Lil Rascals	Fort Myers
Love My Puppy	Boca Raton
Nessy's Puppies of Kendall	Miami
Palm Beach Puppies	Boca Raton
Pet Kingdom	Fort Myers
Petland Bradenton	Bradenton
Petland Davie	Davie
Petland Fort Myers	Fort Myers
Petland Naples	Naples
Petland Largo	Largo
Petland Orlando East	Orlando
Petland Orlando South	Orlando
Petland Pembroke Pines	Pembroke Pines
Petland Pensacola	Pensacola

Pet Stores Contained in Import Records

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) provided over 5,000 puppy import records for the period of August 2019 through December 2020 which included information for the following list of pet stores.

Petland Plantation	Plantation
Petland Sarasota	Sarasota
Petland Kendall	Miami
Petland Fort Walton	Fort Walton
Petland Jacksonville	Jacksonville
Puppies & Rescues	Pembroke Pines
Puppies Galore & More	Jacksonville
Puppies Plus	Parkland
Puppies Plus	Melbourne
Puppies Secret	Miami
Puppies Tampa	Tampa
Puppies To Go	Miami
Puppies World of Miami	Doral
Puppy Avenue	Jacksonville
Puppy Place USA	Miami
Quality Doggie's Inc.	Miami
Star Pups	West Palm Beach
Sunshine Puppies	Largo
Teacup, Puppies, and Boutique	Davie
The Puppy Store	Doral
Tiny Paws Teacup & Toy Puppy	Miami
Vanity Pups	Fleming Island
Waggs to Riches	Boca Raton
Wet Kisses Pet Company	Lake Worth