

February 8, 2009

EXHIBIT 27DATE 2-21-13WB 439**To Whom This May Concern:**

It has been brought to my attention that there is a bill before the State Legislature that, if passed, can help to improve the condition of the so-called "puppy mills" in Montana and the care for the animals in them. Having personal knowledge of one such place here in Montana, I sincerely hope you will do something to change the current situation.

The "puppy mill" I speak of holds approximately 400 to 500 breeding dogs, plus puppies, and markets at least 20 different breeds of dogs. Dogs are kept in 30"x30" cages. (Realize that is about the size of your arm, squared.) Two to five adult dogs typically are kept in one cage, or one female with her entire litter regardless of how many pups she has. Large breed dogs, such as Bernise Mountain Dogs, King Charles Calivers and Kerry Blue Terriers are held in these cages, as well. Compare this to your own dog, if you have one.

The breeding dogs live in these cages their entire lives. They are not held, walked, and only in rare occasions are they moved out of their cage. I have witnessed when they are moved. They cannot walk because their feet are so tender from the length of time they stand on the wire-bottomed cages. Due to lack of exercise, they are stiff. Imagine how you would feel trying to walk after being restrained like this for months.

Food is also limited. Two to five dogs are fed with only one feeder per cage, at a rate of 1/2 cup food per dog. Only the strongest dogs eat regularly. The smaller dogs are obviously weak.

For business purposes, these dogs are forced to exist at the fine line between mere existence and death. A female is put in to breed starting at only six months old, and as soon as her litter is weaned she is taken off of food for three days to dry up her milk and then put right back in with another male. The dogs obviously live in a state of constant stress. I am aware of males killing females when they come into heat by chewing their heads off. Females regularly eat their puppies, or chew their legs off. Dead dogs are common. Some die due to these conditions; others are shot because they have not been sold and are unwanted. Regularly, dead dogs are lying outside or are put in food sacks.

The lucky dogs get to leave. Many "puppy mill" owners in Montana buy and sell dogs at dog auctions out-of-state -- one is the Southwest Dog Auction in Wheaton, Missouri. The business strategy is simple. Puppies are produced in Montana, where the "puppy mill" business is regulated less than in other states. Then, puppies are sold somewhere else in the national markets. Montana receives little to no economic gain. The "puppy mill" I speak of transports anywhere from 60 to 125 dogs out-of-state in one

trip, in the back of a camper trailer that holds 40 small dog carriers -- 2 to 3 dogs per carrier -- and travels 3 to 4 days away from here to sell the dogs. What good does this do our state, let alone our reputation?

I sincerely hope you will give serious consider to the bill before you and approve regulations that improve the conditions of "puppy mills" in Montana.

Signed,

*Diane Kratz*