

# What is a puppy mill?

A puppy mill is a “factory farm” for dogs. Even though more and more Americans are taking a stand against them, the U.S. still has about 10,000 puppy mills.

Many people don't realize that when they buy a dog from a pet store or the internet, that dog most likely came from a puppy mill. In puppy mills, dogs live in small cages, often in the minimum legal size allowed (only six inches larger than the dog on all sides) and female dogs are bred as frequently as possible.

Life in a puppy mill is no life for our best friends. Together, we can take a stand against puppy mills and make them a thing of the past.



## Why puppy mills still exist

Puppy mills have been inhumanely breeding and selling dogs for decades. Although the federal government regulates most breeders who sell puppies online and to pet stores, the minimal standards imposed on breeders don't promote responsible breeding or ensure healthy puppies. For example, it's legal for licensed breeders to own 1,000 or more dogs, keep them in very small cages for their entire lives and breed them as often as possible.

The standards set by the government aren't meant to ensure that the dogs have the good lives they deserve. They only require that they receive the bare minimum of care. Plus, there are only a few inspectors in each state for hundreds (sometimes thousands) of licensed breeding facilities.



## Where are puppy mill dogs sold?

**Pet stores:** Nearly all pet stores that sell puppies are supplied by mills. More and more communities are banning the sale of mill-bred pets in stores, but many Americans are still unaware of the connection between pet stores and puppy mills.

**Websites:** Just like pet stores, most websites that sell dogs are selling mill-bred pets, and most of these sites market the puppies as well-bred and lovingly raised. No matter how convincing a website is, though, never buy a pet online.

**Classified ads:** For decades, classified ads have been the first place that puppy buyers go to look for a new pet. Irresponsible breeders can easily tap into this market by placing classified ads on websites like Craigslist. Please beware of any ads that list several breeds for sale. And if the breeder won't let you see where the dogs and puppies live, please don't buy the puppy.

## Best Friends puppy mill initiatives

Through Best Friends puppy mill initiatives, we are working to convince pet stores to offer pets for adoption (instead of selling mill-bred pets), educate consumers about puppy mills and create and lobby for humane legislation.

Together, we're making an impact and saving lives. Join us and help bring about a time when every dog can feel safe, happy and loved.



**You can save lives today.  
Join Best Friends Animal Society  
in putting a stop to puppy mills.**

## How to fight puppy mills

One of the easiest ways you can help Save Them All is by choosing to **adopt** instead of purchasing a pet.

When you adopt, you're not only refusing to support puppy mills, you're saving a life and giving an animal in need a deserved second chance. If you're looking for a particular breed of dog, no worries. Shelters and rescue groups have dogs of all breeds, ages, colors and sizes.

Here are a few other ways you can fight puppy mills:

- **Spread the word** by telling your friends, family and other people about puppy mills, and encourage them to adopt their next furry friend.
- **Donate** to Best Friends Animal Society at [bestfriends.org](https://bestfriends.org).
- Learn more about the puppy mill problem and get the tools and resources you need to help fight puppy mills.

[bestfriends.org/pupymills](https://bestfriends.org/pupymills)

**Together, we can Save Them All.**



## About Best Friends Animal Society

Best Friends is a leading national animal welfare organization dedicated to ending the killing of dogs and cats in America's shelters. In addition to running lifesaving programs in partnership with more than 2,100 animal welfare groups across the country, Best Friends has regional centers in New York City, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Salt Lake City, and operates the nation's largest no-kill sanctuary for companion animals. Founded in 1984, Best Friends is a pioneer in the no-kill movement and has helped reduce the number of animals killed in shelters nationwide from 17 million per year to about 1.5 million. That means there are still more than 4,100 dogs and cats killed every day in shelters, just because they don't have safe places to call home. We are determined to get that number to zero by the year 2025. Working collaboratively with shelters, rescue groups, other organizations and you, we will end the killing and Save Them All.