

2559

RECEIVED

2007 FEB -6 PM 2: 43

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

Carrol A. Hoover  
1059 Bull Valley Rd.  
Aspers, PA 17304  
January 29, 2007

Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement  
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture  
2301 North Cameron Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

Attention: Ms. Mary Bender

Dear Ms. Bender,

I am writing in response to the full page ad in the Sunday Patriot News of January 28, 2007.

My overall message would be to put more thought and research before changing laws. I do agree that some private at-home breeding of pets will be negatively affected by the changes. I will give you 3 brief scenarios of my own personal experiences:

- 1) I purchased an Old English Sheepdog from a family in York, PA. The pups, as well as the mother, were kept in the house and well-socialized with the couples' children. Our purchased puppy turned out to be the easiest to train and actually the best dog I have ever had. You may say it was luck or breeding, which certainly plays a part, but as you will read later and from my own experience studying dog psychology, the human socialization as well as keeping the puppies together with the mother plays a very important part. This dog lived 11 wonderful years.
- 2) Two years ago I saw an ad in the paper for a York breeder who had very reasonably priced Old English puppies. It turned out to be an Amish farm that raised Shetland Sheepdogs and Old English sheepdogs. The puppies were in a tiny fenced in area in the barn (winter time) without their mother. The mother was running free with the father (farm dogs). All of this was a bit disconcerting, but certainly not abusive. I heard a lot of barking down from the barn and walked down to see a huge fenced-in enclosure with a large number of female Old English dogs, shaved in the middle of winter. In the center of the compound was a dead calf and dead chicken. The Shetland Sheepdogs were in wire cages and many were coughing violently. The man who showed me the pups was no where to be seen. I got in the car and immediately called the Old English Rescue and the York County S.P.C.A. After investigation, they said that when they arrived there were no dead

carcasses in the compound and also said that the farm was a licensed kennel which was inspected once a year and had always passed inspection. Now, how can anyone guarantee that those animals are well cared for if they know in advance when an inspector is coming? I was appalled, as was the Old English Rescue, but nothing could be done. There was no evidence.


- 3) After recovering from this incident I answered an ad from a breeder in Chambersburg. Now, his kennels were spotless and they seemed to really love the breed. After purchasing a 7 wk. old pup (he assured me the vet said he was ready to be sold because of his weight) I assumed my dog owner role in training, etc. which had always been successful in the past (2 St. Bernards and 2 Old English). My new puppy quickly showed signs of neurotic behaviors. After much research I realized that this breeder really has quite the business going (nothing wrong with making money – it is a business after all). The puppies were in a heated building, but really were not held or socialized with humans. The fact that he was taken away from his litter members and mother at such an early age certainly was a factor in his behavior problems. I ended up donating him to an Old English Rescue group and know he had a good placement with someone who could afford to invest in serious behavioral training. Oh, yes, this breeder suggested I use a plastic baseball bat to get him in line, as he did with his as he was training them!

The bottom line is that saying “no grass allowed” is such an insignificant part of the whole process, but truly would segregate the at-home breeder, who may be doing the best job of all.

I really would like more money and emphasis targeted against the “puppy mills” and mass breeders such as the Amish kennel.

Thank you so much for listening to my thoughts and views.

Sincerely,



Carrol A. Hoover