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January 17, 2007

Ms. Mary Bender
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

Re: Doc. No. 06-2452
Unintended Consequences

Dear Ms. Bender:

It is our understanding that certain amendments to the Pennsylvania dog law and regulations have been proposed. Actions to protect the health of animals and the interest of consumers in our Commonwealth are commendable.

We fear that the proposed changes applying to "Kennels - Primary Enclosures" may be worded in a way that will have unintended and undesirable consequences for consumers such as ourselves, however. We would appreciate your review of the language and taking steps to avoid those consequences. A language carve out to provide for those specialty breeders who exhibit the care, love and knowledge to raise exemplary dogs is appropriate whether or not they house more than 26 dogs in a calendar year.

Briefly, we lost a beloved English Springer Spaniel to old age last August. Our pets become family members for their lives so we wanted to find a new addition who would fit our needs. Using the Internet, we went to the Westminster site, picked a breed (Shetland Sheepdog), found a link to the American Shetland Sheepdog Association and there found a recommended breeder network. We called the state breed coordinators for MD, NJ, OH and PA. Within a matter of days, we found "MacDuff." He has been with us since September 2nd and has fulfilled our every expectation. Good breeding, good breeder, great dog. Please take a look at <http://www.acadiashelties.com>.

We did not and would not consider purchasing a dog from a pet store or commercial breeder. We believe the pitfalls of the pure commercial motive risk unhealthy, antisocial, ill bred dogs. MacDuff came from a sheep farm near State College. We drove 3½ hours each way on a rainy Saturday to get him. We had telephone exchanges, emailed photos of MacDuff and his lineage, etc prior to making our decision.

Using this breeder as an example, she probably does have more than 26 dogs housed at their farm in a calendar year. She probably falls into the class 1 designation despite being a small specialized breeder. However, the dogs live in the farm house, are crate trained, are extremely well socialized, have received extensive obedience training in a specially built training barn with jumps, balance beams, obstacle courses, etc. We saw 8 dogs, with tails wagging and great socialization skills when we drove out to pick up MacDuff. This breeder

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regularly shows her dogs in national competition and takes great pride in her relationships with the dogs. None of them lack for love and attention.

In short, please draft exclusionary language or create an exclusionary process in your proposed regulations so that consumers like us will have the opportunity to find well adjusted, healthy pets when we lose our "old guys" to old age.

Thank You.

Sincerely,


George G. Loveless


Shirley M. Loveless