

## Breeding – Murder by Reproduction

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Breeding kills homeless animals by robbing them of homes. I call this phenomenon “Murder by Reproduction.” According to the Humane Society of the United States<sup>1</sup>, every year 3 to 4 million dogs and cats are killed<sup>2</sup> in animal shelters. **Twenty five percent (25%) of the dogs in shelters are purebred.**

While some of the animals killed in shelters are killed due to aggression, illness or some other reason, the vast majority are killed because there are no homes for them. That is an ugly statistic for a country that prides itself on its civility and humaneness. And it does not even begin to address the number of unwanted animals that are inhumanely killed outside of shelters. Instead of adding more animals to the equation, and reducing the available adoptive homes, we should be working to reduce the number of animals and create more homes for homeless animals.

Realistically speaking, there is no such thing as a “*responsible* breeder.” If a person is *responsible*, they are *not* breeding – pure and simple. Every animal they bring into this world and sell or give away or even keep, kills a homeless animal that otherwise could have had that home. If a person is *responsible* they are not breeding animals – they are working to house the homeless.

Some people argue that it is acceptable for them to breed because they are only breeding “purebreds.” That does not make it right. Purebreds have no more right to live than “mix-breeds.” To think otherwise is to take an elitist view that discriminates against mix-breeds. As with humans, all animals should be equal and have the same right to live as other animals, regardless of whether or not their bloodlines are traceable – that should not matter.

Anyone who still believes that breeding of any kind is an acceptable practice should go to their local animal shelter and personally witness the killing of innocent, homeless animals. They need to witness the ultimate cruelty – undeserved death for lack of a home.

People who breed do not want to acknowledge this dreadful reality but it is there and the sooner our society recognizes it, the sooner breeding will become unacceptable, and fewer animals will die for lack of a home.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics are from The National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy.

<sup>2</sup> The author uses the term “killed” because that is what it is and she believes the term “euthanasia” is too gentle for the reality. While society expects that the killings are done humanely that is not always true but that is a subject that warrants its own paper.

If someone really has their heart set on adopting a “purebred” there is no need to go to a breeder or breed one’s own animal. There are “purebred” rescue groups for virtually all breeds and they can be easily located on the internet. Also, as stated at the outset, **25% of the dogs in shelters are “purebreds”** so a person may find the designer-dog (or cat) or other animal) they are looking for at their local shelter.

I know that some kennel clubs encourage their members to adopt a homeless animal and I consider that the height of hypocrisy. It reminds me of the tobacco/cigarette companies who, on the one hand, manufacture a highly addictive and deadly product, and on the other hand portray themselves in their advertising campaigns as caring about the people who contract the diseases the companies knowingly cause.

On the one hand, kennel clubs encourage their members to displace homeless animals by making their animals reproduce, and on the other hand, as part of their public relations, they encourage their members to adopt an animal. That is good public relations, but that is all that it is. By encouraging reproduction the kennel clubs are encouraging their members to contribute to the animal overpopulation. They then invoke the warm-fuzzy idea of adopting a homeless animal, which of course is a great idea. The problem though is the first part of the equation – the continued escalation of the animal populations. If reproducing animals had only one offspring and their owners adopted one animal, the problem of overpopulation remains unchanged and millions of homeless animals will continue to die every year. That alone is tragic but then add to that the fact that most animals have more than one offspring at a time (e.g. litter). That means that the kennel club members who do adopt one animal are still escalating the overpopulation. Even if the club members adopted the same number of homeless animals as they make their animals reproduce, they would still be maintaining the overpopulation.

When Helen Keller learned that approximately **30% of blindness was caused by a disease newborns contract from mothers infected with venereal disease, and which could be easily prevented with the simple administration of nitrate of silver in a newborn's eyes**, she investigated further and found out the reason that the problem was being allowed to continue was "prudery." People were willing to allow the blindness of infants to continue because they could not bring themselves to discuss the issue of venereal disease. As her biographer, Joseph P. Lash put it "Prudery, ignorance, negligence alone stood in the way of the use of this simple preventive measure."<sup>3</sup> Helen Keller was outraged and immediately took up the cause. In making a keynote address at a conference regarding blindness she stated:

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<sup>3</sup> Helen and Teacher, Radcliffe Biography Series, 1980, p. 364 and 365.

"The facts are not agreeable reading, often they are revolting. But it is better that our sensibilities should be shocked than that we should be ignorant of facts upon which rest sight, hearing, intelligence, morals and the life of the children of men."

The same is no less true of the plight of homeless animals. As Ms. Keller said "The facts are not agreeable reading, often revolting." As stated at the outset of this paper the HSUS estimates that that **25% of dogs in shelters are "purebreds."** **That means that breeders are a large part of the overpopulation problem. If breeders ceased reproduction of their animals, hundreds of thousands of animals would be spared untimely and unnecessary deaths every year**

No matter how you look at it, breeding kills homeless animals. Until breeding/reproduction stops, the killing of innocent, homeless animals will continue unabated. It behooves us as an enlightened and compassionate society to admit what we are doing is wrong, and stop it – in the name of kindness.