

Commercial vs Show breeding

Breeder's Attitudes on Pet Breeding

I'm seeing more and more of an attitude that the only breeder with a valid reason to breed, or the right to breed are show breeders. Personally I believe very strongly that this sort of thinking will lead to bigger problems for all rabbit breeders. It comes down to divide and conquer, which one can see the results in the dog world where the AKC supporting a Federal bill (PAWS) that would have had far reaching consequences for all animal breeders pursuing it as a hobby (because it would effectively eliminate hobby breeding).

Personally I believe that more than just show breeders have a right to breed, and I hope I can convince everyone, or at least reconsider your position if you don't. Why? Because I strongly believe that dividing breeders and turning some against others based on breeding goals plays right into the hands of Animal Rights Activists. I believe you don't have to support certain breeding endeavors but you should support the right for anyone and everyone to breed animals, lest that right be taken away from you!

In the dog world it appears that many hobby breeders put more energy into stopping anyone from making a buck raising dogs than into improving their own breeding program. It seems many of these people are really just pet owners who breed once in a great while vs people who breed frequently with a goal to improve the breed or do well in competition.

The problem becomes anyone breeding more than "me" is a "mill" and must be stopped. Then they support legislation that is promoted to do just that however what it really does is chip away at hobby show breeding. You know, a breeder licensing bill that sets a licensing threshold at say 25 is okay because most aren't breeding and selling that many. It gets on the books and next thing you know a new bill comes along lowering that threshold. Either support or inaction is given to other bills that supposedly stop "mills" but in reality the only ones hurt are hobby breeders.

2009, NYS, 2 bills were introduced that would set the licensing threshold for a "pet dealer" at 10 for breeders. So if you are a hobby dog or cat breeder and sell 10 or more animals per year you would be classified as a commercial pet dealer. The current threshold is 25 or more for breeders. Great example of how once a limit is passed it gets lowered.

Starting in late 2008 and continuing into 2009 the H\$U\$ has been introducing bills all over the nation limiting how many dogs a commercial breeder can either own or sell. In many cases that number is negatively impacting hobby breeders as well. Beyond that I have to ask, why do we think it's okay to limit commercial breeders, and many cases that limit is no more than 20-25 dogs, a limit so low the commercial breeder will not even be able to cover their expenses.

What happened in 2008 with the oil companies? How come there weren't any laws that limited how much money they could make? And I strongly believe the out of control price of gas and record profits oil companies made contributed greatly to the economic collapse in the US in '08. But no legislator introduced bills to limit profits there, nor are there bills or laws that limit the ability to profit in other areas of commerce. But we screw the commercial dog breeders. Oh, and let's not forget that shelters are exempt, shelters can sell as many dogs as they want. And shelters have begun supplying pet stores with dogs, and cats and rabbits to sell ensuring the displacement of commercially bred animals. Can anyone say monopoly?

Here's the scoop, no breeder regulation law ever addresses demand for pets nor responsible pet ownership. Therefore you put more restrictions and regs on a breeder forcing the hobbyists out while the commercial breeders are better able to weather the storm. End result is no more hobby breeding and the commercial breeders make up the deficit in supply to pet owners (pet demand is unaffected). Some define "mills" as breeders who mass produce animals to sell as pets. Guess what people, those are what the USDA licenses and regulates, the law didn't stop it, it just makes them have a USDA license to do it. And there aren't any laws limiting how much a commercial breeder can produce. Same with state laws, it doesn't ban commercial breeding just creates a license. So think about consequences. And if we support setting limits on "hobby" breeding, we may see some of our best show breeders fall into the "commercial" category and we may end up losing them.

I once believed that only "show" breeders should exist, that breeding for profit was immoral. Then I really thought about that attitude. I mean why does a show breeder have any better reason to breed than anyone else out there? Did God send a message that show breeding is okay while everything else isn't? Why should some have the right to breed show animals and someone breeding to sell pets can't? Or someone just trying breeding out? Why would a hobby breeder be more valid than a commercial breeder?

I decided that "hobby breeders" had no more valid reason to breed nor any more of a right than anyone else. So I support the right of everyone to breed, be it for meat, show, pets, as a hobby or business, or just the pet owners down the street who want to see the miracle of life. The only limitations I put on breeding is you have to treat the animals properly as per industry accepted guidelines and find a place to go with them-not just dump them on the streets or in the woods.

I refuse to accept the shelter industry or the AR industry's definition of "responsible" breeding because 1) They do not condone *any* breeding of animals and 2) They aren't experienced or knowledgeable about breeding to make accurate and valid judgments about it.

How many show breeders out there started as a pet owner? How many started out knowing you wanted to be a serious and dedicated show breeder-and I mean before you even bought your first rabbit? So are we not limiting ourselves when we say only show breeders have a right to breed? How does one figure out what they want to do

unless they get to try it? How does one become a show breeder unless they jump right in and try it out? We don't require training or any sort of education to become a show breeder, anyone can just declare one day they are a show breeder to enter our world. But aren't we saying that isn't valid when we say the only good breeder is one who is working to "improve the breed" which would require a fair bit of knowledge and experience to accomplish?

And what the heck does breeding to improve the breed really mean? How do you really measure that? Before you speak think about it carefully and logically. You're breeding for show, you know you're a long way off from being one of the top breeders in the US. So how can you be personally "breeding to improve the breed". What you're doing is breeding to improve your personal herd.

So if we say the only valid breeders are those working to improve the breed to me that says we pick the top oh, 15-20 breeders of a breed and they are the only ones allowed to continue. They would be the only ones allowed to sell stock because, well their herds are the best aren't they? If we want to "improve the breed" isn't it best to restrict breeding to just the very top breeders?

And how does breeding for show "improve a breed"? What are we saying defines an "improvement"? Doesn't it really depend on the goal of the breeder to what improving the breed or rather herd means? Like look at a commercial meat breeder vs a show breeder-same breed. The commercial meat breeder needs animals who reproduce in quantity while maintaining quality-as in they can get a lot of good meat off it's young. Is that the same improvements a show breeder needs? Nope.

A show breeder is breeding to the standard, which we know is subjectively applied because that is the nature of what we do. Maybe there is some overlap, probably not alot. And how does improving the breed for show work with producing a nice pet? Pet owners want something friendly, cuddly, etc while the show breeder is again breeding towards defined physical traits that are *not* focused on personality. I believe breeding to improve the breed is just a term the dog breeders came up with to defend what they do against ARAs who want all breeding including hobby or show breeding ended.

So what makes show breeders so special. I believe show breeding fits into the pursuit of happiness so that to me is a valid enough reason to allow it. But then can't that also apply to other breeders whose goals aren't breeding for show. To me it can and does.

And finally, breeding for profit, why is that wrong. I know some say if you breed with a profit in mind you cut corners on care. But do we know that for a fact or is that just propaganda fed to us by those opposed to all breeding? If one cuts corners on care if they are a business, what about hobby breeders who don't make any money since it's a hobby? At least the business is trying to make money which can be used to pay for the animals, where is the hobbyist getting the money? And what guarantee does the world have that they will always be able to fund their activities?

Or why do we have a positive image of a commercial meat breeder but say a commercial pet breeder isn't taking proper care of their animals? Both have profit as a goal, if you say all or most pet businesses cut corners then the same *must* be true of commercial meat breeders. I've seen no evidence to suggest that most involved in commercial breeding be it for pets or meat take less care of their animals or cut corners than any hobby show breeder.

And what about the top show breeders of many breeds, don't you think they probably are making enough money that there is some profit or could be? I believe deservedly so since they are the top-but just pointing out the inconsistency in logic some hobby breeders have. When did trying to make a profit or have a successful business become an evil and immoral thing in the US? Again I think it's AR propaganda meant to divide us against each other so that they can get legislation passed that advances the AR agenda.

I hope this makes breeders think, I hope most will agree that breeders of all types have a right to exist and pursue their project. You don't have to support some breeding projects but if we are to survive the assault of animal rights we need to protect each other and to stand up for the basic right to breed for whatever purpose free from regulation. Otherwise the first endeavor that will be eliminated is breeding for show as a hobby.

@Jan 2006, update Jan 2009