



THE ALLIANCE SPEAKS

FALL 2021

PET PROTECTION VICTORY

This past legislative session, the Alliance played an integral role in passing SB 71, a bill which the National Link Coalition has stated: **“may be the nation’s most comprehensive law allowing courts to include household pets in orders of protection.”** Such orders are sought by Missourians who are needing protection against “acts, attempts or threats to him or her from a family or household member or intimate partner; or from acts of stalking or sexual assault.” Historically, not allowing pets on orders of protection has caused significant issues for pets as well as for their guardians.

Violence in the home impacts all members of the family. 71% of pet owners entering domestic violence shelters report that their batterer had threatened, injured, or killed family pets. In one study of survivors, 48% of respondents said that animal abuse had occurred “often” during the past 12 months, and another 30% said the abuse occurred “almost always.” The types of animal abuse reported included punching, hitting, choking, drowning, shooting, stabbing, and throwing the animal against a wall or down the stairs.

It is important to understand that the abuser is profoundly focused on controlling their victim in domestic violence situations. Animal abuse is a tool of domestic violence – threats of or actual harm to a pet are a means of control and a form of emotional violence. The abuser is saying: “this could happen to you” or “next time, it will be you.” **Animals become pawns in the environment of family violence.**



Governor Parson displaying Pet Protection Bill with Alliance's Aislinn McCarthy-Sinclair



Sometimes when an order of protection is obtained, the abuser will attempt to maintain control of the victim by involving the victim’s beloved pet. The abuser might threaten the pet or try to gain possession of the pet. Often the fear of the abuser obtaining possession of the pet is enough for the victim to stay with the abuser to watch over the pet and attempt to ensure their safety. Up to 40% of women will stay in an abusive relationship because they cannot take their pet.

Thankfully, SB 71 clarifies that pets can be placed on orders of protection and are off-limits for threats or acts of violence. **SB 71 even goes a step further and also assigns possession of the animal to the victim.** This means that the victim can leave the abuser without fear of the abuser using the legal system to take their pet away. Some abusers will indeed violate orders of protection. However, with pets being allowed on these orders, the abuser can be better held accountable for their actions if that occurs.

We want to thank Alliance supporter and former domestic abuse prosecutor Tali Katz for her assistance in drafting this legislation!

We also wish to extend a special thanks to the courageous survivors of domestic violence who came forward to testify in support of SB 71. One such witness was particularly compelling as she had not only suffered serious physical injuries at the hands of her abuser, but the abuser killed her beloved dog.

Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation

MISSION STATEMENT

To advocate for the welfare of animals and to protect companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife from abuse, neglect and inhumane exploitation. We accomplish this by enacting animal welfare laws and by working towards the effective enforcement of all existing animal protection laws and regulations.

FUNDING

The Alliance is a 501 (c) (4) nonprofit animal advocacy organization. The organization depends solely on donations from concerned and compassionate individuals to fund its animal welfare advocacy and legislative efforts. Because of our extensive advocacy work on behalf of animals we are considered a lobbying organization and therefore gifts to the Alliance are not tax-deductible.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Bob Baker,
Executive
Director



We had another busy year advocating for the animals in 2021. We were fortunate to pass the Pet Protection bill this legislative session which allows companion animals to be placed on protection orders. Attacks against animals belonging to victims of abuse occur much more frequently than one would believe. Often these assaults on animals are not so much an act of spite but rather are intended to send a message to the human victim that they could be next.

Many years ago, when I was working as a cruelty investigator for the ASPCA, I had the experience of witnessing such abuse during a stake-out of a puppy mill operation. While I was sitting in an unmarked law-enforcement vehicle with a deputy sheriff awaiting a warrant to arrive so we could lawfully enter the dog breeding operation, we witnessed an attack upon a dog on a neighboring property. The dog was placed in a trash bag and left with the rest of the trash for pick-up later that day. Fortunately, we were able to save the dog, and the attacker was quickly arrested. It was later discovered that the woman living in the home where we had witnessed this attack had an order of protection against the perpetrator. I never forgot that experience, not only for the fluke coincidence that someone would unknowingly attack a dog in front of a cruelty investigator and a deputy sheriff, but that someone would attempt to kill an animal for the sole purpose of sending a message to an abuse victim. Thankfully, our new law will help to deter such behavior in the future.

We are also happy to report on the success of our lawsuit against the USDA, which was finally settled earlier this year. We believe it will make a significant difference for the animals and hopefully send a message to the USDA that the Agency must follow the law in its enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act. Further, we are pleased to report on the admirable work that Attorney General Schmitt is performing in not only closing cruel puppy mills but also filing criminal and civil charges against such inhumane breeders. This sends a strong message to other breeders and creates a powerful deterrent, knowing that there will now be consequences for neglecting and abusing animals.

I must also comment on our story about Dr. Volkmann, the veterinarian who encouraged breeders to assault their breeding dogs. The MDA and the USDA routinely collect surveys from the attendees of these workshops to assess the quality of the speakers and if the attendees learned anything from individual presenters. **Deplorably, Dr. Volkmann did not receive one critical comment about his presentation. According to the MDA, Dr. Volkmann was the highest-rated speaker at the event as judged by the commercial dog breeders.**

Nothing could be more telling of the state of the commercial dog breeding industry in Missouri than the results of this survey. Sadly, the results were hardly shocking since during the presentation by Dr. Volkmann, many attendees were laughing, not only at his recommendation of ramming an instrument into a dog but they also found his crude and sexual comments amusing, even laughing at his most disgusting remarks about how he enjoys stimulating female dogs.

Unfortunately, Dr. Volkmann's presentation only emboldened puppy millers in the mistreatment of their animals. This disdain for the welfare of animals was re-enforced, not only by

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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI PROFESSOR ENCOURAGES DOG BREEDERS TO CRUELLY “RAM” INSEMINATION INSTRUMENT INTO DOGS

WARNING: DISTURBING CONTENT

Dean of College of Veterinary Medicine Refuses to Publicly Condemn or Correct Such an Inhumane Practice

Dr. Dietrich Volkmann, a teaching professor of reproductive medicine at the College of Veterinary Medicine, gave a presentation on artificial insemination on July 30 at the annual Canine Care Workshop sponsored by the USDA and the Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA). Shockingly, Dr. Volkmann instructed the approximately 75 commercial dog breeders in attendance that **the breeders should “ram” the pipette into the dog’s vagina** when performing artificial insemination. Dr. Volkmann even made a violent gesture with his arm to demonstrate the intensity the breeder should use to force the instrument into the dog’s body. **He then mocked the yelping noise that a dog makes when he assaults her in this manner.**

Dr. Volkmann’s entire presentation demonstrated a strong disdain towards animals. He started by describing the daily routine of a veterinarian and **lamented that often the first thing a veterinarian must do in the morning is to have to perform surgery on a “frigging bitch.”**



Dr. Volkmann teaching visiting school groups

Appallingly, Dr. Volkmann’s presentation affirmed that it is acceptable to treat animals as inanimate objects with no regard for

the gratuitous pain inflicted upon them. Even worse, Dr. Volkmann instructed breeders at the workshop to do likewise. He undoubtedly communicates this same message to students at the College of Veterinary Medicine – our future veterinarians.

The USDA and the MDA sponsored the Canine Care Workshop, where Dr. Volkmann gave this presentation, while the USDA was the agency responsible for inviting

Dr. Volkmann to speak at this event. Regrettably, neither the USDA nor the MDA will issue a correction to the dog breeders that were in attendance, thus allowing them to believe that it is acceptable for dog breeders to ram an object into a dog’s vagina and mock her pain.



Dr. Volkmann’s presentation was repulsive on many levels, including its sexual and misogynistic tone. Dr. Volkmann even bragged how he gives more pleasurable sex to a female dog during artificial insemination than any male dog is capable of doing. If you wish to learn more about Dr. Volkmann’s shocking presentation, you can view a copy of our letter to the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine on our website maal.org.

Please contact the President of the University and request that Dr. Volkmann be severely restricted and closely monitored in any future contacts with veterinary students. Ask President Choi to take the appropriate action towards instilling a humane attitude within the College of Veterinary Medicine. Please request that the College makes the welfare of the animals a priority in all of its classes.

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**PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR VETERINARIAN
AND ASK THAT THEY REACH OUT TO
PRESIDENT CHOI AS THIS REFLECTS ON
EVERY GRADUATE OF THE SCHOOL OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE**

ALLIANCE PREVAILS IN LAWSUIT

USDA Settles Lawsuit Rather Than Face Their Day in Court

The Alliance is thrilled to report that we have succeeded in our federal lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture. Our lawsuit was in response to the agency's illegal adoption of the "teachable moments" rule and the "self-reporting" rule. These rules were adopted in an effort to avoid enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act by employing deceptive practices to conceal inhumane conditions at puppy mills, animal research facilities, and other USDA licensed premises.



As a result of the Alliance's legal efforts, **the USDA has consented to cease all use of the "self-reporting" rule.** This is especially significant for animals used in research as almost all violations of humane care for research animals were being "self-reported" and thereby ignored by the USDA. In addition, the USDA has acquiesced to changing its definition of "teachable moments" to ensure that **significant animal welfare violations would no longer be considered "teachable moments."** As part of the settlement, the **USDA is required to re-train all of its staff members** to ensure that its inspectors would no longer consider meaningful violations to be "teachable moments."

As a result of our lawsuit, the **USDA is mandated to publicly display all violations considered "teachable moments" on their website along with the breeder's inspection reports.** This will allow consumers and those concerned about the welfare of animals to more accurately track the conditions at puppy mills, research facilities, and animal exhibits.

Without admitting guilt, the USDA will pay all legal fees and costs of our litigation to the attorneys representing the Alliance. The Alliance is very grateful to Advancing Law for Animals and to the Barrella Law firm for their tireless efforts, on behalf of the Alliance, in pursuing justice for the animals over 18 months.

The "self-reporting" and "teachable moments" rules were not only inhumane to the animals but were adopted and implemented without giving public notice and without seeking public comments. Thereby, the **Alliance has now provided the USDA a "teachable moment" on the federal rule-making process** and has halted the USDA's efforts to aid and abet cruel puppy mills, inhumane animal researchers, and disreputable animal industries.

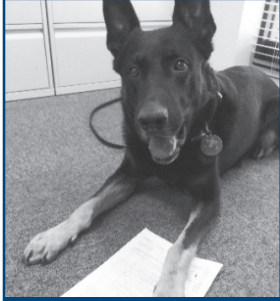
This is a momentous victory for the animals who have suffered for far too long at the hands of their abusers with the full knowledge and complicity of the U. S. Department of Agriculture – the very agency charged with their protection.

The Alliance is delighted that the animals have won the day and have received a measure of relief via the justice system due to our lawsuit.



The USDA often ignored serious violations calling them "teachable moments."

USDA TEACHES PUPPY MILLERS HOW TO WRITE OFF THEIR EXPENSES AND TO IGNORE NOTICES FROM THE IRS



USDA Invites Tax Accountant to a Canine Care Workshop

This past month, the U. S. Department of Agriculture sponsored its annual Canine Care Workshop for licensed dog breeders. The USDA and the MDA initiated the Canine Care Workshops several years ago to improve the care of dogs in commercial breeding facilities. The workshops were also intended to improve the industry's reputation, which

has long been plagued by numerous substandard dog breeders, as demonstrated by the frequent raids of puppy mills across the state, including a recent one in McDonald County.

Instead of solely focusing on animal care and instructing dog breeders on how to care for their animals, this year the USDA not only invited Dr. Volkmann to teach acts of cruelty as reported elsewhere in this newsletter, but also invited a tax accountant to speak to the breeders and explain how to pay the least amount of taxes.

The breeders learned creative ways to deduct business expenses, including deducting the cost of a manicure from a salon. It was explained that if you hold your dog in your hands for a photo for your website, you could deduct the manicure as a business expense.

Shockingly, the accountant advised the breeders to ignore notices from the IRS informing the breeder of underpayment of taxes or penalties that are due to the IRS. She alleged that the IRS is sending out such notifications to help pay for President Biden's extravagant spending programs.

Breeders were also reminded to include as an expense the costs of care for any dead puppies that they cannot sell. Instead of instructing the breeders on how to

properly care for their animals, which was the purpose of the Canine Care Workshop, the tax accountant repeatedly reminded the breeders that dogs are inventory and assets. Such a message was directly opposite to the intent of the workshop which was to instill a caring attitude into the breeders towards their dogs and to improve the welfare of the animals in breeding operations.

The USDA has yet to respond to the Alliance's request for an explanation on why the USDA is encouraging dog breeders to ignore notices by the IRS and instructing breeders to refuse to make requested payments to the IRS.



Dog breeders informed that they could write off manicures. (Photo is from the speaker's tax business Facebook page.)

CITY OF ST. LOUIS RESPONDS TO ALLIANCE REQUEST FOR MORE ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS

City Promises to Hire Seven Animal Control Officers

In a follow-up to our Alert to St. Louis area residents about the demise of Animal Control in the City of St. Louis, **City officials assured the Alliance that they are seeking to immediately hire four additional Animal Control Officers (ACOs) and will provide further funding to hire an additional three ACOs.**

Currently, the City of St. Louis has only ONE full-time Animal Control Officer to respond to requests for so many animals in need of help, food, rescue, and more.

The Alliance, therefore, reached out to our supporters in the St. Louis region and asked that they contact the City Health Department and request that the Department prioritize the work of Animal Control. Dr. Frederick Echols,

the Interim Director of the Health Department, offered a disingenuous response to our supporters alleging that the Alliance's statement that Animal Control only had one remaining officer was incorrect. **Dr. Echols even deceived KMOV-TV and claimed that the Health Department currently had three full-time officers.**



Sadly, Dr. Echols was falsely including one officer who had been called up in the Air Force Reserves last November and has yet to return and was counting another officer who had resigned in May.

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ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC SCHMITT OBTAINS SEARCH WARRANT AND CLOSES CRUEL PUPPY MILL



A licensed dog breeder in McDonald County, Andre Damrill, refused to allow the Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) to inspect her

breeding operation for over a year. This happens all too often where breeders refuse inspections and thus avoid oversight of their breeding facility and the conditions of their dogs. However, this time, Attorney General Schmitt stepped in and obtained a search warrant that allowed the MDA and the Humane Society of Missouri (HSMO) to enter the property and rescue the dogs. Attorney General Schmitt stated that **“For the breeders who don’t comply with the law and operate substandard or noncompliant facilities, my Office is ready, willing, and able to take action to shut those breeders down.”**

According to the Humane Society of Missouri, the conditions discovered were horrendous, and the dogs were in poor health. “These dogs have been living in horrific conditions; the breeder’s neglect is inhumane and utterly reprehensible,” said Kathy Warnick, president of the HSMO. A total of 21 dogs were rescued, but unfortunately, seven dogs had already died, including one who passed away shortly after the raid.

Fortunately, Missouri’s disposition process for abused and neglected animals was instrumental in quickly gaining permanent possession of these animals. When a disposition hearing was scheduled, the defendant immediately agreed to permanently surrender her animals rather than face her day in court.

Missouri law is unique in that it requires a “disposition hearing” for abused and neglected animals within 30 days of seizure. This allows these animals to be quickly adopted into a loving home rather than have to

remain in an animal shelter for many months or even be left in the hands of their abuser while they await the conclusion of a criminal trial.

In 1994, the Alliance worked extremely hard to pass the law to create the disposition process. This law has been highly successful over the years. **It has enabled thousands of animals to be permanently removed from neglectful and abusive situations and expeditiously placed into a permanent loving home.** It has been so successful that groups representing the worst in their industries, such as puppy millers and other agricultural trade groups, have vigorously fought to repeal the disposition process in the Missouri Legislature. This year a bill that would have overturned the disposition process passed the House of Representatives, but the Alliance was able to defeat this legislation in the Senate. We could not have accomplished this without your help. The Alliance’s Alert generated numerous phone calls and emails to Missouri legislators.

Your efforts are truly making a difference, as you can witness from the results of this raid!



Due to Missouri’s Disposition Law these dogs can immediately find a loving home.

Director's Corner continued from page 2

Dr. Volkmann, but by the fact that there were USDA and MDA veterinarians present at this workshop. Not even one stood up to correct Dr. Volkmann and defend the animals against this blatant encouragement to commit acts of cruelty.

Shockingly, the USDA, the MDA, and the College of Veterinary Medicine have all refused the Alliance's request to send out an apology to the attendees and correct Dr. Volkmann, not only for his disdain for animals but for his cruel method of performing artificial insemination.

Unfortunately, the callousness exhibited towards animals by Dr. Volkmann is all too common among veterinarians who have puppy mills for clients. We recently filed a complaint against another veterinarian who defended a grossly substandard puppy mill that was so inhumane that the Missouri Attorney General closed the facility and filed criminal and civil charges against the breeder. The veterinarian went to great lengths to defend this puppy mill by arguing that only 6% of the dogs are underweight and described other inhumane conditions with similar outrageous claims (see photos).

It must be emphasized that cruel puppy mills would not exist without the assistance of veterinarians. The USDA and the MDA both require licensed dog breeders to possess a "Program of Veterinary Care" signed off on by a veterinarian who must routinely inspect the dogs and premises and approve of the care of the animals. **Almost every time you read about an inhumane puppy mill, be aware that this cruelty only exists because a veterinarian approved of this facility and not only failed to report the neglect and abuse but actually signed off on it.**

It is for this reason that we urge you if you have not done so already, to contact the president of the University of Missouri and demand that he not only takes action against Dr. Volkmann but that he immediately acts towards instilling a humane attitude within the College of Veterinary Medicine. Please request that the College makes the welfare of the animals a priority in all of its veterinary classes. **Remind President Choi that systemic cruelty only exists because of the complicity of uncaring veterinarians.**

Thank you,
Bob Baker
Executive Director



Statement by Dr. Nichols, "This kennel is certainly not the showiest or fanciest, but it is functional."



Statement by Dr. Nichols, "Reducing dietary intake by 25%, the life span of dogs can be significantly increased."

City of St. Louis Responds to Alliance Request For More Animal Control Officers continued from page 5

After that denial by Dr. Echols, City officials agreed to meet with the Alliance and discuss our concerns on the staffing of Animal Control. We emphasized that Animal Control receives dozens of calls per day and that the Department needs more officers to respond to complaints of animal abuse and neglect as well as animals running at large. Callers to Animal Control often were only receiving voice mail, and messages were not being returned, and callers were never informed if their complaint/request was being investigated or addressed.

We are heartened by the response from city officials. Increasing the number of officers has been a long time in coming. We are hoping that city officials not only

follow through on their promise to hire additional staff but that they take the necessary measures to retain new officers. We encouraged city officials to provide adequate resources to maintain professional and competent animal control officers. We are concerned over the low morale of previous staff that has led to a substantial decrease in officers.

We thank you for reaching out and letting city officials know that their citizens care about the welfare of the animals. Your efforts are making a difference. You can be assured that we will continue to monitor the response from city officials and the Department of Health.



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Please help us!

In addition to reaching out to public officials to assist our efforts to curb puppy mill abuse and animal suffering, **we need your financial support to enable the Alliance to continue its fight on behalf of the animals** in the halls of the State Capitol and with our state and federal officials.

We need your help more than ever as we extend our efforts to the U. S. Capitol and into the courtroom to advocate for effective enforcement of federal laws to protect animals.

With your generous support, we can continue our vital work of defending the animals. Although we have made great progress, there is much more for us to do in order to ensure that our animal welfare laws are properly enforced. Please help us to continue to speak out on behalf of the animals.



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