

Testimony

SB 414

Senate Agriculture Committee

February 22, 2012

Senator Taddiken and Members of the Committee:

I am Lynn Schumacher, director of shelter/control at the T. Russell Reitz Animal Control Shelter in Manhattan, Ks. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify. At the present time we must oppose SB 414 because it strikes K. S.A. 47-1712 (c) and fails to make other important changes.

Prior to the enactment of The Kansas Pet Animal Act (KPAA) in 1988 I witnessed the extreme neglect, abuse, and downright intentional cruelty taking place within the breeding facilities in Kansas. As owner and operator of Aggie Pet Center in Manhattan, Kansas I purchased puppies and kittens for resale directly from Kansas breeders. I was allowed to enter kennels and catteries to purchase puppies and kittens. The vast majority of the breeders I came in contact with provided minimal care of their animals. The kennels were units thrown together with little regard for comfort or safety. Nearly all were run down needing repair and most had feces piled high with dogs and puppies walking atop their own waste. Cat potty pans went without cleaning and maggots swarmed the cages crawling though hastily slopped down wet gruel thrown in for the kittens to eat. Sick cats and kittens hung over slimy water bowls burning up with fever but too ill to attempt to lower their heads to lap up the liquid slime.

As a general rule sick animals or animals no longer able to reproduce were left in their cages without food, water, or medical care to die. Some medicated their animals themselves and a few lived through it. One cat breeder shared with me that they had a very expensive Persian that was in labor for a full day and was getting very weak. Rather than have the kittens die with the mother, they cut her open while she was still alive to get the kittens. The woman showed no hint of shame at what she had done. The lucky ones were taken out back and shot.

I saw dogs and cats with their eyes eaten out by infection, hair matted so badly it was impossible to guess their sex, toe nails grown into the pads of their feet, and so filthy you couldn't stand their stench. These very animals were forced to reproduce time after time until their death.

I was so repulsed by what I saw and I felt so strongly about the abuse of these animals that I stopped selling any animals in my shop and handled strictly fish and pet supplies. I refused to continue contributing to the abuse by purchasing and selling animals. I've spent 24 years here in the shelter making up for the misery I was once blindly involved in.

The least of the evils was it was a well know fact that unregistered animals were being registered with false registration papers.

The breeders simply registered more offspring with the associations than were actually born and sold the extra papers to anyone paying for them.

The Agriculture Department inspected breeding facilities prior to The State Animal Health Department taking on that duty. The Agriculture Department called breeders and wholesalers several weeks ahead to make appointments prior to arrival. This gave breeders and wholesalers every chance to hide the atrocities.

If the state does not mandate annual inspection of facilities then the regulations we have on the books are meaningless. Consequently, I am requesting that you amend SB 414 to require annual inspections of all licensees under the KPAA and retain K.S.A. 47-1712 (c). Thanks for your attention to this important issue.