

TO: Interested Parties  
 CC: ASPCA  
 FROM: Edge Research  
 RE: Research on USDA Requirements for Commercial Dog Breeders  
 DATE: May 15, 2013

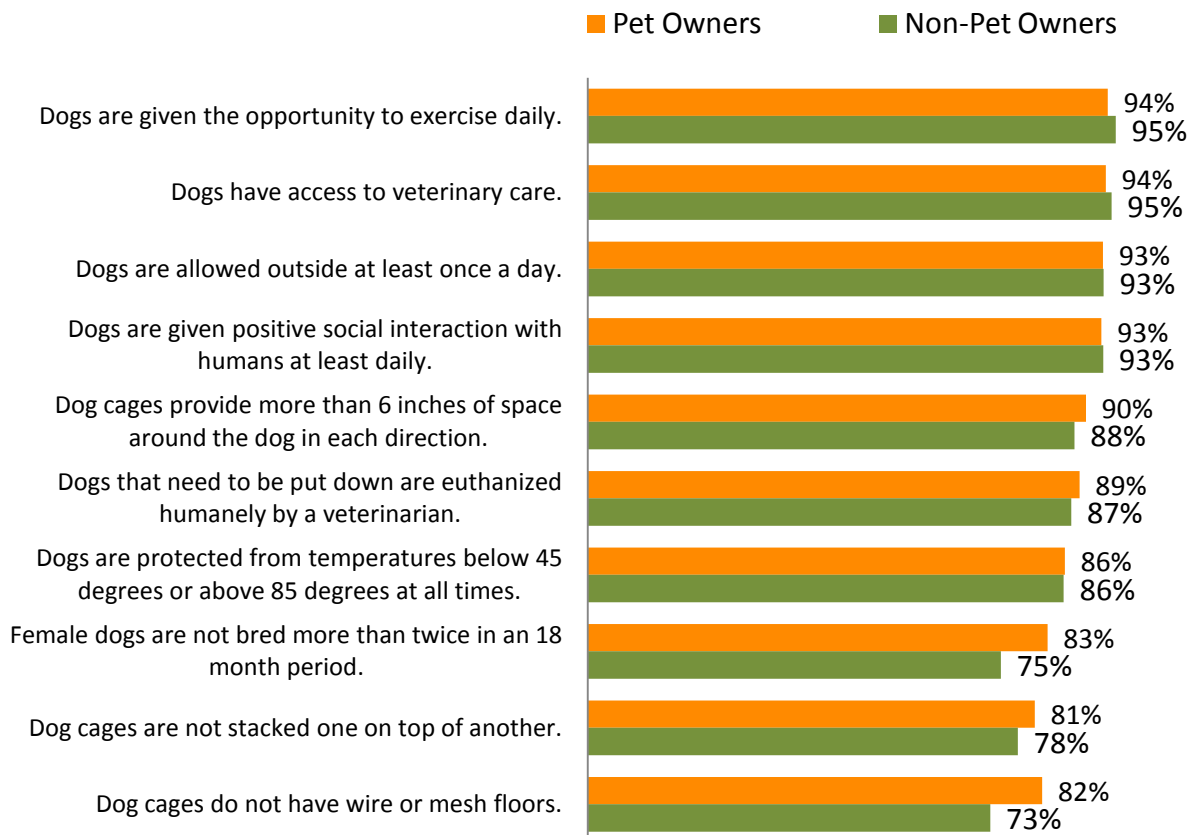
Findings from a recent survey of 1,000 adults nationwide,<sup>i</sup> indicate that Americans have confidence that USDA-licensed commercial dog breeders treat their dogs humanely, but the public’s definition of “humane” treatment differs significantly from existing federal USDA requirements. This disconnect indicates that consumers may take false reassurance from knowledge that a particular breeder is USDA certified.

- **Seventy-one percent (71%) of Americans are confident that commercial dog breeders licensed by the USDA treat their dogs humanely (26% extremely/very confident, 45% somewhat confident).<sup>ii</sup>**
  - Confidence levels are the same for pet owners and non-pet owners (72% and 71%, respectively).
- **However, the public’s definition of humane treatment of dogs in commercial breeding facilities differs in many ways from that of the USDA—majorities felt each tested practice was “absolutely necessary for a breeder to be considered humane”.<sup>iii</sup>**

	% Absolutely Necessary for Humane Treatment	Public Requirement	Current USDA Requirement
Dogs are given the opportunity to exercise daily.	94%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dogs have access to veterinary care.	93%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dogs are allowed outside at least once a day.	90%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dogs are given positive social interaction with humans at least daily.	87%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog cages provide more than 6 inches of space around the dog in each direction.	86%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dogs that need to be put down are euthanized humanely by a veterinarian.	83%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dogs are protected from temperatures below 45 degrees or above 85 degrees at all times.	75%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female dogs are not bred more than twice in an 18 month period.	65%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog cages do not have wire or mesh floors.	63%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog cages are not stacked one on top of another.	62%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Even among those who are extremely/very confident that USDA licensed facilities are humane, majorities believe each practice shown above is necessary for the humane treatment of dogs by a commercial breeder.<sup>iv</sup> This shows a disconnect between what many Americans *think* the USDA requires and what it *actually* requires of commercial dog breeders.
- **In addition, regardless of what they believe is absolutely needed for humane treatment, overwhelming majorities of Americans support implementing each of these requirements.<sup>v</sup>**
  - Both pet owners and non-pet owners support these requirements for USDA licensed dog breeders.

### Support for Making Each a Requirement for USDA Licensed Dog Breeders



In sum, the data reveals that USDA’s current requirements fall far short of the public’s standards and expectations for the humane treatment of dogs at commercial breeders. Americans feel these measures are absolutely necessary for humane treatment and support making them a requirement for all commercial breeders licensed by the USDA.

<sup>i</sup> **Methodology:** Edge Research designed and administered this survey that was conducted via phone between April 1st and 10th, 2013. The sample included 800 respondents that were reached via landline and 200 respondents reached on cell phones. The data are weighted slightly by age and gender to ensure it is representative of the general population nationwide. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 percentage points.

<sup>ii</sup> **Question Wording:** If you were told that a commercial dog breeding facility was licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture or U-S-D-A, how confident would you be that the dogs at that particular breeding facility are treated humanely? Would

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you be extremely confident, very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not confident at all that the dogs are treated humanely?

<sup>iii</sup> **Question Wording:** Now I'm going to read you a list of practices that commercial dog breeders might use. For each, please tell me whether that practice is absolutely necessary for a breeder to be considered humane, whether it is something that is nice to do but NOT necessary for a breeder to be humane, or if it's not really necessary at all.

<sup>iv</sup> **Absolutely Necessary among the Very/Extremely Confident in USDA:**

- 98%- Dogs have access to veterinary care.
- 96%- Dogs are given the opportunity to exercise daily.
- 95%- Dogs are allowed outside at least once a day.
- 94%- Dog cages provide more than 6 inches of space around the dog in each direction.
- 93%- Dogs are given positive social interaction with humans at least daily.
- 90%- Dogs that need to be put down are euthanized humanely by a veterinarian.
- 86%- Dogs are protected from temperatures below 45 degrees or above 85 degrees at all times.
- 81%- Female dogs are not bred more than twice in an 18 month period.
- 80%- Dog cages do not have wire or mesh floors.
- 78%- Dog cages are not stacked one on top of another.

<sup>v</sup> **Question Wording:** Now I'm going to read you that same list of practices for commercial dog breeders. Regardless of whether or not you feel it is required for humane treatment of the dogs, please tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose making that a requirement for all U-S-D-A licensed dog breeders.