



Assessment of the dog breeding industry in
Kathmandu Valley – a report by Animal
Nepal, 2021

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“Dogs are sentient beings. They can feel fear, discomfort, pain and loneliness. Dogs are entirely dependent on humans for their health, happiness and quality of life. We know how much joy, fun and companionship a dog can give to its human family. This knowledge should be enough to ensure that society protects its canine population.”

Dog Breeding Reform Group

President's foreword

In recent years, the dog breeding & selling industry in Nepal has seen an exponential rise and continues to grow. Despite its prevalence, this industry remains unmonitored and unregulated and it is directly responsible for exacerbating the welfare crisis of dogs in Nepal. Simply put, a dog breeder / seller is someone who profits from the reproductive system of a dog. In Nepal, most breeders are small backyard operations but there are a growing number of 'dog farms', especially outside the Ring Road in Kathmandu valley. With the main motive being financial profit, the dog breeding industry thrives on cruelty, abuse and exploitation of dogs as well as other pet animals.

Most breeders keep the dogs confined in small cages where the breeding dogs spend all their lives and are denied proper veterinary care and socialization. Due to being in such terrible conditions, the female dogs' bodies wear out and usually stop breeding when they are only 5/6 years old. After this, she no longer serves a purpose, is seen as a financial burden, and is then swiftly discarded by the unscrupulous breeders.

In Nepal, for some people, owning a certain dog has become synonymous with being fashionable not knowing that their personal preferences for certain breeds lead to severe health and behavioral issues in these dogs. Furthermore, each time someone opts to buy a newly bred pup, the lives of homeless pups born in the streets are compromised. Many people buy dogs like Huskies in a city like Kathmandu where temperatures can reach the high 30s in the summer, which inevitably leads to health issues resulting in costly veterinary treatment, which can in many cases lead to the abandonment or neglect of the dogs. At Animal Nepal's dog treatment center, we receive at least one case of abandoned / surrendered pure bred dog per week and in most cases the dogs come to us in extremely poor state of health.

Based on these observations, we felt the need for a research to assess the situation of the dog breeding industry, so future interventions are based on factual evidence and research recommendations. We plan to engage with the Government, relevant authorities and stakeholders within the industry including pet owners to ensure that the welfare needs of dogs are met and that the industry is closely monitored and regulated.

While we do not agree with the buying and selling of animals, we also recognize that without engagement, interventions and advocacy, this exploitative industry will continue to grow unchecked while compromising the wellbeing of thousands of dogs.

I trust that the Government and concerned authorities will take the content of this report seriously and will jointly work with Animal Nepal in eradicating the despair & exploitation of these long-suffering animals by introducing effective and strict legislation to protect our most loyal friends.

Pramada Shah

President, Animal Nepal

Mission statement

To build a harmonious and
compassionate society for all animals.

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About Animal Nepal

Animal Nepal's vision is for a world where all animals can live a life free from pain, suffering, and human cruelty. Animal Nepal works through carefully designed interventions, direct services to animals, research, education, campaigns and advocacy. For the last 13 years, Animal Nepal has been serving the needs of and protecting vulnerable animals in different parts of Nepal. We do this through rescue & treatment of street dogs, animal birth control of street dogs & cats, improving farm animal & working animal welfare through awareness raising and medical service, animal advocacy to help introduce & enact meaningful & legal protections for animals and a sanctuary for abused and neglected animals. Animal Nepal recognizes the importance of research in making well-informed interventions so that we can help the most number of animals, in the most impactful manner. As such, over the years, Animal Nepal has published several research studies like the [National Livestock Welfare Survey 2018](#), [Research into working horses and mules 2016](#), [Welfare of captive elephants in Sauraha 2014](#), [Lalitpur dog census 2015](#) and many more, which can be found in our [website](#).

Why is dog breeding & selling a welfare problem?

While the fascination with purebred dogs is not a new phenomenon and has been around for thousands of years and many breeders and pedigree dog enthusiasts argue that breed preservation is crucial and the breeding and selling of dogs must not be discontinued, it is however important to recognize that the selective breeding of animals for their physical appearance has a proven damaging effect on a large number of pedigree dogs. There are two distinct but inter-related issues affecting the health & welfare of pedigree dogs which are the extreme breed characteristics encouraged by breed standards, and the hereditary diseases that are a consequence of close breeding to maintain breed standards.¹

Most pedigree dogs, such as the flat-nosed breed, come with a disease guarantee whereby their quality of life is severely compromised. A large number of pedigree dogs are inbred and come from a small gene-pool so these debilitating diseases and features perpetuate from generation to generation. Deliberately breeding animals for

¹ A Healthier Future for Pedigree Dogs: The report of the APGAW inquiry into the health and welfare issues surrounding the breeding of pedigree dogs (2009)

financial gain while knowing that these animals have a high propensity to suffer cannot be regarded as ethical or respectful of animal welfare guidelines.

A 2009 peer reviewed study by the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) identified 322 inherited disorders in the fifty most popular breeds in the UK. It found that: "Every one of the 50 most popular pedigree breeds of dog in the UK were found to have at least one aspect of their physical conformation which predisposes them to an inheritable defect. Conformation characteristics such as short heads, short legs, excessive facial skin folds, pendulous ears, long backs and curly tails are likely to predispose, or are genetically linked in presenting breeds, to a range of physical problems such as occipital dysplasia, malocclusion of the jaws, hip dysplasia, eye ulceration, chronic otitis, intervertebral disc disease, and spina bifida, respectively.² The main purpose for breeding some breeds of dogs was for them to fulfil a purpose such as hunting, herding and burrowing. However, the selection of appearance over purpose has led to breeds like the bulldog being predisposed to health problems due to the accentuation of features which are believed to be desirable.³ Poor breeding practices means that many purebred dogs have to endure a life of pain, suffering, medication and countless medical procedures, which is also emotionally and financially draining for the owner. In many cases, such dogs tend to get abandoned or surrendered due to the owner's incapability in giving the dog the right care. In fact, organizations like Animal Nepal sees the impact of bad breeding/selling/buying practices on a daily basis, with many of the abandoned dogs being taken into animal shelters as they do not have the skills needed to survive on the streets. So, ironically, the shelters once set up to primarily help street dogs is now being largely occupied by such dogs.

The breeding and selling industry thus also adds to the overpopulation crisis of street dogs and cats in Nepal. While thousands of homeless dogs and cats are struggling to survive and with the few animal welfare organizations and the government barely managing to address the challenges of this overpopulation crisis, the influx of thousands of pedigree dogs into this delicate ecosystem, will only serve to exacerbate the problem.

² Royal Veterinary College; A Preliminary Investigation into Inherited Defects in Pedigree Dogs, written by Lisa M Collins, Gillian Diesel and Jennifer F Summers. January 2009.

³ A Healthier Future for Pedigree Dogs: The report of the APGAW inquiry into the health and welfare issues surrounding the breeding of pedigree dogs (2009)

When an animal is bred with a view to profiting from it, the animal will undoubtedly be exploited. The government, animal welfare organizations and the industry insiders have a moral duty to ensure the protection of these long suffering animals through the introduction of meaningful legislation and standards in order to regulate this industry, so that breeders, sellers & buyers will no longer be able to act with impunity.

About the survey

The assessment of the dog breeding industry in Kathmandu Valley, is the largest and only survey of its kind on dog welfare in Nepal and it is representative of the Kathmandu valley dog breeding, selling and buying population. This creates an accurate picture of the dog trade ecosystem of Kathmandu valley. This report is for reference by animal advocates, policy makers, duty bearers, members of the media and researchers. This report including any enclosures has been prepared independently by Animal Nepal. Citation of any part of this report should credit Animal Nepal. Animal Nepal does not accept any liability if this report is used for an alternative purpose other than one for which it is intended.

The research was conducted by surveying **33 dog breeders, 26 sellers** and **62 buyers** inside Kathmandu valley. A total of 121 respondents were surveyed for this research. Additional insights were incorporated from focus group discussions and interviews with animal welfare workers. Three different questionnaires were developed for each of the respondent groups. The questionnaires contained questions addressing the following areas:

Animal records	Staff records	Shelter	Hygiene	Food & water
Health & treatment	Selling & seller experience	Breeding & breeder experience	Buying & buyer experience	Animal welfare
Licensing	Mating & reproduction	Profile of the respondent		

Survey limitations

The reliability of survey data may depend on the following factors:

- While aiming to build a picture of the dog breeding industry in Nepal, due to limitations inflicted by the pandemic, the survey could only be carried out inside Kathmandu valley.
- Not all the respondents may have felt encouraged to provide accurate and honest answers.
- Some respondents may have felt uncomfortable in providing answers that might present themselves in an unfavorable manner.
- Some respondents may not have been fully aware of their reasons for any given answer because of lack of memory on the subject, or even boredom.

Purpose & objective

Based on the observations by Animal Nepal over the years of issues surrounding the welfare of dogs in the breeding & selling industry in Nepal, we felt the need for a research to assess the situation so future interventions are based on factual evidence and research recommendations.



Executive summary

Animal Nepal conducted a survey in summer 2021, to assess the current situation of the dog breeding industry in Kathmandu valley. 19 volunteers and Animal Nepal staff interviewed a total of 121 respondents (33 dog breeders, 26 dog sellers and 62 dog buyers) inside Kathmandu valley, which included Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Kirtipur districts. The findings from this survey call for an immediate intervention by the Government and stakeholders to ensure the welfare of the animals in the breeding industry by introducing strict breeding/selling standards and specific law/s to ensure the implementation of these standards.

Main findings

1. **Unregulated and illegal breeding, selling and buying** – Due to the absence of any laws to regulate the standard of pet breeding/selling/buying in Nepal, our research showed that social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and TikTok were most commonly used by breeders and sellers to advertise their business, with 84.8% breeders selling dogs through social media. Whilst this is a lucrative industry, 61.29% of the buyers interviewed reported that they were not provided with a VAT/PAN receipt at the time of purchase, 76.7% of breeders and 69.7% of sellers do not have a license to sell live animals and 33.3% of breeders and 9.09% of sellers admitted that their businesses were not registered.
2. **No screening of genetic conditions** – None of the breeders surveyed, screen their dogs for genetic conditions which are common to that particular breed. A dog's future health and welfare is directly affected by the conditions under which it was bred. Disturbingly, 6.7% of the breeders admitted that they mate dogs within a close gene pool, with an incest occurrence of 25%, which further increases the risk of puppies inheriting genetic conditions. Many breeders select particular cosmetic traits and reject those dogs which do not have those traits, thus further reducing the gene pool. Perhaps it is due to this very reason that 63.3% of the sellers surveyed reported that the main issue they face in dog-selling is customers returning puppies due to underlying health conditions, among other reasons such as behavioral issues and breed purity. Similarly, 21.1% of the buyers reported that their pedigree dogs had underlying health conditions which were not disclosed at the time of purchase.

3. **Poor welfare conditions** – The survey showed that 76.7% of breeders do not provide a separate diet for dogs with different needs such as pregnant/lactating mothers, puppies, senior dogs and dogs that are unwell. 93.3% of the sellers sell the pups before they are 8 weeks old, the minimum recommended time that a pup should stay with its mother. On average, breeders and sellers reported that they caged the dogs for up to 10 hours/day and 73.7% of breeders and 72.7% of sellers said that they leave the dogs inside the cages and let them defecate and urinate there.
4. **Third party sales** – 63.3% of breeders supply to pet shops, thus separating the pups from the mother, mostly before they are 8 weeks old and as such 69.4% of buyers do not meet the parents of their pups. Welfare compromises are inherent to the third party puppy trade such as increased risk of diseases, lack of socialization, behavioral problems and lack of routine health measures.⁴
5. **Financially driven** – 90% of breeders and 93.3% of sellers said that financial incentive was the main reason for them choosing this line of work.
6. **Vets play a significant role in the industry** – Vets made up 39.40% of the breeders and 30.3% of the sellers surveyed. Vet technicians made up 36.40% of the breeders and 51.5% of sellers surveyed.
7. **No protection for the buyer** – Aside from the dog itself, it is the buyer who suffers most from the problems of poor health & welfare in their dog. The research showed that 59.6% of buyers had very little to no knowledge about the breed they were buying, such as their temperament, inherited genetic conditions and other needs, so they are buying dogs without making an informed choice. 21.2% of the sellers said they do accept puppy returns, 59.7% of buyers did not receive any health information about their puppies and 30.6% did not receive any breed information.
8. **Not just dogs** – Our research showed that breeders and sellers are also engaged in the breeding and selling of other pet animals such as cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, hamster, birds and fish.

⁴ <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/about-us/campaigns/third-party-sales/>

Dog breeders – status in Kathmandu valley

For the purpose of this report, 33 dog breeders in Kathmandu valley were surveyed. In the absence of a dog breeder's license in Nepal, anyone who decides to start breeding dogs can do so with relative ease. Many of the dog breeders are small-time backyard operations, whereas others are larger facilities commonly referred to as 'dog farms'. During the course of our research, we came to learn that most dog breeders also sell the dogs themselves through their own pet shops or various social media sites. The following dog breeders were surveyed for this research, six of the breeders did not have a name for their facilities:

Pet Sansar	Lovely Pet Service & Kennel Club	King's Pet World	Dream way Pet Farm	All breed kennel and pet shop	My Everest Kennel club
Shahi's Kennel	Himalayan Mastiff Nepal	Nepal Pets Keeper	Friends Pet Farm & Pet Shop	Buddha Pet Shop	All Breed Pet Shop
Kathmandu Kennel Shop	Grow Up Pet Shop	Annapurna Kennel	Nepal Dog Breeder	Mahanagar Animals Research Center	Friends Pet Farm
Tamu Dog Farm	Tamang Dog Farm	Kadagheri Pet Shop	Related All Breed Pet Shop	NK Kennel Club	Pet Hub Nepal Kennel Club
Bhairab Pet Farm	Golden K9 Kennel	Pet Breeding Center			



Survey findings

Animal records

The average dog breeder in Kathmandu valley houses 18.15 female dogs, 13.45 male dogs, 18.15 female pups and 9.06 male pups. The 33 dog breeders surveyed, owned a selection of the following breed of dogs:

Labrador	German Shepherd	Cocker Spaniel	Husky	Japanese Spitz
Pomeranian	Lhasa Apso	Chowchow	Pug	French Bulldog
French Mastiff	Tibetan Mastiff	Dalmatian	Rottweiler	Doberman
American Bully	British Bull Dog	Golden Retriever	Boxer	Saint Bernard
Shih Tzu				

Of these, the most popular breeds were reported to be German shepherd, Labrador, Japanese Spitz, Cocker Spaniel, Pug, Husky and Boxer.

Dog breeds such as the Siberian Husky, Saint Bernard, Tibetan Mastiff and Chowchow are typically meant for much colder temperatures and in the warmer climate of Kathmandu and other larger cities of Nepal, they tend to develop health issues such as respiratory problems and skin diseases which are either genetically inherited or linked to unsuitable climate conditions.

There is also a growing trend of importing other exotic breeds such as Presa Canario, Samoyed, Persian cats, Alabai, Border Collie, Jack Russell, etc. from countries such as Poland, Russia, Serbia, Thailand, India, Netherlands, China and United Kingdom.



A screen shot from the TikTok account of a pet breeder/seller operating in Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur. The image shows crates of dogs being imported to Nepal from Russia.

Location: Tribhuvan International Airport

Date: 26 May 2022

Staff records

On average, breeders have 4.3 staff, out of which only 45.7% are reported to have received some form of training in dog-handling, 72.9% are trained in disease & hygiene, 10.9% are trained in food & diet and only 11.3% of the in-house staff are trained in canine first-aid. It is important to note that despite claiming that their staff had received training on the above mentioned areas, none were able to provide a certificate to support their claims.

The average dog breeder in Kathmandu has 40.40 dogs but worryingly, only 33.3% of the breeders have an in-house dog health professional such as a veterinary technician or a veterinarian. It is essential that staff hired to work with animals, must not only have an interest in working with animals but more importantly, they must have the right professional training and qualifications to ensure that the animals under their care are looked after well and the conditions in which they are kept, comply with animal welfare guidelines. 30% of the breeders were not familiar with the Five Freedoms of animals and 56.7% were not aware about any animal welfare regulations in Nepal. 39.40% of the breeders were practicing veterinarians and 36.40% are practicing veterinary technicians. During the course of our research, we came to learn that veterinary professionals play a significant role in Kathmandu Valley's dog trade ecosystem.

Shelter

On average, one dog is kept inside a kennel of 2.2 square feet for up to 9 hours a day. 66.7% of the breeders surveyed claimed to provide heating during the winter months



Tokyo, a breeder dog kept chained while feeding her puppies.

Tokyo is kept in a small garage in Patan where she is caged + chained for most part of the day/night.

Location: Patan

Date: 23 May 2022

and 30% claimed to provide fan during the summer, but all of the cages / kennels were outdoors with no sockets to connect an electrical appliance to.

70% of the breeders claimed to provide bedding for the dogs at night time, but our enumerators were not able to verify this information. 36.7% breeders reported that they do not let the dogs out for walks and exercise. An astounding 73.3% of the breeders surveyed admitted that they let the dogs urinate and defecate inside the kennels and 27.3% did not clean out the kennels on a daily basis.

According to internationally recognized animal welfare guidelines, dogs need to be kept in a comfortable, dry, draught-free, clean and quiet place to rest undisturbed. Living in a place which is wet, too cold or too hot can make them sick. Dogs need to go to the toilet regularly so they need to be given access to an appropriate place where they can go to the toilet. Dogs must be able to get away from things that scare them such as loud noises (thunder, fireworks), and dogs kept in cages are not able to do this. Dogs need an appropriate area for walking / exercise at least once a day. Regular exercise is essential for dogs, it helps them keep in shape and is really important for their mental health. Fit and active dogs are less likely to suffer from health & behavioral problems.

Food & water

On average, the breeders reported that dogs are fed 3 times a day and they are given a diet of rice and meat. 76.7% of the breeders reported that they give the same diet to pups and adult dogs, irrespective of the size, breed or medical condition. In 26.7% of the breeding facilities, the dogs did not have access to clean drinking water at all times.

A dog needs a well-balanced diet to stay fit and healthy. Some dogs such as those that are pregnant or nursing have special dietary needs. Our results showed that 76.7% of the breeders did not provide a special diet for pregnant and nursing breeder dogs, of which there were many in all of the facilities visited.

Health & treatment

16.7% of the breeders surveyed reported they have dogs with underlying health conditions. Some of the more common illnesses reported in dogs in breeding facilities were Parvo, diarrhea, vomiting, parasites and mange, mostly infectious diseases which is typical in animals living in crowded and unsanitary conditions. Only 30% of the breeders reported that they provide treatment for pups/dogs with chronic health

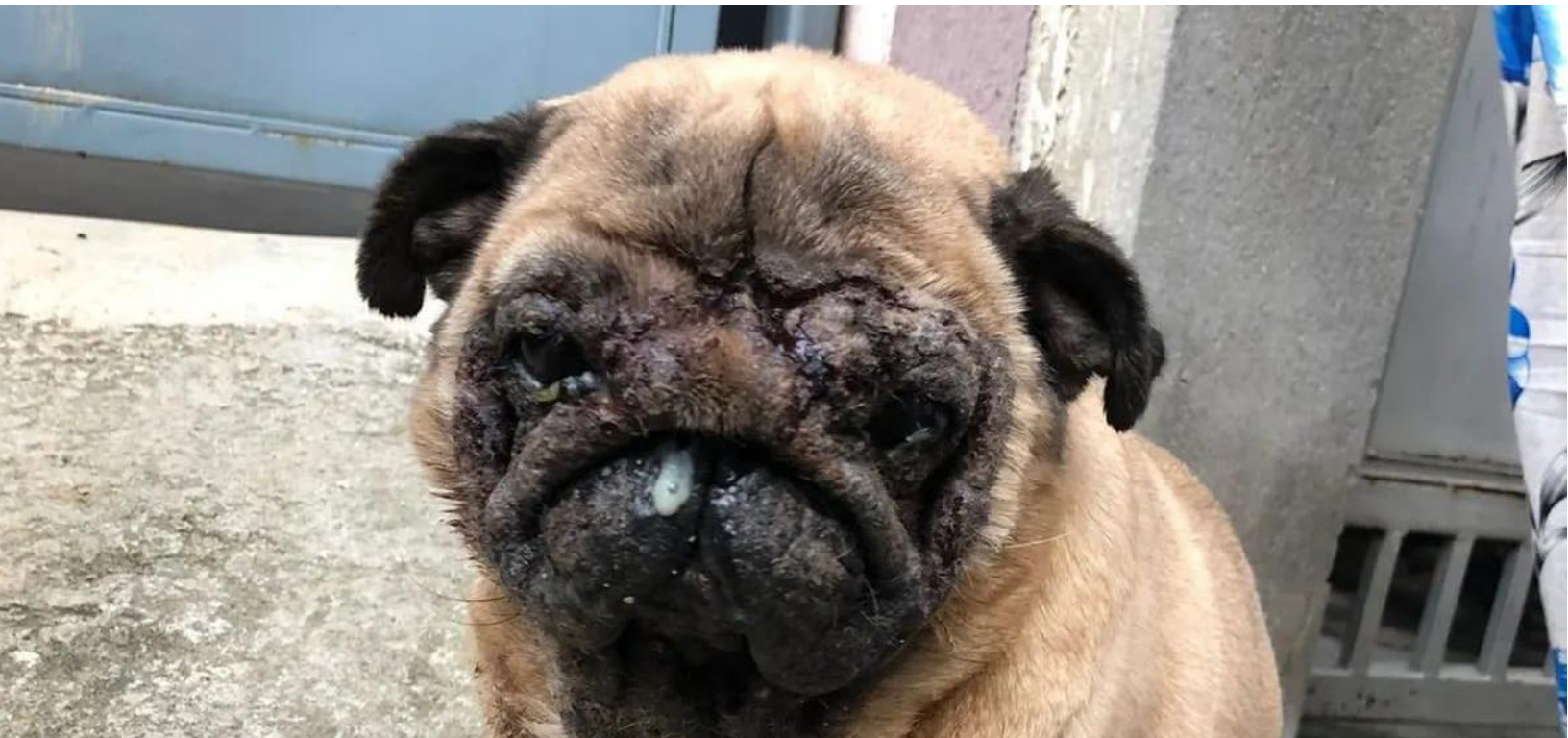
conditions, 23.3% give them up for adoption instead of treating them and 16.7% admitted that the pups/dogs are euthanized if necessary, although they did not expand on what medical conditions require for the animal to be put to sleep.

All breeders surveyed reported that they routinely vaccinate their dogs and provide treatment for parasites. Although, no medical records were shared to prove that this was in fact the case.

Mating & reproduction

36.7% of the breeders reported that on average, a dog is bred for up to 7-8 years. The average dog breeder produces 54.3 puppies annually. 6.7% of breeders mate dogs with incest occurrence of over 25%. There are harmful consequences to breeding dogs in closed gene pools in pursuit of the 'pure bred' appearance. This is done in order to satisfy the human aesthetic preferences rather than improving the health and welfare of dogs. A lot of pure bred dogs are highly inbred and carry debilitating inherited diseases which can be passed down to generations.

None of the breeders surveyed screen their dogs for genetic conditions which are common to that particular breed. A dog's future health and welfare is directly affected by the conditions under which it was bred. According to internationally recognized breeding standards, dogs should only be made to breed after seeking advice from a vet, especially as certain breeds of dogs are more susceptible to inherited genetic conditions.



An abandoned pug suffering from lip-fold pyoderma, which is genetically inherited, Location: Animal Nepal

Of the breeders surveyed, 45.5% reported that their female dogs are made to mate once they reach 2 years old, 15.15% start at 1.5 years old and 39.39% start when their female dogs are 1 year or younger. Most dogs reach puberty and become fertile when they reach six months old, although they should not have puppies until they are fully matured. Smaller breeds mature when they reach 1 year old but larger breeds only mature after 2 years old.

And 30.30% reported miscarriage or other birthing complications. reported they retire the dog at 8 years old, 12.1% reported they retire the dog at 7 years old and the rest claim to retire the dogs between the ages of 3-6 years old. While dogs are fertile and can have puppies their whole lives, older female dogs are at risk of premature labor, stillborn puppies, and birthing complications. Therefore, female dogs should not be made to get pregnant past 5 or 6 years old. 30.30% of the breeders reported miscarriage or other birthing complications as being one of the most common medical issues affecting their female dogs.

93.9% of breeders reported that the retired dogs remain with them at the farm / their home. 6.06% reported that the dogs are sold or given for adoption.

While dog breeding & selling in itself is an exploitative business, by and large the female dogs are subjected to more abuse and suffering. These female dogs are often malnourished, not given proper veterinary care and are often forced to mate with a male by chaining them or tying them to 'rape stands'. A rape stand is a device designed to physically hold a female dog while a male dog mounts her. They are used in cases where the female dog is too aggressive and/or unwilling to otherwise mate of her own volition. 33.3% breeders reported that one of the most common issues they encounter with breeding is difficulties with getting the dogs to mate.



A female Golden Retriever being tied by her neck and head while being made to mate with a male.

Source: Pets Breeding Center

Date: 12 January 2022

Mother & pups

93.3% of the breeders reported that they separate the puppies from their mother and sell them before 8 weeks of age, which goes against internationally recognized dog welfare guidelines. Newborn pups need their mother not only to nurse from but also to teach them important social behaviors. Without her care, they may develop nutritional deficiencies, become ill or even experience behavioral issues later in life.

Breeding & selling experience

36.7% of the breeders sell directly to buyers, while 63.3% supply to pet shops. 84.8% of the breeders said that they find buyers through social media, TikTok and Facebook being the most popular platforms. 16.7% of the breeders don't do any background checks of the buyers. The 83.3% that did claim to do background checks, only did so through an informal conversation with the buyer at the time of selling. 97% of the breeders surveyed reported that they keep unsold pups with them and 3% reported that they manage to sell the pups at a heavily discounted rate.



A male British Bull Dog being advertised for sale on TikTok.

Source: Pets Breeding Center

Date: 25 June 2022

The current market rate for the most popular dog breeds as reflected in the survey findings are listed below:

Breed	Rate
German Shepherd	Rs. 8,000 – Rs. 45,000
Lhasa Apso	Rs. 10,000
Pug	Rs. 13,000 – Rs. 25,000
Japanese Spitz	Rs. 3000 – Rs. 6,500
Husky	Rs. 50,000 – Rs. 80,000
Chowchow	Rs. 90,000 – Rs. 120,000
French Bulldog	Rs. 30,000 – Rs. 45,000
Boxer	Rs. 18,000 – Rs. 25,000
British Bulldog	Rs. 250,000
Dalmatian	Rs. 7,000 – Rs. 8,000
Pomeranian	Rs. 30,000 – Rs. 75,000
Cocker Spaniel	Rs. 12,000 – Rs. 15,000
Rottweiler	Rs. 25,000 – Rs. 45,000
Golden Retriever	Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 30,000
Labrador	Rs. 17,000 – Rs. 25,000
American Bully	Rs. 200,000
St. Bernard	Rs. 40,000 – Rs. 45,000
French Mastiff	Rs. 70,000 – Rs. 80,000

The price depends on the gender and the 'quality' of the puppy, with males generally being sold at higher rates.

27.3% of the buyers do not meet the parents of the puppy before buying. 24.2% of the breeders do not follow up with buyers to check up on the wellbeing of the pups and 12.1% of the breeders do not accept returns or make provisions for rehoming an unwanted puppy.

For 70% of the breeders, dog breeding was their primary source of income and 90% admitted that financial incentive was the main reason for being a breeder and 83.3% said that they will continue to breed dogs for the foreseeable future.

Some of the breeders also breed other pet animals such as cats, guinea pigs, hamsters, mice, fish, rabbits as well as cows, turkeys and ducks.

Licensing & tax avoidance

In Nepal, breeders are not required to have a license to breed and sell pets, which means, essentially anyone can become a breeder. In the absence of any regulations, this industry continues to grow, completely unchecked at the detriment of these long-suffering animals. Furthermore, 76.7% of the breeders do not have license to sell live animals and 33.3% are not registered as businesses, even though they are generating financial gains through the selling of dogs, cats and other pet animals. The number could be higher as this is just based on the response given by the breeders. This finding clearly indicates that such businesses are also cheating the state through tax avoidance.



Dog sellers – status in Kathmandu valley

For the purpose of this report, 26 dog sellers in Kathmandu valley were surveyed. During the course of our research, we came to learn that most dog breeders are also sellers and vice versa. The sellers included in this survey are specifically those who own a pet shop which sells dogs and other animals as well as those selling through social media platforms. The following dog sellers were surveyed for this research:

Windy Hill Pet Shop	Dynasty Pets Nepal	Little Paws Nepal	Abstract Pets	Mandikatar Pet Shop	Namaste Kennel Club
Yubraj Baral	ABC Kennel Club	Annapurna Vet Clinic	Narayan Poudel	New ABC Kennel Club	Saru Pet Shop
Lumbini Kennel Club	Dog Nepal Pet Shop	Mobile Veterinary Hospital	No Name	Triveni Kennel Club	Ganapati Pet Shop
Rajdhani Pet Shop	Gorkhali Veterinary Hospital	Buddha Kennel Club	Banepa Pet Care	Bhaktapur Pet Zone	Rimal Vet Center
Kathmandu Kennel Club	Pange Pet Zone				



Retriever & Beagle puppies kept inside a cage without any bedding, water or food.

Location: Abstract Pets, Jhamsikhel

Date: 26 June 2022

Survey findings

Animal records

The average dog seller in Kathmandu valley houses 1 female puppy and 2 male puppies in their premises. In cases where they themselves are not breeders, they buy puppies from breeders based on the orders they receive from their customers. The most common dog breeds they sell are:

Labrador	British Bulldog	German Shepherd	Dalmatian	Golden Retriever
Husky	Cocker Spaniel	Japanese Spitz	Tibetan Mastiff	Pomeranian
Boxer	Pug	Doberman	St. Bernard	Beagle
Lhasa Apso				

Staff records

On average, sellers have 1.5 staff. 90% of the sellers reported that they have at least one staff formally trained on dog handling, disease & hygiene, food & diet and canine first aid. It is important to note that despite claiming that their staff had received training on the above mentioned areas, none were able to provide a certificate to support their claims.

56.7% of the sellers were not familiar about any animal welfare regulations in Nepal. 30.3% of sellers surveyed were practicing veterinarians. 51.5% of sellers were practicing vet technicians.

Shelter

On average, one dog is provided a cage space of 1.3 sq. ft. and is kept inside the cage for up to 10 hours a day. Only 6.7% of the sellers said they provide heaters for the dogs during winter and 43.3% said they provide fans during the summer. 96.7% of sellers said they provide bedding but these were not visible during our visits. 73.3% said they do not leave puppies at the shop premises overnight. 80% of the sellers do not take the pups out of the cage during the day for walks and exercise. Puppies need a lot of exercise and enrichment, therefore keeping them inside cages for several hours can have a detrimental effect on their health, wellbeing and behavior. 72.7% of the sellers let the puppies urinate & defecate inside the cage.

Food & water

On average, the sellers reported that puppies are fed 3.5 times a day and they are given a diet of rice and meat. 3.3% of the sellers did not provide clean drinking water at all times.

Health & treatment

9.09% of the sellers reported that they currently have at least one puppy with underlying health conditions. The most common health issues seen in the puppies are Distemper, Parvo, parasites, digestion, mange, rickets and diarrhea. 12.1% of the sellers do not vaccinate their pups. 27.3% of the sellers reported that they have euthanized an unhealthy puppy in the past. 30.3% said that they are given for adoption, 54.5% sell them at a heavily discounted rate and 9.09% said they return the pups to the breeder.

Selling experience

46.7% of the sellers do not determine whether buyers are suitable to sell dogs to. 93.3% of the sellers say their main incentive for selling dogs was financial and for 83.3%, dog selling was their primary source of income. 76.7% of the sellers plan to continue selling dogs for the foreseeable future.

63.3% of the sellers reported that the main problem they faced in regards to dog selling was puppies being returned by the buyers mostly due to issues with breed purity, health & behavioral problems.

33.3% of the sellers sold puppies aged between 5–6.5 weeks, 42.5% sold puppies that were 6 weeks and 3.03% sold them at 6.5 weeks. All of these fall below the recommended age of 8 weeks for the puppy to be separated from its mother and littermates. 54.5% of the sellers returned unsold puppies to the breeder and 27.3% give them for adoption. 21.2% of the sellers do not accept returned puppies and do not make any provisions to find an alternative home for the returned pup.

The current market rate for the most popular dog breeds as reflected in the survey findings are listed below:

Breed	Rate
Tibetan Mastiff	Rs. 500,000
French Bulldog	Rs. 65,000
British Bulldog	Rs. 100,000
Japanese Spitz	Rs. 4,000 – Rs. 8,000
German Shepherd	Rs. 13,000 – Rs. 30,000
Dalmatian	Rs. 10,000 – Rs. 17,000
Golden Retriever	Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 30,000
Beagle	Rs. 70,000
Pug	Rs. 10,000 – Rs. 20,000
Husky	Rs. 60,000
Pomeranian	Rs. 60,000
Cocker Spaniel	Rs. 13,000 – Rs. 17,000
Boxer	Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 25,000
Labrador	Rs. 24,000 – Rs. 30,000
Lhasa Apso	Rs. 10,000 – Rs. 15,000

Some of the sellers also sell other animals such as cats, birds, hamsters and fish.

Licensing & tax avoidance

69.7% of the sellers surveyed reported that they do not have a license to sell live animals from their shop premises. 9.09% reported that their business is not registered. 15.15% of the sellers said that they do not provide buyers with any VAT or PAN receipts for the purchase of the puppy. As with the breeders, this also indicates a common practice of tax avoidance within this industry. While we do not have data on the number of dog breeders and sellers in Nepal, it is fair to say that a sizeable population is engaging in this business, profiting from it, while also committing tax avoidance.

Dog buyers – status in Kathmandu valley

For the purpose of this report, 62 dog buyers who bought dogs from Kathmandu Valley were surveyed. The average dog buyer surveyed for this report is a 26 year old female with 1.5 dogs. 26% of the people surveyed were first-time buyers and 20.97% of the buyers also had adopted dogs. The success of irresponsible dog breeders in selling puppies often comes from buyers' ignorance and also the fact that the buyer is limited in the action they can take if a puppy later suffers from physiological or genetic problems.

Animal records

42% of the owned dogs are female and 58% are male. 38% of the dog buyers said that they preferred male dogs as with female dogs they would worry about periods and unwanted pregnancies.

The buyers surveyed had the following breed of dogs:

Lhasa Apso	Cocker Spaniel	Doberman	Pug	Japanese Spitz
German Shepherd	French Bulldog	Dalmatian	Golden Retriever	Schnauzer
Labrador	Tibetan Mastiff	Pomeranian	Boxer	Husky
St. Bernard	Cavapoo			

Shelter

29% of the buyers keep their dogs in the garden and 58% keep them inside the house. 13% of the buyers keep their dogs locked in a cage, 22.6% said they regularly chain/cage their dogs and 11.2% keep their dogs chained/caged for more than 7 hours a day. There have been cases where dogs are chained for days, months or even years. Most dog owners tend to chain or cage their dogs in case of aggression or high energy. Continuous dog chaining is inhumane and poses serious threats to a dog's physical and psychological well-being. Dog chaining inherently creates a life of misery for the dogs and it also creates other hazards such as the dog not being able to escape from danger, not receiving adequate exercise, may die of strangulation, may become more aggressive, susceptible to over-heating / freezing, suffer from neck abrasions, suffer

high exposure to external parasites, forced to urinate & defecate in the same area where they eat and sleep and may bark continuously due to frustration & boredom.⁵

Food & water

87% of the buyers feed their dog a diet of rice and meat, while 46% also give them store bought food.

Health and breed awareness

30.6% of the buyers did not do any research about their preferred breed before buying and 59.6% did not know anything about the needs or inherent health risks of the breed. When buyers purchase a puppy on impulse, they don't have the knowledge or time needed to provide the right care for the dog. Consequently, the dog is either neglected, abused or abandoned.

Based on our rescue experiences, Boxers seems to be one the most abandoned breeds. This could be because Boxers are very high energy and require a lot of exercise and enrichment, in the absence of adequate exercise, Boxers can become very destructive, which thus could lead to abuse, neglect and abandonment.

21% of the buyers reported their dogs had underlying health conditions at the time of buying, which they were not informed of, such as skin disease, viral diseases, kennel cough, other infectious diseases and genetic conditions. Many popular breeds tend to be in poor state of health due to genetically inherited diseases and conditions. Not only do the dogs suffer, but there is an emotional and financial cost to owners too, many of whom obtain their dogs in good faith. 64.5% of the buyers had no previous information about the breeder or seller they were buying from. 59.7% of the buyers did not receive any health cards for their puppies and 30.6% did not receive any information about responsible dog ownership.

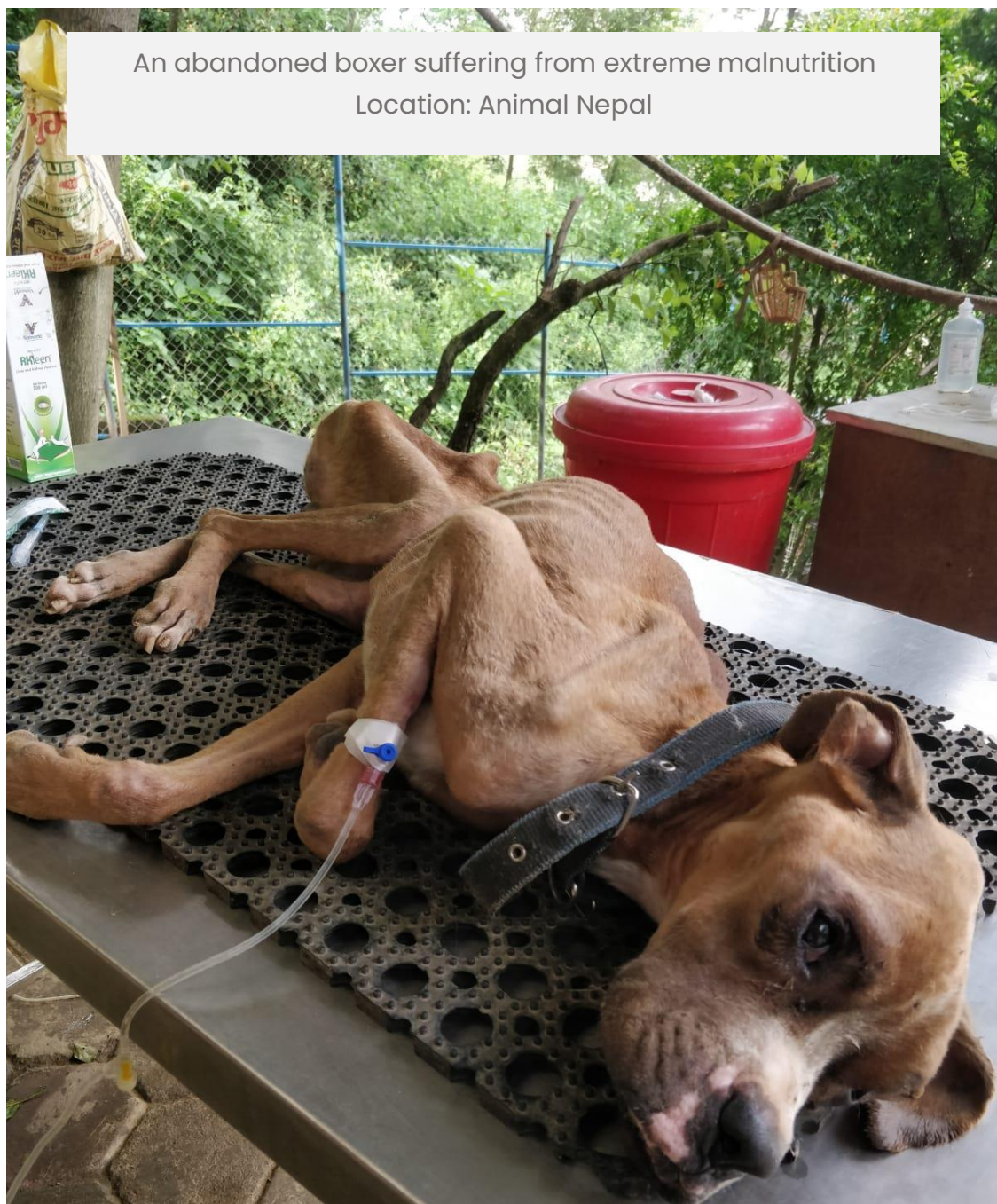
79% of the buyers did not have their dogs spayed or neutered because, because 19.4% said they did not have the time to take their dogs for the procedure, 21% want to breed their dogs and 59.6% are not aware about animal birth control.

⁵ <https://www.nhes.org/the-dangers-of-dog-chaining/>

Buying experience & preferences

While 80.6% of the buyers surveyed knew about adopting a dog, 77.46% of said they chose to buy a pedigree dog due to a preference for a specific breed. 9.7% of the buyers said they were not aware about adoption, 9.7% chose not to adopt due to fear of street dogs and 1.61% bought a dog due to social pressure. 11.3% of the buyers said that owning a street dog would be considered less fashionable. 83.9% of buyers said that their social circle think that adoption is the kinder and compassionate option, yet 75% of buyers said that their social circle would still opt to buy a dog.

There is a growing trend in Nepal of people choosing to buy pedigree dogs and such decisions are mostly influenced by peer groups and mostly social media. Especially when popular public figures share photos of their pedigree dogs, a lot of their younger



An abandoned boxer suffering from extreme malnutrition
Location: Animal Nepal

followers are inclined to copy them. But these picture perfect photos and videos of celebrity dogs shared online often have a sordid backstory. High demand means a lucrative market for unscrupulous and unregulated breeders and sellers.

On average the buyers bought the puppies at 52 days old. 69.4% of the buyers did not meet the parents of their puppy. Buyers said they would prefer one seller over another on the basis of following - cleanliness (26.2%), dog treatment (41%), shop aesthetics (14.8%), friendliness (44.3%) and expertise (34.4%). The most amount spent by a buyer on a dog was Rs. 75,000 for a French Bull dog and the least was Rs. 2,500 for a Japanese Spitz. 61.29% of the buyers were not given VAT / PAN bills at the time of purchase.

43.5% of the buyers said that they were not aware of animal welfare regulations in Nepal. 96.6% of the buyers said they knew little to nothing about the dog breeding industry. 64.5% of the buyers said they did not know or had never thought about what happens to old, sick and unsold dogs and puppies.

Aasha Mamu, a Boxer mix was abandoned by her family following a wanted pregnancy & cancer diagnosis.

Location: Animal Nepal

Date: 29 June 2021



Conclusion and recommendations

Dog breeding is a rapidly growing industry in Nepal and one that must be regulated with the introduction and implementation of meaningful legislation, standards and regulations. This assessment of the dog breeding industry in Kathmandu valley provides a comprehensive outlook on the different aspects of the sector.

Animal Nepal believes that the following recommendations should be discussed, researched, expanded and implemented with the involvement of the government, Nepal Veterinary Council, Nepal Veterinary Association, key welfare organizations, dog geneticists and key stakeholders from the breeding/selling industry.

Recommendations for breeders

1. There should be a government recognized public body, such as [The Kennel Club](#) who will be responsible for developing a code of ethics, which will set standards for good practice in breeding according to animal welfare guidelines. This body should include a wide variety of members such as pet owners, welfarists, vets and breeders. The body should be transparent, open to scrutiny and willing to engage with outside bodies and individuals. This body will operate on a membership basis and it will work together with the local authority and the government to impose regulations on its members.
2. Introduction of an Accredited Breeder Scheme, so that people who do choose to buy can make an informed choice by buying from accredited breeders that focus on the health and welfare of the dogs.
3. The said body should do random checks on breeding facilities so that those not meeting the standards can be appropriately penalized.
4. Breeder should provide all information about the puppy at the point of sale through a puppy sale contract. This is so that the breeder can assure any prospective buyers that they have taken all necessary due care to ensure the good health & welfare of the puppy.

Recommendations for the government

1. Develop and introduce an **Animal Welfare Act** to set out basic provisions concerning the promotion of animal welfare and preventing cruelty, with regulations specific to the pet breeding industry. The Act should impose a duty of care on all owners and keepers of animals to ensure the welfare needs of their animals are met. These include the animal's need:
 - For a suitable environment
 - For a suitable diet
 - To be able to exhibit normal behavior patterns
 - To be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and
 - To be protected from pain, suffering, injury and diseases
2. **Ban third party sales** and buyers must buy directly from the breeder or adopt from a shelter. The licensed dog breeder must also show puppies interacting with their mother at their place of birth. Pet shops should not be allowed to sell live animals.
5. Breeders should obtain a **license for breeding** from their local authority. License must be displayed prominently at premises and the license number must accompany any advertisement for the sale of the animals. Local authorities will award a license based on an accreditation system. A local authority officer will carry out unannounced inspections to licensed premises and if the breeder does not meet the animal welfare standards, then the license can be revoked and animals confiscated. Licensed breeders must keep up-to-date records of all animals, and produce them for inspection when requested to do so by an authorized person.
3. **Impose strict restrictions on the importing and exporting of dogs** for commercial purposes by ensuring the dogs have been screened for genetic health conditions and any other transmissible diseases.
4. **Introduce legal liability for inherited diseases** in animals under the consumer protection law where if a breeder sells a dog with inherited diseases, then the buyer can take legal action against the breeder.
5. **Set up an independent committee** made of geneticists, veterinarians, welfare organizations and breeders to monitor, provide advice and make recommendations to the public body.

Recommendations for welfare organizations

1. **Launch public awareness campaigns.** If public awareness of the health and welfare problems of pedigree dogs increases then there will be demand for improvements and those breeders not meeting the demands will not sell as many puppies. Change will only really occur when there is a financial incentive to do so and it needs to begin with the consumer.

Recommendations for the veterinary community

1. **Open affordable and accessible veterinary facilities** which can carry out disease screenings of inherited health conditions. Dogs that are shown to be carriers of inherited health conditions should not be used for breeding.
2. In general, veterinarians should **make ongoing efforts to keep up-to-date with new genetic information**, and should make client and breeder education a routine part of his or her practice. This can be accomplished via communication in the examination room, especially when a client is discussing the purchase of a new dog. It can involve methods such as placing informative brochures in the clinic waiting area, incorporating articles and fact sheets in clinic newsletters, writing articles for the opinion section of the local newspaper, and providing educational seminars for local breeders.

In an unprecedented move, on February 2022, the Oslo district court in Norway banned the breeding of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels and British Bulldogs on the grounds that it inflicts harm on them. Inbreeding has caused these two breeds, among others to develop a long list of hereditary illnesses that affects almost all of them. Following the verdict by the Oslo district court, there could also be a ban on the breeding of French Bulldogs and Pugs. Brachycephalic (flat-faced) dogs struggle to breathe, they overheat and struggle with arthritis and obesity due to their physique. In the UK, all flat-faced dogs are expected to be banned from appearing in advertisements.

Similarly, in a landmark move, on 6 April 2020, the British government introduced a new legislation – Lucy’s Law – to tackle the dog breeding industry. Lucy’s Law means that anyone wanting to get a new puppy or kitten in England, must either buy direct from the breeder as third party sales are likely to result in poorer welfare conditions or consider adopting from a rescue center. Licensed dog breeders are required to show puppies interacting with their mothers in their place of birth. If a business sells puppies or kittens without a license, they could receive unlimited fine or be sent to prison for up

to six months. The law also bans licensed sellers from selling puppies and kittens under 8 weeks old.

This shows that there is a growing recognition globally about the harmful effects on animal welfare through the breeding and selling dogs and other animals. As such, governments, animal welfare organizations and breeders themselves are taking decisive steps in strictly regulating this industry. Animal Nepal is hopeful that this report will set things in motion in protecting the wellbeing of the animals in the pet breeding industry of Nepal.

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