

## **What is life like for breeding females in USDA regulated breeding facilities?**

### **USDA Standards for Breeding Females:**

#### **Sec. 3.6 Primary enclosures.**

*(c)(ii) Each bitch with nursing puppies must be provided with an additional amount of floor space, based on her breed and behavioral characteristics, and in accordance with generally accepted husbandry practices as determined by the attending veterinarian. If the additional amount of floor space for each nursing puppy is less than 5 percent of the minimum requirement for the bitch, such housing must be approved by the attending veterinarian.*

#### **Sec. 3.8 Exercise for dogs.**

*Dealers, exhibitors, and research facilities must develop, document, and follow an appropriate plan to provide dogs with the opportunity for exercise. The plan, at a minimum, must comply with each of the following:*

*(a) Dogs housed individually. Dogs over 12 weeks of age, except bitches with litters.*

### **What does this mean for the dogs?**

Using the USDA formula for floor space determination, (length of dog + 6") X (length of dog + 6"), the dog pictured below, which measures approximately 36" from the tip of the nose to the base of the tail, requires 12 square feet of floor space.

Assuming her 9 puppies are provided the standard 5% of the mother's floor space, she is given only 5 ½ square feet of additional space to live with 9 puppies.

Mother and puppies require a total of 17 ½ square feet of floor space.

The cage they are in measures 17 ½ square feet and meets the floor space requirements under USDA guidelines.

This will be her life for 4 months of the year. She will live, eat, drink, sleep, urinate, defecate and nurse her puppies in this cage. Once the puppies are weaned, she can be moved to a cage which is 5 ½ square feet smaller, based on USDA guidelines.

Since USDA guidelines exclude nursing mothers from the opportunity for exercise, she has no way of ever escaping her nursing, growing puppies. This often results in malnutrition and complete physical and mental exhaustion.

There is no limit on the number of times nor number of years a female can be bred. Her puppies will be sold and she will be bred again in 6 months. She will be pregnant or nursing puppies for 8 months out of the year.



The photos below are of a typical whelping shed. It was for sale at a USDA sanctioned dog auction. The mother and her puppies will live inside the boxes with the grate on top.



The following are more photos of breeding females living in conditions which meet or exceed USDA standards.

