

## Dogs, Cats Removed From Pennsylvania Kennel

**Agents issue owner a license revocation order for violating state's dog law.**

Posted: October 6, 2008, 5 a.m. EDT

More than 56 dogs and cats were removed Thursday from a kennel in Emmaus, Pa., after investigators found severe sanitation issues.

Agents with the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Department of Agriculture raided the Almost Heaven Kennel and found conditions that they believed were violations of the dog law, said Chris Ryder, department spokesman.

The kennel owner, Derbe Eckhart, will be cited for violating the state's dog law and will have to sell or transfer enough dogs to no longer be considered a kennel. Any kennel housing more than 25 dogs is required to be licensed and inspected.

Attempts to contact Eckhart on Friday were unsuccessful. He disputes the allegations, according to Associated Press reports.

A revocation of his license was issued. He has 10 days to appeal the claim before it is revoked, Ryder said.

"Mr. Eckhart allowed conditions at his kennel to deteriorate into a deplorable state," said Jessie Smith, special deputy secretary for dog law enforcement. "While we continue investigating his operations, we are taking this action to protect the health and welfare of the animals there."

Another step in looking out for animals, Ryder said, would be the passage of House Bill 2525, which would strengthen Pennsylvania dog laws and improve standards for the health and safety of dogs in commercial breeding kennels without affecting other types of kennels that house dogs. The legislation passed the House in September and awaits approval in the Senate before it can be sent to the governor for approval.