

## Officials Close Pennsylvania Dog Kennel

**More than 200 dogs were seized from Almost Heaven Kennel in Emmaus.**

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Animal welfare officials have seized more than 200 dogs from a breeder in Pennsylvania, shutting down the operation.

Agents of the state Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement and the Humane Society of the United States removed 216 dogs from the Almost Heaven Kennel in Emmaus, Pa., on June 23.

The dogs were seized after the Commonwealth Court rejected kennel owner Derbe Eckhart's appeal of his license revocation. The Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement refused Eckhart's 2009 kennel license application after an October 2008 inspection and several subsequent inspections showed "significant" violations of the state's new Dog Law, according to the state Department of Agriculture. The Dog Law, adopted in October 2008, mandates stricter standards for commercial dog breeders.

The seized dogs were to be taken to the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center in Harrisburg, where they were to be evaluated before being put up for adoption. The agents said they left behind 25 dogs, which is the maximum number of dogs allowed without a kennel license.

The Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Animal Cruelty (PSPCA), which visited the kennel on June 24 following the state's raid, has removed 22 animals from the site.

Kim Wolf, PSPCA spokeswoman, said other animals were at the facility. However, she said, the PSPCA's veterinarian determined only 18 cats and four dogs needed to be seized, because those animals were in "immediate need of medical care."

The PSPCA has charged Eckhart with two counts of animal cruelty. The PSPCA originally planned to file 22 misdemeanor charges, but reduced the charges to two at the advice of the Leigh County District Attorney's office, Wolf said.