

Father, Son Caught in Dog Kennel Crackdown

A Pennsylvania man pleaded guilty to kennel violations and his son is awaiting trial for similar charges.

Posted: February 7, 2008, 5 a.m. EST

Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell's crackdown on unsatisfactory kennel operations in the state has led to a trial and a guilty plea for a father-son team of kennel owners.

John E. Esh pleaded guilty to five counts of kennel violations after state dog wardens found dogs with inadequate rabies records living in small kennels filled with excessive amounts of feces at his Twin Maple Farm Kennel during a November inspection, according to the Pennsylvania Agriculture Department. Esh received the maximum fine of \$300 for each count, for a total of \$1,500.

Esh's son, Daniel P. Esh, is facing a trial on four misdemeanor counts of kennel violations based on a November inspection of his Scarlet-Maple Farm Kennel. During the inspection, dog wardens found moldy food, excessive feces, poor maintenance, inadequate records, and dogs housed in cages that were too small, according to the Pennsylvania Agriculture Department.

In October 2006, Governor Rendell announced major changes to Pennsylvania's dog law, after the state had carried a reputation for having poor dog breeding operations. Since then, the governor has added a kennel compliance team to enforce dog laws as well as a special deputy and special prosecutor. In addition, the state's kennel inspection records are now posted online. Rendell proposed additional changes last month that mainly target large, commercial breeding operations and mandate a higher standard of care.

"Our dog wardens are helping make sure that kennels in Pennsylvania meet the state's standards for cleanliness and upkeep, providing for the health and safety of the animals they house," said Jessie Smith, the state's special deputy secretary for dog law enforcement. "While we continue to make progress, we still must work to improve conditions for dogs in Pennsylvania, so consumers will know they are buying healthy animals from licensed kennels."