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CONTACT: Tahli Kouperstein, (240) 662-2221  
Tahli\_kouperstein@discovery.com OR  
Matthew Windsor, (240) 662-6781  
Matthew\_windsor@discovery.com

**DISTURBING QUESTIONS ABOUT LARGEST U.S. PET RETAILER  
ARE RAISED AS *ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: PETLAND***

***-Undercover Operation Reveals Polluted Breeding Conditions-***

(Silver Spring, Md.) – Millions of Americans own dogs and know the joy of bringing a pet home for the first time. Children are filled with excitement at the promise of a visit to the pet store; this heart-lifting emotion is topped only by the ultimate thrill of bringing a puppy home. But how many know about the torment many of these puppies endured prior to arriving at the pet shop and before being lucky enough to find a loving home? Surprisingly, many people are completely unaware of the congested and polluted kennels that are “ground zero” for commercial puppy breeding.

Unfortunately, many pet owners trust pet stores when they should be more wary. On **Monday, May 17, at 10 PM (ET/PT)**, Animal Planet’s new special **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: PETLAND** does the digging for you. This special reports on a Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) investigation into Petland’s alleged sale of puppies from “puppy mills”-- which the retailer denies -- and a resulting lawsuit brought by Petland customers. Meet “Mike,” an undercover investigator for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), who’s investigating Petland, the largest retailer of puppies in the U.S. and its alleged connection to mass, commercial breeders suspected of producing unhealthy dogs. Mike begins his deep dive by sniffing out breeders who have sold puppies to their local Petlands. It’s a dangerous, ominous investigation as Mike comes across unwilling interviewees and roadblocks.

While hundreds of consumers have contacted the HSUS to complain about health problems in the puppies they purchased from Petland, the retailer firmly states they do not purchase from puppy mills. This special shows footage of employees saying that all of their

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puppies are provided by a USDA-certified breeder, yet Mike shows a connection between the retailer and breeders operating under questionable conditions.

Mike discovers a laundry list of possible violations and inhumane practices at numerous breeders including more than 140 dogs housed in chicken-wire kennels, water bowls encrusted with mold and containing green water, pungent aromas of wet dog and one breeder's confession that she kills healthy dogs because of their less-than-stellar looks.

“In our **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES** specials, we are committed to providing viewers with a raw and unrestricted access to crucial animal issues,” says Marjorie Kaplan, president and general manager of Animal Planet. “It’s our responsibility--however horrifying as it may be--to raise questions about the practice of mass dog breeding and to question whether hard profit is put before the welfare of animals.”

As commercial breeding of dogs has become a popular way to make a profit, more and more puppies are raised in revolting conditions and sold to pet stores. Too often, these dogs become seriously ill shortly after arriving in their new homes, and the consumers say they are left to pay the costly medical bills and suffer the emotional consequences including, in some cases, the harsh reality of an all-too-sudden death. **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: PETLAND** features several heartbreaking stories of families affected by Petland's alleged involvement with inhumane breeders.

**ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES** is a quarterly series reflecting the network's investigative strand. Last quarter, Animal Planet premiered **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: DOG FIGHTING**. The Petland special will be followed next quarter with **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: GANG DOGS**.

**ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: PETLAND** is produced for Animal Planet by Teale/Edwards Productions and Working Dog Productions. Sarah Teale and Tom Simon are executive producers for Teale/Edwards Productions Working Dog Productions. Dawn Sinsel is the executive producer for Animal Planet. The show was developed by Charlie Foley, vice president of development for Animal Planet.

Animal Planet Media (APM), a multi-media business unit of Discovery Communications, is the world's only entertainment brand that immerses viewers in the full range of life in the animal kingdom with rich, deep content via multiple platforms and offers animal lovers and pet owners access to a centralized online, television and mobile community for immersive, engaging, high-quality entertainment, information and enrichment. APM consists of the Animal Planet television network, available in more than 96 million homes in the US; online assets

[www.animalplanet.com](http://www.animalplanet.com), the ultimate online destination for all things animal; the 24/7 broadband channel, Animal Planet Beyond; Petfinder.com, the #1 pet-related Web property globally that facilitates pet adoption; and other media platforms including a robust Video-on-Demand (VOD) service; mobile content; and merchandising extensions.

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