



# What Are We Worth?

United All Breed Registry 888-908-9299

Originally published by email May 27, 2014

Imagine you're a state legislator. Animal rights people are all over you with data on how awful pet breeding is. You want to answer them. But with what?



Data! You need data! You need the kind of data that enables you to state with confidence "I'm not for any legislation that is detrimental to one of the biggest money-makers in our state."

As breeders, we can give our legislators and lobbyists the ammunition they need.

When the value of someone or something is not fully understood or appreciated, they can end up ignored or abused. I see it all the time... that new flowering plant I just added to the yard inevitably gets weed-eated by my husband if I don't give it a red flag on a tall stake! Our industry, the raising of pets, is in need of a red flag on a tall stake. What we do is not fully understood or appreciated.

The red flag we need is an economic impact report. What's that? It's a collection of numbers that proves that an activity generates income and benefits the community.

I worked in the arts for many years. While everyone likes a pretty painting or the sound of a live orchestra, the arts are typically non-profit activities and need support from donors and the government to keep afloat. By the 80's, belts were tightening and many arts groups and institutions were threatened with extinction. It became necessary to engage professionals to do economic impact studies in order to prove to our communities that they really didn't want to lose their arts activities. I recall one study that proved that the actual income



generated for the community from the purchase of two concert tickets was 4 times greater than the price of the tickets. That's because people who attend a concert also have to have dinner, have drinks, park their car, buy gas, and so forth.

Has your state breeder organization done an economic impact study?

Our home state, Missouri, is about to begin their first. It's a huge effort, involving dog breeding industry leaders and several agencies. The work is being facilitated by the Missouri Farm Bureau (insurance) Canine Interest Workgroup. Their role is to keep the effort moving forward, provide connections to credible experts to perform the study and act as a neutral third party when the data is aggregated (compiled). The University of Missouri Ag Economics staff is contributing to the planning, helping out with advice on privacy concerns, professionalism, survey mechanics, cost projection and aggregation methods.

Who's paying for it? That's the job of the chief beneficiaries: the pet breeding industry. In Missouri, industry leaders already pledged a big chunk of the costs, and the remainder will be solicited from members of our state's breeder clubs.

Participation is the key. Every breeder in the state will be sent a survey this summer. Hopefully, they will ALL be filled out and returned. Privacy of the data is guaranteed. It will all be pooled together to make one report without any kennel names on it.

The data will answer one question. The answer could be the secret to protecting the rights of animal breeders in this state PERMANENTLY. The question that will be answered:

***What is the economic value of the professional pet breeding industry to the State of Missouri?***

Remember, it's not just about the income from the puppy sale and the resulting taxes. Our contribution indirectly includes every can or bag of pet food purchased for that puppy for the duration of its life, every vet visit, every trip to the groomer, every stay at the doggie hotel, every doghouse purchase, collar purchase, toy purchase... are you beginning to get the picture?

So, Missouri breeders, get your pencil out when that survey arrives! Give our legislators the ammunition they need to defend your rights. Information is power. Inform them!

Breeders in other state that are reading this, if you haven't had an economic impact study done for the breeders in your state, you might want to contact the coordinator of the Missouri study for advice! His name is Kelly Smith. He's the Director of Marketing and Commodities for Missouri Farm Bureau. His email is kesmith@mofb.com

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