

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Petco Violates Agreement, Sells Rabbits in the Southern United States

Animal Advocates Demand Immediate End to Rabbit Sales at Petco

Palo Alto, CA — September 4, 2024 — In a blatant betrayal of its promises, Petco has resumed selling rabbits in southern U.S. stores, shattering its commitments made in 1994 and 2008 to cease all rabbit sales.

Selling rabbits in pet stores often leads to impulse buys by customers unaware of the extensive care and significant veterinary costs involved. These hasty purchases often lead to "summer dump season," when many pet rabbits are abandoned outdoors, becoming road-kill or prey for predators.

"Petco's decision to sell rabbits is hypocritical and shows blatant disregard for their past commitments," said Paige K. Parsons, President of the Rabbit.org Foundation (rabbit.org).

"It is a huge disappointment that Petco has decided to sell rabbits again, especially designer rabbits. It will negatively impact rabbit rescues nationwide," says Beth Woolbright, Executive Director of the House Rabbit Society (houserabbit.org).

"It's egregious that Petco plans to exploit ignorance by selling purebred 'boutique' rabbits. When you hear 'purebred,' think inbred. So many 'imperfect' animals are 'culled' to create breeds with short faces (brachycephaly) and lop ears," said Dana Krempels, PhD, evolutionary biologist and Senior Lecturer at the University of Miami. "These in-bred animals are genetic disasters, veterinary time bombs predisposed to chronic dental disease, ear infections, and other maladies. The process is cruel, and the result is expensive. Veterinary bills can quickly run into thousands."

1994: Petco vowed to stop selling rabbits under pressure from rabbit advocates.

2000: Petco broke its promise, secretly resuming rabbit sales.

2008: Petco made another promise to end rabbit sales and support in-store adoptions.

2024: Petco blatantly ignored its commitments, selling rabbits in Southern U.S. stores.

“Rabbits are among the most surrendered companion animals in the U.S.,” says Mary Cotter, former President of House Rabbit Society.

“It doesn’t have to be this way,” said Marinell Harriman, founder of the House Rabbit Society. “In 2008, Petco committed to partnering with local rabbit rescues and promoting adoptions, which we saw as a positive step for animal welfare. Sadly, Petco has broken those promises, putting profits over the well-being of rabbits.”

“We are deeply disappointed by Petco’s decision to sell rabbits in 25 stores nationwide, including three here in North Carolina,” said Jeanette Lyerly, co-founder of Triangle Rabbits. “As a rabbit rescue, we advocate for adopting homeless rabbits from shelters and rescue groups, not selling them in retail stores. So far in 2024, our small rescue was asked to take in over 175 rabbits. Shelters and rescue groups are overwhelmed.”

Rabbit.org Foundation demands Petco honor its commitments and end rabbit sales. “Everyone who cares about animals should speak out against Petco,” said Parsons. “Exploiting rabbits for profit is unacceptable.”

Rabbit.org Foundation improves the lives of rabbits through education and advocacy.

More at rabbit.org/activism/petco/

**Media Contact: Paige K. Parsons President, Rabbit.org Foundation 650-520-4290
paige@rabbit.org**