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**Missouri Farm Family Agriculture Alliance Statement on HSUS Ballot Proposal**

*Alliance urges Missourians not to sign petitions*

**JEFFERSON CITY, MO. (January 21, 2010)** – A ballot proposal has been approved for circulation by the Missouri Secretary of State that poses a threat to all animal agriculture. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is targeting Missouri dog breeders in a veiled attempt to regulate animal agriculture in Missouri. The so-called “Puppy Mill Cruelty Protection Act” needs to gather nearly 100,000 certified signatures before May, 2, 2010 to be placed on the ballot for a statewide vote.

“The HSUS is a known quantity among the agriculture community,” said Sharon Oetting, a Missouri Pork Producer and Missouri Farm Family Agriculture Alliance (MFFAA) spokesperson. “The HSUS is anti-animal agriculture and anti-farmer. Their own mission statement notes that they want to end livestock production and consumption. This proposal is less about the welfare of animals and more about achieving their stated goals, which is dangerous for Missouri’s agribusiness industry and poses an even bigger threat to the price and availability of food. In the next four decades, worldwide food needs will double while the land mass to produce that food will continue to shrink. Additionally, threats posed by groups such as HSUS, create another type of risk to that food supply. Missouri has effective rules and regulations in place that regulate dog breeders. It is important to remember, this ballot initiative is less about protecting puppies and more about setting a dangerous precedent for animal agriculture. Today’s farmers

are committed to the care and well being of all of their animals and strive to provide them with the best possible care and environment.”

The Missouri Department of Agriculture regulates the dog breeding industry in the state. While every industry may have a bad example, there are no better stewards of animal welfare than the kennel owners themselves who care deeply for their animals and treat them with compassion and integrity – it is the right thing to do and the economical thing to do. The MFFAA encourages the support of the local humane society and local animal shelters.

“We’re asking agriculture supporters to stand together and say no to HSUS,” said Oetting. “Dog owners will be first, but all animal agriculture is at risk of being targeted and so are the surrounding Midwestern agriculture states. The strength of Missouri’s agriculture industry is in all of our best interests. If a petition circulator asks you to sign this act, please tell them ‘NO’ and that you stand with Missouri farmers and support agriculture.”

#### **About the Missouri Farm Family Agriculture Alliance**

The Missouri Farm Family Agriculture Alliance is a Missouri nonprofit corporation being led by agriculture interests across Missouri to increase awareness about the increasing threats to the state’s most productive industry. Board members include Dr. Harold Edward of Diamond, Mo., Ms. Cindy O’Laughlin of Shelbina, Mo. and Dr. Dan Goehl of Canton, Mo.

The Alliance is encouraging supporters of the proud Missouri farm families in our state specifically and supporters of the agriculture industry generally to go to their website [www.moagriculture.com](http://www.moagriculture.com) to learn more about the latest threats to agriculture and what they can do to fight back. Additionally, the Alliance hopes that the discussion will prompt changes to the legal and regulatory climate affecting agriculture that will create new jobs, expand agriculture markets, and provide Missouri farmers and ranchers more support for their responsible farming practices and their healthy and abundant products.

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