

PUPPY FARMS

Many people enjoy sharing their homes with dogs because they make such loyal and loving companions. Sadly, there are people who will exploit this demand at the expense of the dogs in order to make money.

Puppy farms are places run by dog breeders purely for profit. Some puppy farms operate illegally without a licence, selling dogs to unsuspecting people through pet shops or small advertisements in newspapers. They operate right across the U.K., and are often located far away from the public eye.

As the purpose of these farms is to make money, breeders will cut as many costs as possible. They will keep a number of female dogs (bitches) who are used solely for breeding. Their puppies are taken from them far too early, and the mother dogs will be made pregnant again almost immediately. Their lives are a constant cycle of pregnancy and birth. This puts a vast physical strain on them, and, when they are worn out and no longer able to breed, they will be killed. Both the breeding bitches and their young, until sold, are kept in miserable conditions.

Investigators have found that puppy farm dogs are deprived of exercise and given only a minimum of food to keep them alive and able to breed. They are also deprived of adequate healthcare, and, in the cramped living conditions of the farms, disease is rife.

Illegal puppy farms sell the puppies far away from the farms so that the public do not know the conditions in which the animals have been kept. As the puppies frequently carry diseases, they often fall ill, sometimes fatally, shortly after the sale. The disappointed new owner will then be unable to trace the person who sold them their dog.

Licensed breeders are supposed to meet certain guidelines with regards to the welfare of the dogs. Mother dogs may only be bred from once a year, and there are

certain regulations about the space that should be made available to each animal. However, these regulations are minimal, and licensed establishments may not be routinely inspected to ensure that even these low standards are met. Profit is often still very much the primary motivation for these businesses.



The Dogs Trust states that 150 stray dogs are needlessly destroyed every week in the U.K. by local authorities that cannot cope with the numbers of abandoned pets. Thousands of other dogs in under-funded rescue centres desperately need homes. Is it

justifiable to breed even more dogs just to make money? Even 'good' breeders who care about the welfare of 'their' dogs are ultimately putting their profits before the welfare of dogs in general.

Some people want to buy from a breeder rather than a rescue centre so that they can get a pedigree (pure breed) dog. Mixed breed dogs are just as much fun to be with! They are just as affectionate and far more in need of a home. And, because they are not highly inbred – unlike pedigrees – they are likely to be far healthier. While breeders are producing animals and trading them as though they are mere products, other dogs end up living in rescue centres, or are tragically destroyed.

WHAT YOU CAN DO!

- **If you want a dog, think, can you give him or her a good home? Have you got time to walk a dog every day? Space for your dog to run around? Money to pay for his or her food and vets' bills for the rest of his or her life? Never get a dog on a whim.**
- **Never get a dog from an animal dealer. Rescue centres may charge a fee to cover their costs, but they do not treat animals as commodities.**
- **Tell your friends about puppy farms. Try to discourage them if they are considering buying a dog through an advertisement or pet shop.**
- **The Dogs Trust have more information on this subject. Their website is www.dogstrust.org.uk**
- **Contact Animal Aid for ideas on how you can help all animals, and join our Youth Group. Check out: www.youth4animals.com.**

**For more information on animal issues, please contact: Animal Aid, The Old Chapel, Bradford St, Tonbridge, TN9 1AW
Tel: 01732 364546 • www.animalaid.org.uk • www.youth4animals.com • email: info@youth4animals.com**