

Scandal of puppies smuggled to Britain for Xmas

Daily Mail Reporter

EASTERN European gangs are smuggling thousands of puppies into Britain in 'shocking conditions' to cash in on Christmas demand, a dog welfare charity has warned.

The Dogs Trust said nearly 100 pedigree puppies, which can net thousands of pounds each, were seized at the border in one week, adding that the record clamp-down was 'just the tip of the iceberg'.

High demand for trendy breeds such as pugs, dachshunds and chow chows helps fuel the 'sickening trade'.

Puppies suffering from behavioural and health problems are among thousands trafficked in, many from central and eastern Europe, the charity said.

Some as young as four weeks old resort to eating their own faeces as they are smuggled across Europe in cramped spaces with no air conditioning.

They are then presented to prospective buyers with fake rabies vaccination certificates.

In 2016, some 275,876 dogs travelled to Britain, more than treble the recorded number in 2011.

French bulldogs can cost up to £3,000, while a toy maltpoo in Northwich, Cheshire, was adver-



Sickening: These trendy chow chows were among thousands of puppies smuggled here

tised for £2,000. One owner in Weymouth, Dorsetshire, advertised a French bulldog online for £10,000.

Dogs Trust director Paula Boyden said: 'Buying an illegally imported puppy could cost well-meaning but unsuspecting families thousands of pounds in quarantine and vet bills and emotional heartache for the family if the

puppy falls ill or worse, dies.' In one recent case, seven Italian mastiffs were found with infections after having their ears and tails illegally cropped and docked with scissors and vodka meant to sterilise the wounds.

The charity advises prospective buyers to take new puppies to the vet as soon as possible and not to

buy from anyone who can supply various breeds on demand.

The maximum sentence for illegal importers is just three months.

A spokesman for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said: 'We are cracking down on animal trafficking with one of the toughest pet border checking regimes in the world.'

Snack nuts to week risk to

Daily Mail R

EATING a handful of nuts a week can help reduce the risk of heart disease, say scientists.

A study of 100,000 people, many over three decades old, found that those who ate the most nuts had the lowest risk of heart disease.

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The same is true for almonds, which are rich in healthy fats and fibre. The study found that those who ate the most nuts had the lowest risk of heart disease.

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