

BIG NEWS

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

THE Government is urging people to be more careful before buying a puppy or kitten, to help stamp out cruel breeders.

Some puppy and kitten breeders are more concerned with making money than taking care of their animals. Pets can be big business. Labrador puppies – Britain's favourite dog last year – can sell for more than £1,000 each.

Buying an animal that has been bred in poor conditions can cause terrible health problems for the pet and heartache for the new owner.

"The animals reared on puppy farms are often in awful conditions, which can lead to chronic [serious] health problems, behavioural issues and, in the most tragic cases, death," said Lord Goldsmith.

To combat this problem, the Government has put together lots of information for people who are looking to buy a new four-legged friend. The advice might help people avoid huge vet bills, or buying an aggressive pet – which can result from animals being separated from their mothers too early.

In April, pets in England will get even more protection when Lucy's Law comes into force. The new law will mean that only the people who breed



puppies and kittens will be able sell the animals. In the past, puppy and kitten farms have sold the animals on to pet shops or to traders. This hides the cruel conditions at the farm, or health problems with the mother. It's hoped the new law will put an end to cruel puppy and kitten farms.

If your family is thinking of getting a puppy or kitten, please read the advice first at getyourpetsafely.campaign.gov.uk.

Questions on: 'Paws for thought'

1) Who is giving people advice on buying pets?

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First News

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The RSPCA charity

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The Government

2) Can you explain why pets can be 'big business'?

3) Buying a pet from an unkind breeder can cause heartache for the pets and people. Make a list of the problems it can cause.

4) The Government would like "to stamp out cruel breeders". What does 'stamp out' mean here?

5) Puppies and kittens should never be sold under the age of eight weeks. What can happen if they are taken from their mothers too early?

6) What is going to happen in April?

7) Look at the last paragraph. This website address ends .gov.uk What does this tell you?

8) Why is 'Paws for thought' such a great headline. Make sure you explain the **pun**!