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USPCA fury at PPS order to hand over seized pups

BY STEPHEN BREEN
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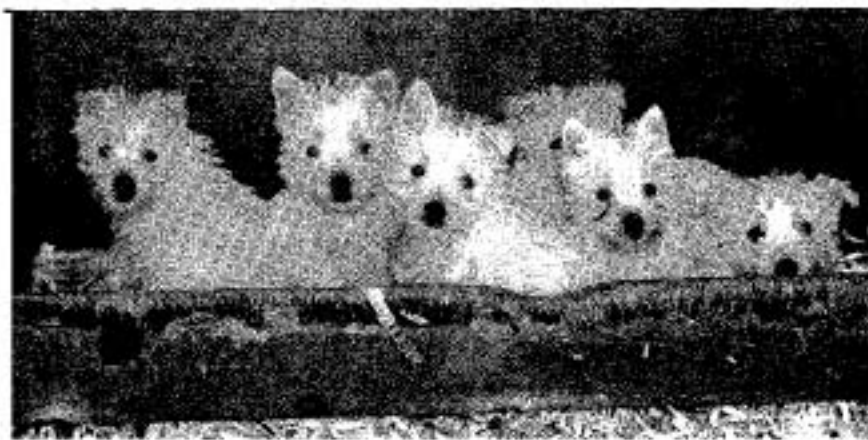
A BITTER row erupted last night after prosecutors ordered an Ulster animal charity to return 45 rescued dogs to a suspected puppy farm.

Outraged USPCA chief executive Stephen Philpott hit out at the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) for instructing him to hand over the Westland terriers, rottweilers and labradors.

The dogs were taken from the alleged illegal dog breeding operation, following a USPCA raid.

But the charity has been forced to hand them all back.

Sunday Life obtained a copy



FORLORN: Some of the pups found during the raid

of the PPS order, which ruled the animals were being returned because it was "not clear" Mr Philpott was trained in animal welfare and because there was "insufficient" evidence.

But the charity worker, who has provided evidence in some of Ulster's most high profile animal welfare cases in the last 14 years, has vowed

to fight against the decision.

Said the USPCA boss: "We are absolutely aghast at this decision. The PPS couldn't even get the date of the offence right. They haven't heard the end of this.

"How can a breeder claim to be respectable if his dogs are riddled with worms and fleas. If this is not animal cruelty, I don't know what it is?"

"I am sure all animal lovers will be outraged at this decision and I would urge them to stand shoulder to shoulder with us."

He added: "When we went to this place the smell was horrendous and this has to be in the top five places we have raided for animal cruelty offences."

The charity has asked the new Assembly to address the matter and is also considering putting video footage of the raid on its website.

During the raid at the suspected puppy farm, the USPCA discovered dogs eating garlic potatoes, eating food placed on top of their own faeces, munching on out-of-date food and bogus pedigree papers.

● **Animal torturers caged for Ulster's worst puppy farm.**
— see Page 13.