

Picture: CHARLIE SHOEMAKER



PEDIGREE CHUM: Michaela says consider adopting a rescue dog like her beloved Rio

TV's Michaela slams craze for 'designer' dogs

TV PRESENTER Michaela Strachan says she fears for the health of Britain's dogs as owners opt for "designer" pets that look good in social media snaps.

The host of BBC's Springwatch said some owners now cared more about their dog's appearance than their wellbeing.

Michaela, 53, who owns terrier-mix rescue dog Rio, warned that many pedigree pets suffer from a host of health problems and said people should consider adopting from shelters.

She said: "I'm anti-pedigree dogs that are bred for their looks and not their health. I think it's become a massive problem in the UK especially.

"There's some really, really unhealthy breeds out there that have been bred because people want them as an accessory and they want them to look a certain way.

"It's really sad the way pedigree dogs are going, dogs that can't even breathe. It's complete nuts and madness – and there are so many dogs that need rescuing."

Michaela urged people to read up on the right breed to suit their lifestyle and the

By **Rachel Spencer**

importance of vaccinations and flea treatments before thinking about getting a pet.

She is raising awareness of the importance of protecting pets against fleas and ticks as part of a campaign called The Big Flea Project, with MSD Animal Health.

A study with the University of Bristol which checked 1,475 dogs and cats for fleas found one in four cats and one in seven dogs were carrying them.

Animal experts said more than half of owners, 57 per cent, did not understand the life cycle of fleas and that having them can make owners ill too.

Michaela said: "People told us horrific stories about fleas being in their car and every time they sat in their car they were bitten. It's uncomfortable for pets and their skin. They can get terrible reactions and it's unpleasant for yourself."

● *To find out more about the campaign and how to treat and prevent flea and tick infestations, visit bigfleaoproject.co.uk*

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