

Tail Docking Statements

compiled by



Akita Club of America

American Brittany Club

American Miniature Schnauzer Club

American Rottweiler Club

American Spaniel Club

Doberman Pinscher Club of America

Field Spaniel Society of America

German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America

Miniature Pinscher Club of America

Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America

Poodle Club of America

Staffordshire Terrier Club of America

US Australian Shepherd Association

US Kerry Blue Terrier Club

Vizsla Club of America

Weimaraner Club of America

AKITA CLUB OF AMERICA



P.O. Box 103
Islip Terrace, NY 11752-0103

April 15, 2009

Please Oppose AB7218

The Akita Club of America is an AKC member club and the National Parent Club for the Akita Breed. Our membership is nationwide, including many members from the state of New York. Akita Club members attend dog shows throughout your state, with many traveling from across the country to attend the prestigious Westminster Dog Show. If you pass this bad piece of legislation you will effectively put an end to these dog shows and thereby deprive your communities of the revenue generated by hosting them. Fifty AKC Recognized breeds dock tails and would not be permitted to exhibit at New York shows under this legislation making it impossible for the AKC clubs to host their events. Clubs would be forced to look for venues outside of New York State in which to hold their shows.

Though Akitas are not a docked breed, our members understand the need for the humane docking of tails for many sporting dogs and Terrier breeds. This procedure is done to protect these dogs from injury while they perform the work that they are bred to do. Docking of puppies, usually done at less than five days of age, is a relatively minor discomfort because of immature nervous systems and cartilage in the tails. Pups return to their moms to nurse immediately after the procedure with barely a moment's interruption. Compared to the pain and major surgery required if tails are bloodied or broken when older dogs wag their tail with excitement while hunting in dense brush, or terriers go to ground and turn in the small holes, the docking of a puppy tail is far more humane, compassionate, and practical. The Akita Club of America believes that decisions about procedures such as tail docking should be left between breeders/owners and their veterinarians and not legislated. Certainly, making owners of docked dogs, which they may have purchased as already docked older dogs, guilty of misdemeanor offenses, with up to \$500 fines is unacceptable.

Finally, The Akita Club of America is appalled that a bill is being considered which contains specific language encouraging New York based animal rights groups to sue those who own/exhibit dogs with docked tails.

The Akita Club of America strongly requests that you oppose AB 7218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Lawrence J. Kaplan
Corresponding Secretary



10370 Fleming Road • Carterville, Illinois 62918
Phone: 618-985-2336 • Fax: 618-985-5103 • trimmatchbritts@midamer.net

American Brittany Club, Inc.

SPONSORS OF THE BRITTANY

Mary Jo Trimble
Executive Secretary

April 6, 2009

To: Members of the New York Assembly
Agriculture Committee
Assemblyman William Magee, Chairman

RE: OPPOSE A 7218 Docking Bill

The Directors of the American Brittany Club, Inc., an Illinois chartered 501-C 7, Corporation request a “no” vote on A 7218.

Our organization is an AKC and an American Field sanctioned group created and devoted to the breeding, care, and development of the Brittany as a quality hunting dog. We have over 2000 members throughout the United States and 2 Regional affiliate clubs in New York. We have numerous regional clubs on the East Coast whose hundreds of members participate in field trials, shows, and other performance events in the State of New York. We are just one of many parent Clubs who are devoted to good breeding practices for our dogs in order to produce the best and healthiest dogs possible.

Brittanys are both born with no tails and the others are docked at 3 days of age. This has been done since the beginning of the breed over 100 years ago. The dogs do not suffer any long range effects as has been touted by the supporters of this bill. Our dogs are bred to hunt and have remarkable stamina and enthusiasm. They actually could suffer more damage to their bodies by limp tail, bloody tails and other injuries encountered while hunting in heavy cover than from a docked tail at 3 days. Spay and neuter procedures which are widely accepted practices often performed on all dogs entering shelters actually put the dogs in more danger from botched operations and long range pain and suffering than do simple docking procedures. Bills like this take money away from rescue, shelter, and genetic research that clubs would give to them instead of having to fight irresponsible legislation that will harm our clubs and members as well as our dogs.

If this bill is enacted as law, all AKC events will cease in the State of New York. This will result in the loss of millions of dollars to your state as well as ending what has been a time honored sport and activities with our beloved dogs.

This is a truly dangerous bill and should be killed in committee..

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Trimble

Mary Jo Trimble, Ex. Sec., American Brittany Club, Inc.

Dr. Harold Engel, DMV, Phd via Brittany Discussion List

To: <BRITTANY-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>
Sent: Wednesday, April 08, 2009 12:55 AM
Subject: Re: [BRITTANY-L] ATT: NY Dock Bill

Dear Group:

I just read the "Justification" (see below) on why the New York Anti-Docking Bill was proposed. The proponents of this bill want you to believe that docking a dog's tail will cause "lasting chronic tension in the back and hindquarter muscles" if the tail is docked.

Tail docking is performed on dogs between 3-5 days of age, before they have fully evolved their pain responses and before the blood supply to the tail has fully developed. The tail muscles arise from the loin area of the back, both on the dorsal and ventral sides. Having a long tail could place tension in this area, but removing the tail would totally eliminate this tension.

Furthermore, many dogs with long tails that don't carry much fur for protection are continually subjected to injuries of the tail. The tail muscles are also another region of the body that can be harmed. Several pointing dog breeds with long tails are encountering "limber tail syndrome" due to muscle damaged from overworking the tail muscles and then having excess build up of lactic acid.

The tail muscles have no attachments (origin or insertion) to the hindquarter muscles, so it is inconceivable that docking a tail would have any relationship to tension in this group of muscles.

How do I know this information regarding the anatomy of the dog's tail? I taught veterinary anatomy to veterinary students (at 3 different veterinary colleges) for over 35 years.

By the way, the same groups of Animal Rights people are major proponents of early spay/neutering. This is much more invasive and risky regarding blood loss and infection that removing a pup's tail at 3-5 days of age.

H. N. Engel, DVM, PhD
Professor Emeritus, Veterinary Anatomy

American Miniature Schnauzer Club

From: John Constantine
Subject: [AMSC-Board] American Miniature Schnauzer Club
To: ggolab@avma.org
Date: Monday, December 1, 2008, 1:39 PM

Gail Golab
American Veterinary Medical Association
ATTN: Animal Welfare Division
1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100
Schaumburg , IL 60173-4360

Ms. Golab,

The American Miniature Schnauzer Club is the parent club for Miniature Schnauzers in the United States . We have a membership of over 600. We strive to do all in our power to protect and advance the interests of Miniature Schnauzers, to educate the public with regard to breeding, proper care, and maintenance of Miniature Schnauzers, and to support and encourage research activities designed to improve the health and welfare of Miniature Schnauzers.

We have recently been made aware of your change in policy concerning ear cropping and tail docking. We believe your categorizing these procedures as "cosmetic" is an extreme mischaracterization. These procedures were historically done to help our breed perform its function safely and efficiently. We should strive to preserve the history and heritage of this breed and others. The essence of a breed should not be forgotten so easily. We feel that calling for the elimination of cropping and docking from all breed standards shows a real lack of appreciation for the history and functions of these breeds, as well as being inappropriate.

These procedures, when performed by a veterinarian, are very safe and virtually pain free. We firmly believe that we, jointly with our veterinarians, should have the right to decide in the proper care and treatment of our pets.

Your website is really quite vague in stating whether these procedures are truly harmful to our pets. There does not seem to be any studies that have been done concerning these procedures. We would be interested in knowing what percentage of American veterinarians are against tail docking. Your website only references foreign surveys (footnotes 9 and 10). These surveys were only done in countries that currently do not allow docking (i.e. UK , Australia). I think you may well find a much different result in the USA .

Sincerely,

John Constantine, President
American Miniature Schnauzer Club

American Rottweiler Club

On Apr 2, 2009, at 10:46 PM, Peter Piusz wrote:

I am writing for two reasons. First, I was asked to repeat my message from March 16th. Apparently, not everyone received it and some people received a garbled version.

Second, I am writing you each to encourage your Parent Club to go forward with writing their letter to AVMA and to share it with the rest of us.

Peter Piusz
American Rottweiler Club

Repeat of my email of March 16th:

The delegates from the Crop Dock meeting asked me to give them a series of "talking points". They felt this would give them the confidence to go forward with their Boards and write their own letters.

My talking points are:

- * Only write about what you know. If you are "docking", write about docking. If "cropping", then write about cropping.

- * Do not make up fantasy arguments that do not pass the common sense test or would be rejected by your members for their own use. Historical arguments that utilize settings and conditions rarely encountered in today's world are fun, but in reality, they boil down to the breed image of the dog today (see below).

- * The basic argument for everyone is that docking and/or cropping is inherent in the breed and intrinsic to the identity of the breed. Undocked or uncropped dogs leaves undesirable dogs that do not fit the image of the breed.

- * For Rottweilers, the breed is an outdoor-farm dog that has been domesticated and brought into the home. The undocked tail is a large thick appendage, which specializes in clearing tables and beating on you, your children, and your visitors with authority.

- * The above example can be crafted to any specific breed, but needs to utilize both the specific tail and the physical traits of the breed. Example, little spindly tails can be characterized as easily broken or injured.

- * For docking. A key element needs to be a direct attack on the credibility of AVMA for raising issues about docking puppies at 3 days of age. For a scientific organization, where is the science? Where are the studies? It must be nice to pontificate on the world from an ivory tower without doing the research. Every docked breed and all of the related breeders can testify to the lack of negative impact from docking to the puppies involved. Where is the evidence to contradict the evidence of 1000's of litters each year? What about the cumulative evidence of the last hundred years?

Peter Piusz



THE AMERICAN SPANIEL CLUB, INC.

Office of the President
Charles P. Born
ascpresident@yahoo.com
March 30, 2009

Cocker Spaniel Docked Tails a Vital Breed Characteristic

Club / Breed History - The American Spaniel Club is the parent club of the Cocker Spaniel and was established in 1881. The Cocker Spaniel is a docked tail breed that can be accurately traced in America to 1879 although Spaniels in America can be traced back to 1620 and the landing of the Mayflower. The Mayflower carried two dogs on the voyage to New England, a Mastiff and a Spaniel. However, it is impossible to trace the ancestry of the blooded dogs of today to these two dogs since pedigrees and stud books were not available prior to the early nineteenth century.

Why Cocker Spaniels have a docked tail - The Cocker Spaniel is the smallest of the Spaniel breeds, and the inherent desire to hunt renders him a capable gun dog when judiciously trained. This continues today. The usual method of hunting is to let him quarter the ground ahead of the gun, covering all territory within gun range. This he should do at a fast, snappy pace. Upon flushing the game he should stop or preferably drop to a sitting position so as not to interfere with the shot, after which he should retrieve on command only. He should of course, be so trained that he will be under control at all times. He is likewise valuable for occasional water retrieving and as a rule takes to water readily. Because of this mode of hunting for which the breed was created more than 100 years ago, the Cocker Spaniel is a docked tail, hunting breed. The characteristic incessant, merry action of the tail while working in thick, dense cover which is sometimes deeper than the dog is tall absolutely necessitates docking to prevent injury to the animal.

The position of the American Spaniel Club - The recent AVMA labeling of tail docking as cosmetic, or the proposed legislation some states are considering outlawing tail docking, is in the view of the American Spaniel Club a severe mischaracterization of this important breed characteristic. It connotes a lack of respect and/or knowledge of the function of Cocker Spaniels, as well as other docked tail Flushing Spaniels or other docked tail breeds. Keeping in mind the welfare of the Cocker Spaniel breed and the function it was bred to perform, the American Spaniel Club continues to support docked tails for Cocker Spaniels as an important characteristic required by the breed's function as a hunting dog. We firmly believe that we, jointly with our veterinarians, should have the right to decide in the proper care and treatment of our beloved Cocker Spaniels. Of course, the American Spaniel Club advocates that appropriate veterinary care should be provided. When tail docking procedures are done under the direction of a vet at an early age they are virtually pain free and safe.

An informed public is required to combat misinformation - Through education and communication such as this letter, the American Spaniel Club hopes to foster a more informed general public that can appreciate and support the continued history of this docked tail breed. The Cocker Spaniel is excellent in Breed, Obedience and Field work, with many having dual and triple titles. As a pet and companion the Cocker Spaniel popularity has been exceptional. He is a great lover of home and family, trustworthy and adaptable - as adaptable for the 21st century as in the past. More information about Cocker Spaniels and the American Spaniel Club can be found at our website www.asc-cockerspaniel.org.



Doberman Pinscher Club of America

Position on the AVMA Policy Change

Whereas the AVMA recently changed its policy statement on ear cropping and tail docking to state that “the AVMA opposes ear cropping and tail docking of dogs when done solely for cosmetic purposes. The AVMA encourages the elimination of ear cropping and tail docking from breed standards,” and

Whereas the Doberman Pinscher was bred as a personal protection dog whose ear crop and tail dock is not solely for cosmetic purposes, but for utilitarian purposes that allow our breed to be used most effectively for its intended purpose, and

Whereas the utilitarian purpose for which our breed was created therefore renders the AVMA policy inapplicable to the cropping and docking of the Doberman Pinscher, and

Whereas our breed has a century of devotion and faithfulness to America that has seen the Doberman Pinscher gallantly serve this nation in time of war, saving the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of American soldiers, sailors and Marines, as well as civilians, and

Whereas the DPCA has just signed an historic Convention on Cooperation in Topeka, Kansas in October, 2008 in which we have pledged to assist the Department of Homeland Security in developing programs to provide American dogs for American security, and

Whereas this historic commitment encourages American Doberman Pinscher breeders to breed dogs whose conformation, drives and temperament will enable the dogs they breed to do the work for which they were originally bred as well as to adapt to the work needed by the Department of Homeland Security to carry out its mission of protecting the American homeland,

Now therefore, the Board of the Doberman Pinscher Club of America hereby affirms our unwavering commitment to the standard of the breed, as currently written, in all its respects.

Field Spaniel Society of America

April 3, 2009

Gail Golab PhD, DVM
Division Director, Animal Welfare Division
American Veterinary Medical Association
1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360

Dear Dr. Golab,

The Board of the Field Spaniel Society of America strongly urges the AVMA to reconsider its position on ear cropping and tail docking. We feel your position is both misguided and counterproductive.

As the American Kennel Club and many of its member clubs have already indicated to you, the cropping of ears and docking of tails is not practiced by breeders for cosmetic, i.e., decorative purposes. In our case, the tail docking of Field Spaniels is done not only to increase the breed's efficiency flushing birds out of very heavy cover, but also to minimize the risk of infection and injury to their tails while they engage in their hunting activities. Some Field Spaniels used for hunting would be at risk for these injuries to their tails. Most veterinarians know these injuries are difficult to heal and would necessitate have the tails shortened or docked anyway. Many other breeds will be negatively impacted in this way also.

Furthermore, if veterinarians, veterinary schools and institutions follow the AVMA's recommendations and refuse to dock tails or crop ears, it is unlikely to deter breeders and other fanciers from these operations. Instead it will put animals at risk, as these procedures will not be performed often enough by qualified veterinarians, but rather will often be done by those who are neither qualified nor practiced. This surely cannot be the intent of the AVMA's policy.

Please rescind this policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen L. Howard
Corresponding Secretary

German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America

Gail Golab
AVMA Headquarters
Att: Animal Welfare Division
1931 N Meacham Rd Suite 100
Schaumburg, Illinois 90173-4360

Ms. Golab,

The German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America (GWPCA) was formed in 1959 and is the parent club for the German Wirehaired Pointer. Our mission is to maintain the qualities of the breed. This includes health and welfare and as such we support the Canine Health Foundation research to detect and eliminate genetic disease. As is the AVMA, we are concerned about the welfare of our breed but your position on tail docking is misguided and not in the best interest of the pointing breeds with docked tails. The practice was developed to prevent injury and suffering not for cosmetics.

As many of the continental hunting breeds were being developed, the practice of tail docking became a common procedure to prevent pain and suffering in the hard working hunting dog. Tail injuries were common and the bloody traumatized tails would frequently become infected and could require amputation. Amputation in an adult dog in the 19th century was a painful and risky procedure. The canine is an altricial species and at three days of age the tail could be docked safely, preventing later pain and suffering. This is still true today. Therapeutic tail amputation in adult dogs requires the risk of anesthesia and surgery. Frequently they chew the surgical site causing re-infection and often require additional surgery and risk. The initial trauma, pain and suffering with subsequent surgery and incurred expense could have been prevented if the tail had been docked safely and humanely at 3 days of age! Tail docking and dew claw removal are not done for cosmetics or to satisfy a standard as the extreme animal rights people would have you believe. The procedures were developed to prevent pain and suffering and have been included in the standards of many breeds because it was recognized as a BENEFICIAL procedure. As a practicing small animal veterinarian and owner of German Wirehaired Pointers, I assure you it is still an essential preventative procedure today. Preventative medicine and surgery is more than health screens and vaccines!

The AVMA position on tail docking will only drive the procedures to be done by untrained individuals with poor understanding of aseptic techniques, causing more pain and suffering. To prevent this, the AVMA should take a stand supporting tail docking. It is preventative medicine. We urge you to reconsider this issue.

Raymond L. Calkins, D.V.M.
German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America, Vice Pres.

Miniature Pinscher Club of America

TO:
Gail Golab,
Head of the AVMA Animal Welfare Division
American Veterinary Medical Association
1931 North Meacham Rd. Suite 100
Schaumburg, Illinois 60173

FROM:
Board of Directors
Miniature Pinscher Club of America

Dear Miss Golab,

The Miniature Pinscher Club of America (MPCA) is the parent club representing the Miniature Pinscher within the American Kennel Club (AKC). Our membership encompasses much of the United States as well as several other countries. Our goals are the maintenance, protection, and improvement of the Miniature Pinscher. We take our role as preservers of this distinct breed very seriously.

We respect and hold the AVMA and its members in the highest regard. Your mission statement: "...to improve animal and human health and advance the veterinary medical profession" we can readily respect and appreciate given our devotion to our dogs and their health and well-being. The knowledge and skill of today's veterinarians enable all animal owners to make informed decisions concerning the healthcare needs of their animals, including preventative care.

We have recently been made aware of your change in policy concerning ear cropping and tail docking. We believe your categorizing these procedures as cosmetic is a complete misrepresentation not clearly based in any scientific evidence. These procedures are performed to allow our breed to safely and effectively carry out their role as true vermin exterminators. As most breeders and veterinarians are aware, the injuries that can be inflicted upon ear leather and long tails by the various types of vermin hunted can be quite damaging and painful. Requiring the elimination of ear cropping and tail docking from all breed standards shows a significant lack of appreciation for the functions of these breeds. It would also greatly increase the odds of injury to many of the breeds given the various jobs these dogs perform on a regular basis to assist us in our daily lives. Ironically, your organization supports the docking of lamb's tails to simply keep the animal clean.

The MPCA requests an immediate review and revision to your amended dock and crop policy. These procedures, when performed by a veterinarian, are very safe and virtually pain free. We firmly believe that we, jointly with our veterinarians, should have the right to decide in the proper care and treatment of our pets.

Sincerely,

<http://www.minpin.org/>



Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America, Inc.

Tail Docking Statement

The Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America believes it is and always has been an important part of our breed to have docked or natural bobtailed dogs. We strongly suggest that our puppies' tails be banded as soon after birth as possible. This causes little discomfort to the puppies and is a totally bloodless procedure. Puppies that have been banded immediately return to normal nursing and settle in with their dam. The Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America stands firm on our right to raise our puppies as we always have, which includes the banding of tails.

Mrs. Anne H. Bowes, Corresponding Secretary
Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America, Inc.

Poodle Club of America

April 14, 2009

Gail Golab, PhD, DVM
American Veterinary Medical Association
ATTN: Animal Welfare Division
1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360

Dear Dr. Golab,

The Board of Governors, representing the membership of the Poodle Club of America, desires to defend the practice of docking tails in our breed. It is our job, as the parent club, to protect and advance the interests of Poodles. Firstly, we do this by being the guardian of our breed standard, and secondly, by educating the public with regard to breeding, proper care, and maintenance. We support and encourage research activities designed to improve the health and welfare of Poodles. Therefore, it our aim to discourage the AVMA's current proposed policy of anti docking as a purely cosmetic procedure.

It is with some concern that the Poodle Club of America questions the AVMA's standing on cropping and docking as an animal rights directive and not as a support of animal welfare; one being political and the other being a humanitarian issue. The docking of dogs tails is a practice which has been carried out for centuries in order to avoid tail damage, for hygiene and other reasons. There are over fifty traditionally docked breeds which are recognized by the American Kennel Club.

It seems that the AVMA's conviction for the banning of this practice is based on the supposed possibility of the pain endured during the process, potential health risks (infection, incontinence, etc), and that somehow the animal will become physically or psychologically disadvantaged. From our research, it seems nothing could be further from the truth.

1. The tail bone in 3-4 days old puppy is still only partially formed and the nervous system undeveloped and therefore the level of pain is less and fleeting. (1) A parallel can be drawn comparing tail docking to human circumcision. There can be no question as to which causes actual pain.
2. Poodles are very versatile dogs. They work and perform at any task requested of them. They hunt, track, do search and rescue, etc. A long tail can be easily damaged in the home as well as the field. A docked tail is less susceptible to damage. Once damaged, the tail is extremely difficult to heal, whether broken or split, sometimes requiring amputation. Since tail docking was banned in Sweden in 1989, there has been a massive increase in tail injuries among previously docked breeds.(2)
3. When done properly, the procedure is quick, with very little vascular involvement, and with therefore less chance for infection. It is the rare docking procedure that goes wrong when done at 3-4 days. Yet the early spay neuter policy currently being applauded has all kinds of serious chronic conditions that can develop ie. Chronic incontinence in young dogs, CCL rupture, hip dysphasia and other serious medical issues. (3)

Poodle Club of America continued

4. The poodle has been around for centuries. In fact it is one of the oldest breeds. P. Howard Price was able to trace back as far as Roman and Greek coins, and there are also little poodles represented on some monuments about the time of the Emperor Augustus, approximately A.D. 30, and there is art work throughout the centuries displaying poodles with docked tails.(4) The poodle has maintained popularity, for work, service, and pleasure throughout time, seeming to dispel the issue of being physically or psychologically disadvantaged

The American Kennel Club recognizes tail docking, as prescribed in certain breed standards, as an acceptable practice integral to defining and preserving breed character, enhancing good health, and preventing injuries. The Poodle Club of America truly believes that the procedure of docking tails, when performed by a veterinarian, is safe and virtually pain free. We firmly believe that we, jointly with our veterinarians, should have the right to decide on the proper care and treatment of our pets. The Poodle Club of America is distressed with the AVMA's attempt to misrepresent centuries of breed history by using inflammatory verbiage, such as the words amputation and cosmetic mutilation, to inflame animal rights advocates. This wording is designed entirely to elicit emotional responses and destroy any possibility of logical consideration.

The Poodle Club of America respects and holds the AVMA and its members in the highest regard. You are a proven academic, professional, and science based medical association. Your expertise enables all animal owners to make informed decisions concerning the healthcare needs of their animals, including preventative care. We are grateful. But our membership has been polling its veterinarians and we have not found a preponderance of veterinarians who are against the procedure of tail docking. Please initiate a review of your membership and the actual percentages of established American veterinarians against tail docking. We would be interested in seeing the compiled data. The Poodle Club of America respectfully requests that the AVMA review their anti crop and dock policy immediately.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Fishler
Representing the Membership and Board of Governors
Poodle Club of America

References

1. Prof. Dr. R. Fritsch, Clinic of Veterinary Surgeons Justus Lieberg University report at <http://www.cdb.org/vets/fritsch.htm>
2. The Case for Tail Docking, <http://www.netpets.com/dogs/healthspa/case4dock.html>
3. Early Spay-Neuter Considerations for the Canine Athlete One Veterinarians Opinion, Chris Zinc DVM, PhD, DACVP, <http://www.caninesports.com/SpayNeuter.html>
4. P. Howard Price, The Miniature Poodle, Great Britain, 1960



TO:
Gail Golab,
Head of the AVMA Animal Welfare Division
American Veterinary Medical Association
1931 North Meacham Rd. Suite 100
Schaumburg, Illinois 60173

FROM:
Tom Rapinchuk
Board of Directors
Staffordshire Terrier Club of America

Dear Miss Golab,

We are the Staffordshire Terrier Club of America (STCA), the parent club representing the American Staffordshire Terrier within the American Kennel Club (AKC). **Recently we became aware of your revised dock and crop policy statement and your request to provide data-based evidence in the submittal of requests for policy review and revision.**

We respect and hold the AVMA and its members in the highest regard. You are a proven academic, professional, and science-based medical association. Your expertise enables all animal owners to make informed decisions concerning the healthcare needs of their animals, including preventative care. For this we say thank you.

We are requesting an immediate review and revision to your recently amended dock and crop policy. We will focus our arguments on the ear crop side of subject; however, we feel our argument holds for tail docking as well.

We were surprised that your subcommittee, full committee, and board of directors released such a policy without supporting data of any kind. No research was found by us proving that these procedures can be classified as cosmetic in any way, shape, or form. We only found verbiage based upon pure opinion. No scientific study was found to disprove the benefits of cropping. We, like you, would love to see the "data-based evidence". If you have literature references contrary to our findings, please provide these for us to review. We conducted our cursory review of research realizing that we are not the academics and professionals that the AVMA and its members are.

We did find data illustrating that an ear crop to obtain an erect ear could be beneficial to an animal. Please see the attached two abstracts. Both corroborate that pendulous ears are more prone to diseases than an erect ear. "Dogs with erect ears, regardless of the amount of ear canal hair, had less risk", implies a preventative measure some may be willing to choose to reduce the risk of disease. It is a medical procedure from a fully qualified and professional individual, with medical benefits available. The data proves any implication of the procedure being cosmetic is wrong.

Please initiate an immediate review and revision of this misleading policy. Any diction utilizing the word cosmetic or implying an absence of medical benefits lacks "data-based evidence (as compared to anecdotal opinion)". The research data validates these procedures as providing medical benefits.

Sincerely,

ATTACHMENTS

Abstract One:

Study of lipid in the ear canal in canine otitis externa with *Malassezia pachydermatis*.

Masuda A, Sukegawa T, Mizumoto N, Tani H, Miyamoto T, Sasai K, Baba E.

Department of Veterinary Medicine, Graduate School of Agriculture and Biological Sciences, Osaka Prefecture University, Sakai, Japan.

An epidemiological investigation of 120 canine otitis externa cases in 1,370 dogs was done on the incidence rate, ear pinna shapes, breeds and their relationships. Eighty-five cases (12.6%) in 672 dogs with pendulous ears and 35 cases (5.0%) in 698 dogs with erect ears had otitis externa, and the difference between them was significant ($P < 0.05$). Ninety-five auditory cerumen specimens were cultured for *Malassezia pachydermatis* (*M. pachydermatis*) and analyzed for concentrations of major fatty acids. Although rates of cases positive for *M. pachydermatis* in both ear pinna shapes were almost the same, i.e. 55.2% in the pendulous group and 53.6% in the erect group, the average total fatty acid level of the pendulous ear group was significantly ($P < 0.05$) higher than that in the erect ear group after dismissing extraordinary levels in the Siberian husky. Isolated *M. pachydermatis* strains were examined for the effects of fatty acid supplementation on their growth. The majority of the strains utilized fatty acids and grew faster in fatty acid supplemented broth. These results suggest that *M. pachydermatis*, the predominant causative agent of canine otitis externa, prefers the auditory canal of dogs with lipid-rich earwax and grows fast, but growth strongly depends upon the canine breed.

PMID: 11129861 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

Abstract Two:

Res Vet Sci. 1987 May;42(3):294-8. Links

Effects of ear type and weather on the hospital prevalence of canine otitis externa.

Hayes HM Jr, Pickle LW, Wilson GP.

A retrospective study of 8975 dogs seen at 15 university veterinary medical teaching hospitals in North America (1975 to 1978) found that dogs with pendulous ears and heavy ear canal hair had significantly (P less than 0.01) more otitis externa than dogs with other ear types. Dogs with erect ears, regardless of the amount of ear canal hair, had less risk (P less than 0.01) of the disease than mongrel dogs.

Direct evidence is available for the first time showing that monthly variations in ambient temperature, rainfall and relative humidity explain, to a large extent, the monthly variations in the hospital prevalence of canine otitis externa in different geographic regions.

PMID: 3616145 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]



Stevens Parr
President

December 15, 2008

Ms. Gail Golab, PhD, DVM
Division Director, Animal Welfare Division
American Veterinary Medical Association
1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360

Re: AVMA Policy on Ear Cropping and Tail Docking

Dear Ms. Golab,

The Board of Directors of the United States Australian Shepherd Association strongly protests the AVMA's policy revision on ear cropping and tail docking as both misguided and counterproductive. We strongly urge the AVMA to reconsider its position.

As the American Kennel Club and many of its member clubs have already indicated to you, the cropping of ears and docking of tails is not practiced by breeders for cosmetic, i.e., decorative purposes. In our case, the tail docking of Australian Shepherds is done not only to increase the breed's efficiency as a premiere herder of sheep and other livestock, but also to minimize the risk of infection and injury while engaged in that very important work. The AVMA's policy, if followed, will work to hinder the Aussie in the function for which it is bred. It will potentially have the same negative impact on a great many other breeds as well.

If veterinarians, and veterinary schools and institutions follow the AVMA's recommendations and refuse to dock tails or crop ears, it is unlikely to deter breeders and other fanciers from these operations. Instead it will put unfortunate animals at risk, because these procedures will not be performed often enough by qualified veterinarians, but too often by those who are neither qualified nor practiced. This surely cannot be the intent of the AVMA's policy.

Please rescind this policy.

For the Board of Directors
United States Australian Shepherd Association

President, USASA

W. Stevens Parr

United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club

March 19, 2009
Gail Golab, PhD, DVM
American Veterinary Medical Association
ATTN: Animal Welfare Division
1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100
Schaumburg , IL 60173-4360

Dear Dr. Golab,

It is the aim of the membership of the United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club, represented by it's board of governors, to defend the practice of docking tails in our breed based on practical reasons. Thus we provide below sound arguments against the AVMA recommendation which seems to be driven by Animal Rights agenda.

Please understand, all caring and responsible breeders support animal WELFARE, a humanitarian prerogative, however they do NOT support Animal RIGHTS, which is a political movement.
Animal Right's Argument #1: Docking puppies is cruel and painful.
Responsible Breeder's Response: The tail bones in a pup at 3-4 days old are still only partially formed and the nervous system undeveloped and therefore the level of pain is less and fleeting. A parallel can be drawn comparing tail docking to human circumcision aside from the fact that the pain of circumcision appears to linger considerably longer than that of either tail docking and dew claw removal combined.

A young lamb or calf at birth is developed to the extent that it can stand and walk with the mother within minutes of being born. These animals are considered "flight" animals and necessarily must be more developed at birth, especially neurologically. A puppy, like a human, is essentially helpless for quite some time after birth. The pup is still developing sight, hearing, and the nervous system for many days after birth, just as the human infant. These animals, including the human, are considered "nest" animals and are less developed and are dependent on nurturing at birth and beyond, thereby not requiring a fully operational nervous system.

A very well reasoned argument proving the difference in development in various animals (including humans) is one made by Prof. Dr. R. Fritsch, Clinic of Veterinary Surgeons Justus Lieberg University. Dr. Fritsch cites the similarity of human and dog infant physiology as it affects the ability to feel pain, comparing this to that of other animals more advanced in neurological development such as herd animals, including sheep, which are routinely docked. Dr. Fritsch concluded that the docking procedure in 4 day old puppies does NOT result in any serious pain. Please read the entire report in full at: <http://www.cdb.org/vets/fritsch.htm>

The Kerry Blue Terrier is a very exuberant dog and even in the home situation can damage it's tail by striking it against furniture or other household furnishings. In the field the Kerry Blue Terrier has been and is used as a go to ground hunter for vermin. In order to remove the dog from an earth tunnel or den, the tail provides a means to carefully pull the dog out of the tunnel or den. This is the only body part the hunter can reach to safely extract the dog to prevent serious attack against the dog from the prey. In the close confines of the tunnel or den the tail can become

turned back on itself as the dog backs out, or as the handler uses it to signal removal. This can result in a sprained or even broken tail. Docked tails are stronger and rarely damaged. Once damaged, the tail is extremely difficult to heal, whether it be broken or split, sometimes requiring amputation later in life when the dog must be placed under general anesthetic causing undue stress. Pain post surgery and difficulty in keeping the dog from re-damaging the wound is always an issue.

Animal Right's Argument #2: Tail docking is a dangerous procedure and results in later health issues.

Responsible Breeder's Response: Nothing could be further from the truth. When done properly, the procedure is quick, there is very little vascular involvement, therefore less chance for infection and the puppies bounce back immediately from the procedure. It is the rare docking surgery that goes awry. This is in stark contrast to the much ballyhooed early spay neuter currently applauded wherein all manner of serious chronic conditions can develop, including chronic incontinence in young dogs, CCL rupture, hip dysplasia and other serious medical issues. reference: <http://www.caninesports.com/SpayNeuter.html> Early Spay-Neuter Considerations for the Canine Athlete One Veterinarian's Opinion© 2005 Chris Zink DVM, PhD, DACVP

What is more, experienced breeders who routinely dock tails report that within hours after docking, puppies exhibit renewed vigor and even weaker pups seem to experience a "jump start" to their energy levels and surge ahead in developing strength and motor skills.

Animal Right's Argument #3: Tail docking is done only to win shows or for cosmetic reasons.

Responsible Breeder's Response: The Kerry Blue Terrier has been around since the 19th century and earlier. Historical references prove the tail was docked, as well as proof in early painting and photographs reflecting this fact. The Kerry Blue Terrier was not exhibited in any numbers until the early 1920s, therefore docking is certainly NOT done to win at shows. Docking is performed to save the dog pain and medical hardship due to injury in adulthood.

Argument #4 Tails are required for balance while running, or for swimming

Responsible Breeder's Response: Despite this argument, no dogs have ever been proven to fall over due to the lack of a tail. A docked tail does not result in a dog exhibiting poor balance or difficulty moving properly. This ridiculous argument is readily disproved by comparing the movement of a docked Kerry Blue Terrier with an undocked one. However, while both dogs are speeding around and doing the typical breed mid-air turns and leaping, the Kerry with the docked tail will be LESS likely to suffer tail damage.

Many docked breeds, including the Kerry Blue Terrier and even fully docked breeds, are excellent swimmers and are very capable of making short turns and efficient movements in water, thereby disproving another ridiculous argument.

Argument #5 Tails are required for expression.

Responsible Breeder's Response: The average human believes the tail is the most accurate barometer of a dog's mental state, yet full body language as used by other dogs to determine this state is much more reliable. Even fully docked dogs can easily give a full range of emotions readable by both dogs and humans. Suggesting an undocked tail is necessary to make an accurate reading on a dog's disposition is a silly and specious argument.

Argument #6: Docking tails is Cosmetic Mutilation.

Responsible Breeder's Response: "Cosmetic Mutilation" is a catch-phrase, carefully coined by radical animal rights advocates to elicit maximum shock value with the aim of squelching any logical consideration. It is a carefully contrived wording guaranteed to misrepresent a centuries old practice developed for the welfare of a working animal. This term is specifically designed to bring emotion into the argument, thereby relegating logic and science to the very dim background. Emotion is hard to argue against because people fooled into relying on emotion rather than thinking logically are caught up in their "feelings" thereby rejecting out of hand any intelligent discourse. Pejorative terminology is a weapon used to great effect by animal rights advocates, entirely designed to elicit emotional response and destroy logical discourse.

Argument #7: Other dogs don't have their tails docked.

Responsible Breeder's Response: The practice of docking a hunting/working dog's tail was generally done for practical reasons, specifically to avoid more serious and extensive damage in later life. Level of activity and breed specific proclivities (jumping, navigating close quarters, digging into earth) may result in tail damage while at work or play. While other breeds may not benefit from the practice, Kerry Blues as stated earlier, are extremely active dogs and are prone to acrobatic activities in work and play, thereby making them prone to tail damage.

Argument #8: Other countries are banning tail docking.

Responsible Breeder's Response: While this is true, it has proven disastrous for many working dogs. Many countries having banned tail docking are currently re-considering if not totally reversing their prior stance, making lawful docking of hunting breeds for humanitarian reasons. Denmark's Anti-docking law specifically excludes five hunting breeds. Several anti-docking dog laws are being reconsidered due to the number of reported tail damages in all traditionally docked breeds.

We respect that the AVMA acts in what it believes is in the best interest of dogs. We share the concerns of the AVMA that all creatures must be treated with respect and dignity and our members strive to assure the health and well being of their Kerry Blue Terriers. That is why our members dock their tails and remove their dew claws....to prevent injury as they do the job for which they were bred, We, therefore, respectfully request that the AVMA review this policy immediately. If you would like additional information or to discuss further please feel free to contact our club.

Thomas W. Rogers, President

Representing the Membership and Board of Governors

cc: Dennis Sprung cc: Dr. Patricia Haines

The Vizsla Club of America, Inc.



January 9, 2009

Gail Golab
American Veterinary Medical Association
ATTN: Animal Welfare Division
1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360

Ms. Golab,

The Vizsla club of America is the parent club for smooth coated Vizslas. We have a membership of over 1000, from every state in the union, as well as Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Europe. We strive to do all in our power to protect and advance the interests of Vizslas, pointing breeds, and purebred dogs in general. Our goals include educating the public in regard to breeding, training, proper care, and maintenance of Vizslas. We also support and encourage research activities designed to improve the health and welfare of Vizslas and dogs in general. As an example, we are currently supporting epilepsy and lymphosarcoma studies.

We have recently been made aware of your change in policy concerning ear cropping and tail docking. We believe your categorizing these procedures as **cosmetic** is an extreme mischaracterization. Tail docking is done to help our breed perform its function safely and efficiently. Unlike the long tailed English pointer who is only required to find and point game in light cover, a Vizsla is a continental pointer. As such a Vizsla is expected to not only find birds in open country, but to also to track downed game, and retrieve it; no matter what the terrain or vegetation. As most sportsmen and veterinarians are aware, tail injuries in long tailed sporting dogs are quite common. Therefore calling for the elimination of tail docking from all breed standards shows a real lack of appreciation for the functions of these breeds, as well as actually increasing the odds of injury to many of the breeds such as the Vizsla, the German Short Hair Pointer, and the Weimaraner that still perform the function they were historically bred to perform.

Tail docking, when performed by a veterinarian, is very safe and virtually pain free. We firmly believe that we, jointly with our veterinarians, should have the right to decide in the proper care and treatment of our pets.

Sincerely,

J. L. Brennan
Corresponding Secretary
Vizsla Club of America

Judy Colan
 Weimaraner Club of America Health Committee



April 21, 2009

Ms. Gail Golab, PhD, DVM
 Division Director, Animal Welfare Division
 American Veterinary Medical Association
 1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100
 Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360

Re: AVMA Policy on Ear Cropping and Tail Docking

Dear Dr. Golab

At the semi-annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Weimaraner Club of America on December 5, 2008 in Ardmore, Oklahoma, we discussed your organization's recent unfortunate policy statement labeling tail docking as "cosmetic". Obviously, this policy was adopted without consulting our organization and we would like to offer some historical background information regarding the reasoning for the tail-docking of our breed in the hope that you would reconsider your position.

Since the Weimaraner breed was developed in the 1800's, tails have been docked to prevent trauma to the tail when hunting in heavy cover. The Germans of Weimar, who originally developed the breed, did not look at the dog and decide that they would look better with a docked tail. Rather, the decision to dock tails was pragmatic, based on cause and effect. Simply stated, dogs with undocked tails were plagued with chronic injuries to the tail when hunting in heavy cover; hence, the decision was made to dock tails to prevent injury. Incidentally, although dewclaws are not mentioned in your policy revision, they are also routinely removed for the same reason, usually at the same time as the tail docking--when the puppies are three days old. These procedures are routinely performed at such an early age so as to minimize discomfort for the puppies; noteworthy is the fact that, within a minute or so of the performance of the docking procedure, puppies are observed nursing peacefully with their mothers.

Listed below is a study conducted in Australia which clearly shows the adverse effects of not docking tails.

TAIL INJURY % FROM AUSTRALIA

	Breed	# pups regis	# of tail injuries	Percentage injured	
Historically	GSP	289	64	22.0%	Historically
	Gt Schnauzer	69	14	20.0%	
Docked	Vizsla	100	19	19.0%	Never Docked
	Weimaraner	339	61	18.0%	
	Boxer	1155	185	16.0%	
	Cocker Spaniel	1069	76	7.0%	

Breed	# pups regis	# of tail injuries	Percentage injured
Afghan Hound	92	3	3.3%
Staffordshire Terr	2710	80	2.9%
Saluki	71	1	1.4%
Dalmatian	97	1	1.0%
Pointer	122	1	0.8%
Whippet	623	1	0.2%
Basset Hound	501	0	0.0%
Rhodesian Ridgebk	1124	0	0.0%

In light of the foregoing, the Weimaraner Club of America respectfully requests that your organization reconsider your policy with respect to tail docking.

Judy Colan
 Weimaraner Club of America
 AKC Delegate

cc: Timothy C. Carwile, President, Weimaraner Club of America
 Dennis B. Sprung, President/CEO, The America Kennel Club