



Council of Docked Breeds

PRESS RELEASE

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CDB says no to Europe's pet charter

Britain's dogs would be the losers if the Government were to sign up to a well-meaning but misguided European pet charter, the Council of Docked Breeds (CDB) has told vets.

In its response to a consultation by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons over whether the UK should sign the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals, the CDB has said that banning tail docking and the removal of dew claws, as required by the Convention, would only lead to tail injury and welfare problems in working dogs and domestic pets. Where tail injury is severe, the only real option is amputation which, says the CDB, is "immeasurably more significant in welfare terms than the process of docking at the age of a few hours."

Dog breeders, whether they breed for work, show, or to produce pets simply do not want to abandon docking, which is a proper and legitimate aspect of kennel management that has attracted a level of debate out of all proportion to its welfare significance, says the CDB.

The organisation also warns of big changes ahead to many dog breeds which will fall foul of a clause in the Convention which seeks to alter breed standards to eliminate what Europe regards as "extreme characteristics" and "harmful defects". This alone, says the CDB, would lead to the loss of many of our present pedigree dogs.

"The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons have made it quite clear that they disagree with docking, but that they find it hard to prevent the many vets who support it from continuing to dock," said CDB president Peter Squires. "It is no secret that they see the European Convention as a neat way of forcing the British Government to introduce a docking ban.

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“But dog breeders and owners who know the effect a ban will have on their dogs simply will not stand for it. We do not need this meddling, bureaucratic piece of legislation in Britain and neither do we want it,” added Peter Squires.

The European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals was approved in 1987, but less than half of the 41 member states have signed it. The CDB believes that the Council of Europe should be more concerned with improving animal welfare in member countries like Albania and Moldova than with interfering in the UK, which already has a high standard of legislation.

“Make no mistake. If the UK Government signs this Convention, then that will be the end of docking and dew claw removal, and the writing will be on the wall for many of our most cherished breeds. Our dogs will be the losers,” said Peter Squires.

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Copies of the CDB’s full response to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons are available.

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