



Council of Docked Breeds

PRESS RELEASE

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Protection of Animals – guidance notes welcomed

Changes to official guidance on the implementation of new animal welfare legislation shows that the Government has been listening to dog owners, says the Council of Docked Breeds.

Newly published guidance notes on the Protection of Animals (Amendment) Act 2000, which caused alarm last year amongst dog breeders, specifically state that animals kept by hobby breeders and those kept for recreation, sport and competition – including showing – are not ‘commercial’ and are therefore not covered by the Act.

“We lobbied hard to ensure that small-scale breeders and those who kept sporting dogs such as gundogs or working terriers were not caught up in legislation which could enable approved prosecutors to gain access to their premises,” said CDB Secretary Ginette Elliott. “It is gratifying to see that officials have taken note of what we said, and have incorporated our suggestions in the revised guidance.”

The guidance notes specifically rule that the Act does not cover “... animals kept for recreation, sport and competition (e.g. gundogs, working terriers and show animals kept for personal use).”

“We are also pleased that, in cases where the question of whether or not animals are ‘commercial’ has to be decided by the Courts, other legal definitions such as that in the Breeding and Sale of Dogs Act (Welfare) Act may be used. This could exclude breeding establishments producing less than five litters in any 12 month period,” added Ginette Elliott.

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However, the CDB remains concerned that a veterinary surgeon called to advise upon whether a Court Order should be granted under the Act does not need to be demonstrably independent of the prosecuting body.

“Where prosecutors like the RSPCA employ their own investigating vets, there will always remain a suspicion that the actions of the vet will be coloured by the policies of his employer towards controversial issues like tail docking, field sports or the display of animals in pet shops. We firmly believe that the veterinary advice a Court receives should be verifiably independent, and it is disappointing that the Government has not accepted that view,” said Ginette Elliott.

Ends

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