



Council of Docked Breeds

PRESS RELEASE

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Swedish shooters' docking plea rejected

The Swedish government has rejected demands by gundog owners to relax a ban on the tail docking of German pointers. Officials at the Board of Agriculture have decided that despite greatly increased tail injuries among German wirehaired and shorthaired pointers, particularly popular breeds amongst Swedish hunters, an exception to the country's strict anti-docking law is not justified.

With the backing of the Swedish Kennel Club, the Vorsteh (Pointer) club urged a reconsideration of the ban last summer and submitted a report drawing attention to the dramatic increase in tail injuries following the ban on docking introduced in 1989.

In a three month trial during the autumn of 1994 involving 117 German pointers, the Vorsteh club found that 58 (50%) of the dogs suffered injuries ranging from loss of hair, broken skin and bleeding and 'water' tail to serious recurrent injury requiring amputation. The majority of the injuries were stated to have occurred during hunting or hunt training, and of the 58 dogs injured, 54 had been used for pointing and/or flushing game.

However, the Board regarded the Vorsteh club's report as unscientific. It pointed out that preventative docking is prohibited under the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals, and that since Sweden had now acceded to the Convention a reversal of the ban was impossible.

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“We have a great deal of sympathy for Swedish pointer owners,” said Ginette Elliott, secretary of the Council of Docked Breeds. “This demonstrates just how serious the European Convention could be for British gundog owners. Our Government has not signed the Convention and if it does so, then it is imperative that it reserves the right to allow docking to continue in the United Kingdom,” she commented.

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For further information contact Graham Downing, Tel: 01206 263234