

(March 2010)

Kate McMillan presented a lengthy report on the status of cropping and docking policy changes to the MSCC Board. The main points were as follows:

There have been rapid, and very recent moves on the part of Vet associations to ban their members from cropping and docking, with a goal of having legislation enacted. Attached is a communication that was circulated widely from Lee Steeves, CKC Director for Zone 1.

As has happened in other countries, this issue is not limited to cosmetic surgery - there is also an agenda to delve into breed standards they view as extreme. Bulldogs, pekingese, etc. The high rate of c-sections in some of these breeds was reportedly mentioned at this meeting.

1. I have been working with Lee Steeves, and have agreed to assist in drafting a letter to clubs to determine as best as possible the funding that is provided to animal research at vet colleges in Canada, etc. The objective is to remind the vet associations that the dog fancy has some leverage. ie: Why is it in the interest of a breed club, or breeder, to support research for a larger veterinary community intent legislating our sport out of existence?

2. I have contacted the National Post and they are willing to publish an op-ed on the subject. The goal is to raise awareness of what is going on with the broader public. This is not being written in the name of the MSCC. (This Op-Ed was published in January).

3. I've drafted a stand alone statement that addresses the history of the MS, level of homozygosity, and implications that cessation of docking and cropping could have on long term genetic diversity and breed health.

4. I've contacted a noted population geneticist for his thoughts on the letter, to see if he is willing to endorse it or contribute a statement of his own. (UPDATE: Dr. Bell did not ultimately reply).

5. I contacted Dr. Mary Whiteley of Dogenes Inc. who developed the commercial test for juvenile renal dysplasia. She has studied MS at the genetic level and has sent me a statement by email endorsing the contention that selecting for tails and ears could do serious harm to an already inbred gene pool. (UPDATE: Dr. Whiteley submitted a statement of support.)

6. I would like to send out a special newsletter dedicated to this issue, and an email alert list of those members who are online.

7. Some of our members are exhibiting undocked tails now. We should not allow the debate to be sidetracked by arguments for and against.

8. I also think we should draft a second statement regarding the importance of history and aesthetics: concern that breeders will drop out of the breed, taking lines and their valued mentorship with them (there is documented evidence of this happening already in Europe).

9. Approach breeder vets to endorse our position, as co-signers.

10. Jurisdiction. It's important to note that the CVMA (the national body) has no regulatory authority over provincial counterparts. So that's where the real fight is going to occur, at the provincial level.

11. Avoid issues related to other breeds, veterinarians rights, etc. That's for others to do. What I really want to avoid is the phenomenon of pasting our name to a mass emailing of exaggerated claims.