



The Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare

An all party group for members of both houses at Westminster formed to promote and further the cause of animal welfare by all means available to

MINUTES 3rd DECEMBER DOG WELFARE ISSUES

Political Members present: Roger Gale MP, Angela Smith MP, Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Neil Parish MP, Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, Baroness Sue Miller

Marc Abraham (Pup Aid)

The Pup Aid petition seeking to ban sale of young puppies and kitten which was put before the last committee has reached well over 100,000 signatures making it the biggest pet welfare petition of all time. Only 23 out of 40,000 petitions have achieved the 100,000 needed to trigger a parliamentary debate. Puppy farming is a relatively unknown industry for the British public but when they are educated about it they are angry and passionate about it- they want to see it stopped. Caroline Lucas MP suggested the petition so I would like to thank her and my thanks to Neil Parish, Luciana Berger, Angela Smith and all the other MPs who have supported the campaign. I would also like to thank the Kennel Club, Blue Cross, PDSA, and Dogs' Trust all of which supported us. Everyone needs to work together in the UK to create change.

Electric Shock Collars

Professor Jonathan Cooper

I led 2 projects on electric shock collars, one that was conducted with Bristol University and Food and Environment Research Agency and then a follow up study by Lincoln University. The first study primarily focused on the properties of the devices. We bought anonymously representative devices from market, we developed a dog model and we tested the devices on the electric model of the dog. Whilst, there was little variation in outputs the same model, different models varied considerably in their outputs.. Most devices were operated by changing settings 1-8 and using buttons to give either short momentary burst or "nick" and another for continuous bursts. There was a pre-warning ability on most devices. The maximum output was ten fold lower to things like visible electric fence. Manuals varied in the quality of information available, and did not gave clear distinctions between uses of the buttons nor adequately introduce the use of pre-warning stimulus.

The second part of the study was looking at long-term consequences for dogs and for that we did a questionnaire survey where we recruited people who had used them in the past. Common uses were recall related and most devices were bought over the internet. Owners reported some vocalization from the dogs yet the manuals state that the devices should not be operated to the point when the dog vocalizes. The dogs trained using e-collars showed increased arousal , more time tense and engaged in owner directive behaviour when wearing dummy collars. The third part of the study looked at dogs trained according to protocol put forward by the ECMA compared with mainly reward based training, using trainers experienced in using the collars who set them at levels where dogs were supposed to be sensitive but not respond in an exaggerated manner. Behaviour differences are time spent tense and yawning in the electric collar groups. On return to

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training context, there was a significant increase in salivary cortisol in the e-collar group compared to dogs that had been trained using positive reinforcement when wearing dummy collars. We surveyed owners who had gone through training and across the board the owners were happy with the training they received and there was no significant difference between those who had gone through e collar training and those who went through positive rewards and signals, except in their confidence in using the approaches.

The data gathered in this part of the study indicated that e-collars, particularly at high settings had the capacity to cause discomfort or pain to dogs during training, and owner reports suggested that over a third of dogs showed overt signs of pain during training. In the longer term, there was evidence that e-collar training carried a greater risk of behavioural and physiological responses that are consistent with negative emotional states than reward based training, although many dogs trained with e-collars showed no overt signs of impaired welfare when returned to the training context.

The findings of these studies indicate that some (though not all) dogs trained using e-collars incur welfare costs during and following training and suggest that this in part may result from poor or inappropriate use of the devices. This may be addressed by ensuring all users are appropriately informed of the operation of the devices and trained in their use at point of sale. The studies also found that reward based training was as effective as e-collar training at addressing recall related problems, but carried fewer risks to dog welfare, even when e-collars training was conducted by experienced trainers using recommended approaches. This suggests that for many dogs, reward based training would be a more appropriate means of addressing the problems commonly referred for owner operated electronic collars.

Lord Duncan McNair (Electronic Collar Manufacturers' Association)

I will touch on the points ECMA put to Defra during a recent meeting. We were happy to collaborate with the studies. Bad animal behaviour is a significant problem for the public as we know from out of control dogs and the news stories on incidents. Training is the key to affecting how dogs behave and there are many tools for training. The electric collar is simply another tool that can be used in the array of tools. There is not a group of trainers who only use electric collars. Most people would be using reward based training and the collars. It is widely accepted that reward based training should be used but there are instances when unpleasant stimuli is required. It is submitted that the decision makers in Wales have not considered the facts when they banned the use of these collars and in fact they made their decision on evidence that had been soundly discounted by Defra years ago. An email from Defra on 10th June concluded that they wanted to ensure the collars are used properly as they could not be banned when no evidence exists that the collars cause welfare problems for dogs. On the 19th November the Scottish Parliament acknowledged Defra's research and announced that they did not intend to instigate a ban either.

Denisa Delic (KC) – After the two studies were published we met Lord de Mauley who was indeed more in favour of introducing guidance rather than a ban. However, we are opposed to the idea of guidance as we are against negative training methods. In the proportion of dogs in idealized conditions in a benign programme, there were still negative welfare consequences there and we

believe that guidance will not protect the welfare of dogs where collars are used by those who are not professional. There was variation in how people used the manuals which questions how useful guidance would be. Electric shock collars were not any more effective than positive reinforcement methods for recall behaviour issues which had no welfare cost. They are banned in Scandinavia, Switzerland, Wales and they should be banned in England.

Neil Parish MP – What happens the day the dog does not have a collar on and what happens to the temperament of the dog? What did the research show you Jonathan?

Jonathan Cooper – There was evidence that some dogs showed behaviour changes, quite often the dogs were closer to their owners and less interactive with the environment. That could be because the dogs are being cautious so maybe inhibited.

Duncan McNair – Defra said that as far as they could see there were no welfare issues long-term. You need to look at what someone is training a dog for, the main issues would be sheep chasing, interfering with other people and running off and getting run over. What you do not know is what would have happened to a dog with a tendency to run off if it had not had the training with the electric collar. We lose 100,000 dogs on the roads every year. 500,000 of these collars have been used and where are the queues of dogs which have been traumatised and the tide of unhappy letters in the veterinary press – they do not exist because the majority of dogs trained with collars are perfectly fine.

Sue Miller (House of Lords) I put down a number of amendments to ban these collars during the Animals Welfare Bill. At that time the evidence used for banning collars was that professionals like the police do not use them. It is owners who do not want to put the time into training in a positive way that use them. If reward training works for all of those professional dogs then I do not think we should pander to lazy owners who want a quick fix. This is a political decision; it is either morally wrong or morally right to allow lazy people to continue putting less effort into training the dog.

James Yeates (RSPCA) We have been very strong on electronic collars in Wales and continued the campaign to ban them in England. The RSPCA are led in decisions by science, ethics and evidence. There are a number of good studies which show they are detrimental and from the ethics point of view their use is causing deliberate unnecessary pain. We do see the worst at the RSPCA and there have been cases of what looks like burns from the collars. The availability of the collars allows someone to deliberately press a button to cause pain. We have seen the capacity for major cruelty and we see the people who cause pain to animals on a daily basis which is why we want electric collars banned, in England.

Angela Smith MP – The idea of short cuts like this appals me. It encourages lazy ownership and lack of proper control of dogs. If a dog is bothering livestock it is out of control and that should not happen and if it running through a park it is not been managed properly. You do not allow dogs to run lose without a lead in the countryside particularly when there is livestock around so either it is

trained properly and does not do this or it should be on a lead. The electric collars are not the answer.

Denisa Delic (Kennel Club) –The second Defra funded study concluded that the first Defra funded study did find evidence of long-term negative welfare consequences on dogs from the electric shock collars.

Sheila Crispin (Dog Advisory Council) – I have kept dogs for years and never dreamt to using these things. It is a lazy approach to dog training and not good enough.

Jonathan Cooper – I would like to make the point that we do not believe the collars are powerful enough to burn a dog but they may have caused lesions where they are put onto tight which is what the RSPCA have seen. As scientists we are cautious as to how we take our work and interpret it. It is interesting that the wording of our report was very cautious to indicate that not all dogs have had a hard time with this method of training but some dogs have and the issue is how the use is policed and legislated against to prevent incorrect use.

Lord McNair (ECMA) – On the burns issue I must make the point that the RSPCA in Australia had a representative who made the same statement and one of the manufacturers sued them because there is no possibility that the amount of energy in the collars could possibly cause cell damage resulting in a burn. What can happen is that someone could leave the collar on too long so a bed sore type injury is caused and if it is not treated it can get worse. I hope that the RSPCA would never make a similar statement. The collar owners we have been in touch with were far from lazy. They had gone to great lengths to train dogs and many had trained them for years and the collars solved a difficult problem by using the collar only for a short time. There are people who abuse animals and there is an Animal Welfare Act to prosecute people who abuse animals. However, as far as we know, and I am sure the RSPCA would let us know, there has not been a single case of somebody who was prosecuted for abuse of an electric collar. 500,000 of these are in use and there is not a problem.

Neil Parish MP – My position is that I would like to see these electric collars banned but we deal with Government and we should get a clear position from Lord de Mauley as to where he stands and how the use of them can be good as possible.

Dog Breeding

Neil Parish MP – What should be the focus of 2014 for the work on dog breeding and welfare?

James Yeates (RSPCA) - Most of us are aware of the history around this issue so there is no need to go over it again. There have been some useful bits moving forward with a working group tackling breeding for extreme conformation but we are still in need of some major progress on breed standards, helping consumers understand the issue and empowering good breeders. That needs to be the focus of 2014

Robin Hargreaves (BVA) – As veterinary surgeons we face the public all the time so the best use we can have is on the demand side. We were keen to drive forward the puppy contract and I would like to see everyone behind that. We have had constructive meetings and we are now at least in agreement that one contract is the best idea and we can all get that agreed. If we re-launch the contract by the Spring 2014 that will be a good step forward.

Steve Goody (Blue Cross) – I think from our perspective there has been forward progress but still lots more to be done. The issue is also about numbers of which we must not lose sight. The issue is around too much commercial breeding and also casual breeding. Casual breeders with less than 5 litters are largely slipping under the radar. Additionally, we are seeing increasing evidence of dogs being imported into the UK. That needs to be tackled. Two pieces of legislation which need to be reviewed and updated are the Breeding of Dogs Act 1973 and the Breeding and Sale of Dogs Act 1999. Both these areas do not reflect current legislation in the AWA 2006. Local authorities are puzzled about what they are meant to do, what constitutes a licensable institution, what is hobby breeding, what is commercial breeding?

Paula Boyden (Dog's Trust) - I endorse the comment about the puppy contract as we are pulling together with this. Helping with indiscriminate sales is the Pet Advisory Group with the setting of minimum standards endorsed by Defra. I agree that the Breeding and Sales Legislation needs to be updated. Certainly the number of litters needing a license must be reconsidered. I cannot let this evening pass without mentioning the Pet Travel Scheme and the influx of puppies from Europe with the disease risk disease, all untaxed and unregulated. We ought to lobbying Defra further as so far their lack of engagement about this influx of puppies has been disappointing. Unfortunately a case of rabies may be the only thing that makes them take notice.

Professor Steve Dean (Kennel Club) - The standards under the Assured Breeders Scheme are the standards that should be used across the board to make improvements. We introduced a tiered approach to pedigree dog breeding which is working well. We just took the French Bull Dog off our lists onto the breed watch list on the advice of Sheila's group. We continue to develop single gene inheritance tests and we are still developing Estimate Breeding Values. We have had a long run of educational seminars and working with vet schools. We have put online a puppy socialisation plan that we developed with the Dogs' Trust. We have a health scheme for Cavalier King Charles, but it has not been taken up well because of cost and changing advice. We will sit down with the BVA to do some more work on that to get it right. There is free online access to a scientific journal on genetics so it can be seen easily. I chair the Canine and Feline Sector Group bringing together all of us in the dog sector which is a major step forward to allow us to agree our position and put views forward to Defra. Exotic disease is one of the issues on the table and needs to be taken seriously.

Sheila Crispin (Advisory Council) – The rabies risk and other exotic diseases are a serious problem. Neil mentioned how important it is to collaborate and we do more harm if we fail to work together. The Advisory Council has decided to form a joint working group on exaggerated breed standards and work with the Canine and Feline Sector Group on population studies. We believe that all puppies should be identified before they leave their mother and there remains a lot of work to be

done on micro-chipping. We only have until 2016 to make sure this is effective with a single database which has not been dealt with yet. Identifying the puppies and breeder with a single registration number would help to solve many problems. Recommendations are with Ministers now on regulations that can be done with secondary legislation rather than new primary legislations.

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP – You believe it can be done with secondary legislation?

Sheila Crispin - Yes and I can circulate that information to you so you can see how it would be done.

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP – Yes it would be useful if that information could be sent to interested MPs.

Angela Smith MP – I wanted to go back to the rabies point as we can raise this in the House but we do not want to cause hysteria. We need to be guided by yourselves as to how to deal with this effectively. We cannot leave it as it is a huge risk.

Paula Boyden (Dogs' Trust) - Jim Fitzpatrick MP has kindly put some PQs in already. We would suggest that a risk assessment which was carried out by Defra before 2012 saying if everyone complied that the risk was low needs to be looked at again. People are not complying and there has been a significant increase of animals coming in. We need to have 100% checks not just on declared animals, they need to look for undeclared animals.

Angela Smith MP - Can you send us a briefing note on this so we can approach the Home Office and Defra. I am happy to write to both.

Sally Philips (RSPCA) - Our inspectors are very concerned about dogs coming into this country and during the Ramsgate incident they found dogs being brought in. The border control often just turns the carrier back so the driver then comes back later and gets through. I also know Trading Standards in Norfolk have plans written up for a rabies or disease outbreak so if they are taking it seriously, Defra should too.

Jim Fitzpatrick MP – I put PQs down to Defra to raise it and it will give the opportunity for us to move it forward once they provide the answers.

Joe Moran (RSPCA) – In regards to disease risk, there are 2 pieces of legislation going through in Brussels currently. One is around Animal Health Law and the illegal trade in puppies to push for compulsory registration on national databases which Parliamentarian here can lobby the Government here to support. That would provide the ability track the movements of dogs moving across countries.

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP – On the issue of the micro-chips is it a problem of getting databases to correspond with each other?

Sheila Crispin – At the moment there are 4 databases and no central one in the UK, let alone abroad.

Steve Dean (Kennel Club) – There is communication between the 4 groups and there is the European network of chips so if the dog has been correctly micro-chipped it should be traceable but there is illegal use of the chips.

Victoria Brown (Kennel Club) – There are no longer 4 databases, there are now more as businesses are opening everyday making money before the regulations come in and limit their business. This is a problem as their standards may not meet the requirements which will be set. We are working with Defra to bring in minimum standards as soon as possible.

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP – Are Defra on top of this now or do we need to take some action?

Victoria Brown (Kennel Club) – They are on top of it and are looking to get the minimum standards.

Robin Hargreaves (BVA) – A lot of the things we talked about at the beginning of the meeting around controlling dogs comes down to behaviour issues. Poor socialisation produces anxious animals and if you use an adverse training method with those animals you will not solve the problem. Socialisation has to be done at the beginning and then longer-term problems can be avoided. This needs to be addressed alongside the breeding concerns.

Baroness Miller– The Anti-Social Bill is currently going through the House of Lords. Relating to dogs if the individual does not have the dog in control, action should be taken to prevent it reaching the point where it becomes a serious problem. At report stage, a discussion may bring out more on whether this could apply to those who are breeding puppies that might be difficult later which would include this socialization point.

Carol Fowler (Cavalier Campaign)– The Advisory Council's idea of registering every breeders, even who breed one litter would go a long way towards ensuring responsibility and making breeding a profession. What are the chances of this idea being taken up by politicians and Defra?

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP – I think there is support for the licensing issue to be reviewed.

Marisa Heath – APGAW is considering the setting up of a sub-group which would focus solely on dogs as it is becoming such a large issue. This sub-group could operate beside the usual business of APGAW allowing more time to be given to the areas of breeding and responsible ownership. We will liaise with stakeholders over the next month as to whether this is feasible. And we already have political support from members like Angela Smith and Geoffrey Clifton-Brown.

Dog Meat Trade

Julia de Cadenet (World Protection for Dogs and Cat in the Meat Trade/No To Dog Meat)

We wish to raise awareness to the use of cats and dogs in the meat trade. The reality of eating a dog for most of us is unthinkable but 5 million dogs are bred in South Korea in cramped cages, pumped with antibiotics and fed waste food and even other dogs. They are then transported without food and water for long distances on the way of slaughter which is carried out in a cruel way. There are also many pets included in this trade and some dogs still wearing collars, many animals are stolen and transported across the Thailand border to Vietnam. Dogs undergo beatings, have their fur removed in rotating drums and often left skinned still alive. If they do not survive the mercy of being electrocuted they are boiled alive. Change has started with new laws in the Philippines to punish offenders who comply with their ban and this has been led by the Kennel Club campaign. 2013 has seen the unprecedented rise of media and campaigns against the movement with Animals Asia doing a lot of work. I hope we can spread the message that this is wrong.

PLEASE NOTE: No to Dog Meat/World Protection for Dogs and Cats in the Meat Trade are NOT members of APGAW and whilst we are keen to support work to stop the dog meat trade we do not endorse or support this group or any other.