

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Richard Lochhead MSP



T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

Mr John Swinney MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Your ref: JS/SCu
Our ref: 2008/0027882
10th September 2008

Thank you for your letter of 4 July 2008 to Mike Russell of behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] concerning dogs with docked tails competing at Kennel Club and Scottish Kennel Club events.

I note that [REDACTED] has written to the Kennel Club as he is concerned that their advice to affiliated dog shows prevents dogs with illegally docked tails being shown at any shows licensed by the Kennel Club, the Scottish Kennel Club or the Welsh Kennel club.

The rule prohibiting the showing of an illegally docked dog in Scotland is a Kennel Club rule and is not a legal requirement.

[REDACTED] accurately describes the position in England and Wales, where the Animal Welfare Act 2006 makes it illegal to show a docked dog, if the dog was docked on or after 6 April 2007 (for England) or 28 March 2007 (for Wales), at an event where members of the public are admitted on payment of a fee. Although there is an exception for certified working dogs demonstrating their working ability, I do not think that this exception would apply to [REDACTED] as she is unlikely to be a certified working dog.

The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 does not prohibit the showing of docked dogs in Scotland, whether they were legally or illegally docked. Consequently, there is no legal prohibition on [REDACTED] being entered in agility shows in Scotland even where the public are admitted on payment of a fee. [REDACTED] is quite correct, therefore, when he states that the Kennel Club rule exceeds the legal position in Scotland.

My officials have been in touch with the Kennel Club and have been informed that, as a result of the letter from [REDACTED] they are presently reviewing their guidance on entering dogs with illegally docked tails at shows in Scotland. As soon as they have completed their review and reached a decision with regard to the points raised, a reply will be sent to [REDACTED]

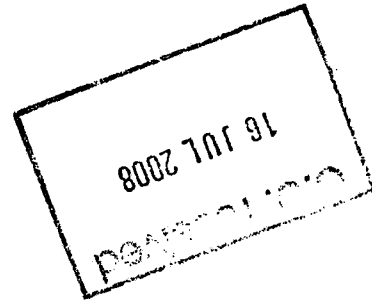
The Scottish Government fully supports and greatly appreciates the work undertaken by animal shelters and rescue centres in their efforts to find suitable homes for dogs and other animals.

I hope this is helpful.

*Regards
Richard*

RICHARD LOCHHEAD

GF 2008/27560



Michael Russell MSP
Minister for the Environment
Scottish Government
Pentland House
47 Robb's Loan
Edinburgh
EH14 1TY

Ref: JS/SC

4th July 2008



I received the enclosed letter from [redacted] today expressing his concern with the docking of dog's tails and the impact this has on dog shows.

I would appreciate you reading the letter and investigating his concerns about this policy. I look forward to hearing from you.

JOHN SWINNEY
Member of the Scottish Parliament for North Tayside

Parliamentary Office:
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Constituency Office:
35 Perth Street
Blairgowrie PH10 6DJ

Tel [redacted]



02 July 2008

Mr John Swinney MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for North Tayside
35 Perth Street
Blairgowrie
PH10 6DL

Dear John,

Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 and position of Kennel Club and Scottish Kennel Club on tail docking of dogs

Please find enclosed a letter I have sent to the Kennel Club regarding their advice to clubs organising Kennel Club licensed shows.

As you know [REDACTED] competes in dog agility and we are facing this problem ourselves with our new puppy [REDACTED], who we adopted from PADS with the hope that [REDACTED] could train her for agility. It is however a larger issue and I'd be grateful for any help you can give in seeking to change the policy of both the Kennel Club and the Scottish Kennel Club (SKC)

If I can summarise my letter's contents as such; currently the Kennel Club advice, which is followed by the SKC, is that no dogs which have had their tails illegally docked may enter any show held under the auspices of the SKC (or Kennel Club in England), this will include dogs which have been re-homed by local authority dog warden services and via animal shelters and rescue centres. These shows as well as the more common breed display shows will also affect agility shows, obedience shows and flyball competitions.

The Kennel Club advice reads:

"ILLEGALLY DOCKED DOGS - Dogs which have been ILLEGALLY docked are not permitted to be shown at any shows licensed by the Kennel Club, the Scottish Kennel Club or the Welsh Kennel Club."

I have a concern that the Kennel Club and by default the SKC have exceeded the spirit of the above legislation which makes it, rightly in my opinion, an offence to dock a dogs tail or to permit your dog's tail to be docked. It does not, nor should it, criminalise the owning of a dog that has had its tail docked by someone else (who in any event I hope would have been prosecuted).

Further I have a real concern that people seeking to rescue a dog but who may wish to take part in SKC licensed events, such as agility, will steer clear of dogs who have had their tails docked due to these Kennel Club rules. This would therefore reduce re-homing opportunities for these dogs through no fault of their own.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Should you, or your staff, require any further information or assistance I am, of course, happy to provide it.

Many thanks for all your efforts on our behalf and keep up the good work.

Yours aye,



[REDACTED]

[2 pages and 15 lines redacted exempt.]



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

**Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Richard Lochhead MSP**

Mr John Lamont
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Telephone: [REDACTED]

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>

Your ref: [REDACTED]

Our ref: 2007/0026400

104 August 2007

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 23 July about the ban on tail docking.

The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 makes it an offence to mutilate a protected animal and "mutilation" is defined as interfering with the bone structure or sensitive tissue. Removing the tail of a dog, unless it is for medical reasons is classed as a mutilation. It is also an offence to take an animal out of Scotland for the purpose of having a mutilation performed and returning that animal to Scotland.

Thus it would be an offence to take puppies out of Scotland for the purpose of having their tails docked and then returning them to Scotland. Taking a bitch outwith Scotland who subsequently gives birth to puppies in England or Ireland and having their tails docked and then moved to Scotland would not be an offence under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, as the act of tail docking was not conducted in Scotland, nor was an animal (the adult dog) taken out of Scotland for the purpose of having its tail docked.

I hope that clarifies the situation.

With regards

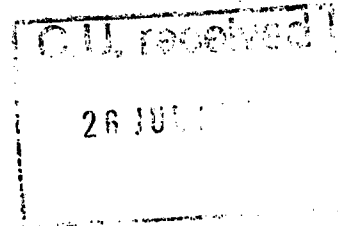
Richard

RICHARD LOCHHEAD



The Scottish
Parliament

John Lamont MSP
Member for Roxburgh & Berwickshire



Richard Lochhead MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs &
the Environment

The Scottish Executive
Pentland House
47 Robb's Loan
Edinburgh EH14 1TY

Our Ref: [REDACTED]

23 July 2007

Dear Richard

Tail Docking

I have been contacted by a constituent who breeds dogs in the Borders and has been affected by the tail docking ban in Scotland. They have advised me that they did not breed this spring due to the ban being in place but they have now discovered that there is a potential loophole in the legislation which I would be grateful if you could clarify for me. If a bitch is registered with "new owners" in England, gives birth there, the puppies are subsequently registered with the new owners and have their tails docked in England, have all the relevant paperwork as required by England and subsequently sold to working homes in Scotland would this be permissible under the Scottish ban? It would mean a lot of extra paperwork and fees for the Kennel Club in England but could you confirm that the subsequent dog owners in Scotland would not be liable for prosecution under the Tail Docking legislation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

*Yours,
John*

John Lamont MSP
Roxburgh & Berwickshire
Scottish Conservatives

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]



T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

Mrs Nanette Milne MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Our ref: 2007/0029697
15th September 2007

Dear Nanette,

Thank you for your letter of 28th August concerning the tail docking of working dogs and whether an exemption should be made for working dogs.

The tail docking of dogs has been an issue which has been both controversial and difficult. A great deal of time and consideration was given to this issue by Parliament and the Environment and Rural Development Committee when the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill was being considered. The Scottish Government accepted the advice of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the British Veterinary Association and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association who oppose all tail docking except where a tail has been injured or diseased. The Environment and Rural Committee also concluded that making an exception for working dogs to a general ban on tail docking would be difficult to enforce and could create a loophole which would allow non-working dogs of traditionally working breeds to continue to have their tails docked.

The evidence of tail damage to support an exemption from the ban on tail docking for working dogs is far from powerful, and in the case of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) study shows that the vast majority of Scottish vets do not believe that prophylactic docking is necessary to ensure the welfare of working dogs:

A study of German Pointers in Sweden which purported to show a considerable increase in tail injuries was not a properly controlled scientific study and was not peer reviewed.

The evidence from the Scottish Gamekeepers' Association is far from conclusive. The questionnaire was only sent to 64 rural veterinary practices. Only 17 responses were received (a response rate of 27%), and of those 17 vets who responded 12 replied "yes" to the following question,



~~"Is it better, for the welfare of an adult working dog, to have its tail shortened/docked at 3 days old than to suffer prolonged pain in adulthood caused by continual tail action in rough cover?"~~

ABJ Consultants conducted research into the instances and likelihood of tail injuries amongst Scotland's undocked working dogs. A simple survey form was used at game and country fairs across Scotland between 28 July and 3 September 2006. Details of injuries which dogs had received while working were reported by those who wished to volunteer information. This was far from a scientific study since it relied on information being volunteered and no consideration was given to the period during which the injuries had been sustained nor how representative those who responded were of the wider working dog owning population. Some of the injuries were to the tails of spaniels that had their tails shortened, but in the Consultants' view, not "properly" shortened.

A postal survey seeking the opinion of veterinary surgeons in Scotland by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation showed that the vast majority of veterinary surgeons do not dock, and most veterinary practices do not permit docking. Most significantly, by a margin of over 3:1 (74% to 21%), Scottish veterinary surgeons do not believe that prophylactic docking is necessary to ensure the welfare of working dogs.

Despite the lack of robust evidence to show whether tail injuries are increased as a result of a ban on docking, it is significant to note that in countries where a tail docking ban has been imposed, that there has been no call for the ban to be removed due to a increase in tail injuries.

However, we have contributed £10,000 towards a research programme by the University of Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College in North Mymms on a case control study to estimate the risk of tail injury to dogs. This study will run for 12 months from October and will involve some 30 veterinary practices along the Scottish/English and Welsh/English borders. The aims of the study are to document the risks of tail injuries in dogs in the UK, to evaluate whether docking of tails reduces the risk of tail injury and to identify other major risk factors for tail injury.

When we have the results of this study we will be in a position to decide whether our policy on tail docking needs to be reviewed.

With regards

Richard

RICHARD LOCHHEAD



The Scottish
Parliament

Nanette Milne O.B.E. MSP
North East Scotland

RECEIVED

RURAL

OFFICE

Richard Lochhead MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Pentland House
47 Robb's Loan
Edinburgh
EH14 1TY

28th August 2007

Dear *Richard,*

You will be aware that during the passage of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill in the last session of Parliament, the Scottish Conservatives sought an exemption for working dogs with regards to the practice of tail docking, a measure which was unfortunately voted down by the other parties.

In light of the powerful evidence that such an exemption would be in the best interests of the animals concerned, I am writing to ask whether you and the new Executive will support such an exemption and bring forward proposals to amend the Prohibited Procedures on Protected Animals (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulation 2007 so as to bring this about.

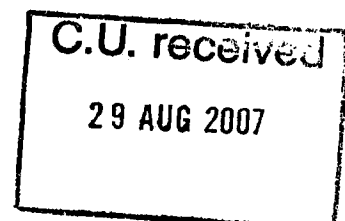
I read with interest, in a recent edition of 'Scottish Gamekeeper', that:

"Alex Salmond has stated plainly that he too will ensure that an SNP led Executive will revoke the ban."

I am therefore hopeful that this policy will be implemented in the very near future, for which I can assure you the whole hearted support of the Scottish Conservatives.

With my very best regards
Yours sincerely,

Dr Nanette Milne OBE MSP
Shadow Minister for the Environment



Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Tel: [REDACTED]

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Richard Lochhead MSP



T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

Angela Constance MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Your ref: [REDACTED]
Our ref: 2008/0030907

22nd September 2008

Dear Angela,

Thank you for your letter dated 13 August to Michael Russell on behalf of one of your constituents concerning the tail docking of working dogs. Your letter has been passed to me for a response since this matter falls within my portfolio, and I apologise for the delay in replying.

While I am not in a position to comment on Defra's policy regarding tail docking, I can assure you that the decision not to exempt the tail docking of working dogs in Scotland was taken neither lightly nor quickly.

The tail docking of dogs is an extremely controversial issue and was the subject of considerable consultation in March 2004, when outline proposals on new animal welfare legislation were first issued, and again in May 2005 when the draft Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill was published. Strong views were held by both sides and robust arguments were presented for and against tail docking for all dogs and whether any exception should be made for working dogs.

The case for an exemption for working dogs was made to the Environment and Rural Development Committee during their Stage 1 consideration of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill by a number of organisations, including the Scottish Gamekeepers Association and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation. The Committee concluded in its report that they believed that the prophylactic docking of working dogs' tails did not apply consistently across all dogs that may be described as "working dogs" and still owed a considerable amount to tradition. The Committee also raised concerns about how any exemption for working dogs could be formulated and applied in practice.

When the Mutilation section of the Bill was considered in detail by the Committee during Stage 2, an amendment was proposed which would have made a specific exemption from the tail docking ban for working dogs. This amendment was debated and defeated by 8 votes to 1.

Subsequently, during the Stage 3 debate, when the whole Parliament had the opportunity to consider, debate and vote on the Bill, another amendment to exempt working dogs from the tail docking ban was proposed and debated. Considerable time was given by the Presiding Officer to this single issue and Parliament had ample opportunity to consider the arguments for and against. Again, the issue was put to the vote and, this time, the amendment was defeated by 89 votes to 31 meaning that there was an overwhelming majority against making an exemption from a tail docking ban for working dogs. It is unlikely, therefore, that the Scottish Parliament would be willing to change their view without evidence to support that change.

However, since there is a lack of robust evidence to show whether tail injuries have increased, the Scottish Government is keeping the policy under review and has contributed £10,000 towards a case control study to estimate the risk of tail injury to dogs. The aims of the study are to document the risks of tail injuries in dogs in the UK, to evaluate whether docking of tails reduces the risk of tail injury and to identify other major risk factors for tail injury. The study, which commenced in October 2007, is being undertaken by the University of Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College in North Mymms. It will run for approximately 18 months and will involve some 30 veterinary practices in Scotland, England and Wales.

When the results of the study are known, I will be in a better position to decide whether our policy on tail docking needs to be reviewed and whether such a change would carry in the Parliament.

I hope this information is of some help to your constituent.

*Best with
Richard*

RICHARD LOCHHEAD

RAE
18 AUG 2008
PRIVATE OFFICE



The Scottish
Parliament

Angela Constance MSP
Livingston Constituency

Gov. Received
18 AUG 2008

Michael Russell MSP,
Minister for Rural Affairs,
Scottish Government Environment & Rural Affairs Department,
Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan,
Edinburgh EH1 3DG.

RAE
18 AUG 2008

[REDACTED]
13 August 2008

Dear Michael,

I have received a constituent inquiry that I would like to draw to your attention.

The inquiry relates to tail docking on sporting/working dogs. The constituent says that prior to the introduction of Animal Welfare legislation in Scotland, he believes the SNP supported the principle of sporting/working dogs being exempt from the ban on tail docking. An ex-breeder, he is of the view that tail docking is a simple pain-free solution to giving a working dog a life time's insurance against tail damage.

He is concerned that, despite representations from people with the greatest knowledge and experience of working dogs, namely the Scottish Game Keepers Association and other breeders/trainers, the Scottish Government has chosen to extend the ban on tail docking to include sporting/working dogs. He states that in England it is still legal to have working dogs docked.

Given that shooting is a major industry in Scotland and should be fully supported, [REDACTED] asks if the Scottish Government will be reviewing its stance on this matter.

It would therefore be much appreciated if you could clarify the Government's policy position regarding tail docking on sporting/working dogs, and say whether this aspect of the legislation is likely to be reviewed at any point in the future.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,


Angela Constance MSP

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(Tues/Wed/Thurs)

Constituency Office
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Owen Square,
Livingston EH54 6PW
Tel: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]
(Mon & Fri)

[REDACTED]

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Richard Lochhead MSP



The Scottish
Government

T:
E:



Mr John Lamont MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Your ref:



Our ref: 2009/0001899

6 February 2009.

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter dated 6 December 2008 asking me if I have any plans to review the ban on tail docking in Scotland.

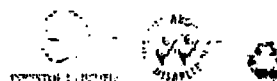
The tail docking of dogs is an extremely controversial issue and strong views are held both by those who support the ban on the tail docking of dogs in Scotland and those who think that an exemption should have been made for working dogs, as was the case in England.

In view of the ongoing interest, and since there is a lack of robust evidence to show whether tail injuries have increased since the ban, the Scottish Government is keeping the policy under review and has contributed £10,000 towards a case control study to estimate the risk of tail injury to dogs. The aims are to document the risks of tail injuries in dogs in the UK, to evaluate whether docking of tails reduces the risk of tail injury and to identify other major risk factors for tail injury. The study, which commenced in October 2007, is being undertaken by the University of Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College in North Mymms. It will run for approximately 18 months and will involve some 60 veterinary practices in Scotland, England and Wales.

When the results of the study are known, I will be in a better position to decide whether our policy on tail docking needs to be reviewed.

*With regards
Richard*

RICHARD LOCHHEAD





The Scottish Parliament

John Lamont MSP
Member for Roxburgh & Berwickshire

Richard Lochhead MSP
Minister for Rural Affairs
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

RAE
23 JAN 2009
PRIVATE OFFICE

6th December 2008

Ref: [REDACTED]

Ben Richard

A number of constituents who breed working dogs have raised the issue of tail docking with me. I wonder whether you have any plans to review the legislation?

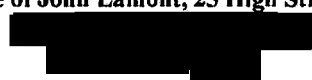
I am particularly concerned about the impact the present law is having on my constituents given my constituency's proximity to England, in that dog owners South of the Border are unlikely to come and buy working dogs from breeders in Scotland given the present legislation.

Yours sincerely

John

John Lamont MSP
Roxburgh and Berwickshire
Scottish Conservatives

23 JAN 2009



Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Richard Lochhead MSP



T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

John Farquhar Munro MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

104 Our ref: 2009/0006341
March 2009

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 February 2009 on behalf of your constituent [REDACTED] concerning the ban on the tail docking of working dogs in Scotland.

The tail docking of dogs is an extremely controversial issue and strong views are held both by those who support the ban and those who think that an exemption should have been made for working dogs, as was the case in England.

[REDACTED] comments and she and her dogs have clearly been through an extremely distressing and difficult time. Nevertheless, there is a lack of robust, scientific evidence to show whether tail injuries have increased since the ban. Consequently, the Scottish Government is keeping the policy under review and has contributed £10,000 towards a case control study to estimate the risk of tail injury to dogs. The aims of the study are to document the risks of tail injuries in dogs in the UK, to evaluate whether docking of tails reduces the risk of tail injury and to identify other major risk factors for tail injury. The study, which commenced in October 2007, is being undertaken by the University of Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College in North Mymms. It will run for approximately 18 months and will involve some 60 veterinary practices in Scotland, England and Wales.

When the results of the study are known, I will be in a better position to decide whether our policy on tail docking needs to be reviewed.

*Regards,
Richard*

RICHARD LOCHHEAD





The Scottish Parliament

RAE
26 FEB 2009
John Farquhar
Munro MSP
Ross, Skye & Inverness West
Constituency

Richard Lochhead MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs & the Environment
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

C.U. received
26 FEB 2009

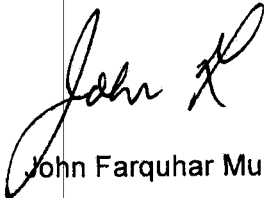
20 February 2009

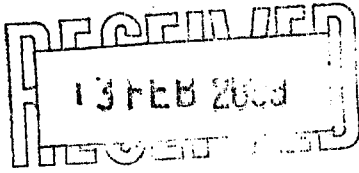
Dear Richard

I enclose a copy of correspondence from the above constituent regarding her concerns over the introduction of the law banning the docking of working dogs' tails.

I would welcome your response to the points [redacted] raises.

With best wishes,


John Farquhar Munro MSP



[Redacted]

The
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

cc Alex Salmond First Minister, Jaimie McGrigor MSP, Mary ScanlonMSP, SSPCA.

Dear Mr Farquhar Munro,

It is almost two years since the parliament passed the law banning the docking of working dogs tails. I am sure you all believed that you were acting in the best interests of the dogs concerned. Please read this letter carefully whilst I tell you exactly what it meant for my youngest springer spaniel.

I have three working springer spaniels. The two older were born well before the ban and were docked at three days after birth. The second I bred myself, and held each puppy as the tail was docked. They gave a brief wriggle, and were fast asleep before they were back in the whelping bed. I did not do this procedure lightly, but after careful thought.

My youngest spaniel [Redacted] was born on the 1st Sept. 2007, and had a long tail. All was well until she started to work. The first time she went into cover she damaged her tail, and the second, and the third. At this point vet nary advice was that she would have to have the end of her tail amputated; she was placed on antibiotics to prevent infection, and operated on four days later. I should say that her tail was plainly sore prior to the op, and painful after. Normally things would start to improve after five or so days. [Redacted] was plainly very uncomfortable throughout. At about nine days she managed to slice the tip of her tail off with the buster collar she was wearing to prevent injury! A second amputation was required. At four days when the bandage was removed her tail started to swell up. Back to the vet. A protective bandage was replaced. Two days later she was in to be checked, the tail was plainly painful, and there were concerns that there might be an infection. She was given more powerful antibiotics, and a further dressing. She had to be strongly restrained to allow all this treatment. On her return to have the dressing checked and changed, when it was removed the skin beneath it came away with the dressing, and she had abscess deep into the tail. She had an antibiotic resistant infection, incredibly painful, and she was going to have to loose her whole tail. The vets were unable to operate until the infection was eliminated, and at this point there was a real risk to her life. She had to be sedated whilst a culture was taken and a dressing applied. She was placed on a powerful broad spectrum antibiotic which fortunately turned out to be the right one. She had to have the dressing changed every day, initially under sedation, and then with me pinning her down through sheer brute force. She found the whole thing

extremely distressing and painful. After ten days the infection finally cleared up, and they were able to operate, She spent two nights in the vets being monitored before returning home. After six days she started to relax and the stitches finally came out after ten.

She now has no tail at all, spent seven weeks having treatment, wearing a buster collar, and suffering considerable pain and distress. I cannot believe that this was the Scottish parliament's intention. The reason given for the law was that docking was a cruel and unnecessary mutilation. Well what [REDACTED] went through was undoubtedly cruel, and the end result a totally unnecessary mutilation. Although my vets kept costs down as much as they could, it cost about £600 which is a lot of money when you are on a pension

[REDACTED] is not unique, although she did have a particularly nasty set of side effects. I have been involved in the training of two cocker spaniels this year. The first damaged her tail on the kitchen units at her home. She finally had to have the end amputated but was fortunate in that all went well. The second injured her tail repeatedly in training. The end was amputated, but after five days the stitches pulled away exposing the bone, and she had to have a second amputation. She now has a short stump. For ages she tried to avoid going into a car as she connected it with visits to the vet. It is also worth mentioning that of four puppies who started work on one shoot on [REDACTED] had amputations, and the other two are about to.

Please do something about changing this law which is doing nothing but cause misery to the dogs it was intended to help?

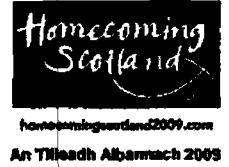
Your [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Rùnaire a' Chalbneit airson Cùisean Dùthchail agus na h- Àrainneachd
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Ridseard Lochhead BPA
Richard Lochhead MSP



[Redacted]

Rt Hon Alex Salmond MP
17 Maiden Street
Peterhead
Aberdeenshire
AB42 1EE



Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2009/0020505
10 August 2009

Dear Alex,

Thank you for your letter dated 22 June 2009 on behalf of your constituent, [Redacted], concerning the recent veterinary bill received from [Redacted] following the amputation of his dog's tail.

I note from the itemised invoice from [Redacted] that the total cost included an outstanding balance of £16 from a previous invoice; this takes the actual cost of the amputation procedure to £145.80 which, of course, included VAT.

Veterinary advice suggests that a cost of £145.80 for surgically removing a grown dog's injured tail under general anaesthetic is not unreasonable, especially when considered against the cost of private human health care or dental treatment. However, the cost of veterinary treatment, which is potentially one of the major costs of pet ownership is, of course, a private matter between the client and veterinary surgeon. Pet insurance schemes are available for those who wish to be prepared for any costs associated with the cost of emergency veterinary treatment.

[Redacted] makes the point in his letter that this cost could have been avoided if his dog's tail had been docked when it was a pup. This is a valid observation and I fully appreciate that he holds very sincere views on the subject of tail docking, believing that prophylactic docking is necessary to protect working dogs from painful tail injury. As you know, however, the tail docking of dogs is an extremely controversial issue and strong views are held both by those who support the ban on the tail docking of dogs in Scotland and those who think that an exemption should have been made for working dogs. I understand that on a personal basis you are of the latter opinion and voted accordingly in the House of Commons. However, the decision to ban tail docking was not taken lightly and was only approved by Parliament after all the arguments, from both sides, had been given extremely careful consideration.

/ ... A



A case control study to estimate the risk of tail injury to dogs has been undertaken and the study researchers have now completed the analysis of the returned questionnaires. A draft report has been prepared but this has to be peer reviewed and the researchers have indicated that this review will take some time. Consequently, it will be the autumn before the report can be finalised and published.

Only after the report is peer reviewed and finalised and we can be certain that the methodology used and the findings and conclusion reached are robust, will the Scottish Government be in a position to review the policy on tail docking using this research.

Best wishes,



RICHARD LOCHHEAD

DOC 10



22 June 2009

Richard Lochhead MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

RA
23 JUN 2009
PRIVATE

Alex Salmond
Member of Parliament for
Banff & Buchan

C.U. received
24 JUN 2009

Dear Richard

[REDACTED]

I have been contacted recently by my above mentioned constituent regarding a recent veterinary bill he was administered by [REDACTED] after his dog has its tail docked.

As you can see from the enclosed correspondence, [REDACTED] believes that the cost of £161.80 to have his dog's tail docked is an extortionate price. I would be grateful for your comments for this matter.

I would also be most appreciative if you would address the other points raised by my constituent in the enclosed correspondence.

I should be grateful if you would ensure that the concerns expressed by [REDACTED] are addressed and I would be appreciative of a response which I may then share with my constituent

Yours sincerely

ALEX SALMOND MP

Please address all correspondence to:

Constituency Office
17 Maiden Street
Peterhead
Aberdeenshire
AB42 1EE

Tel. [REDACTED]
Fax. [REDACTED]

Office Open
Monday to Friday
10.00am to 1.00pm,
2.00pm to 5.00pm

Also at:

House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

e-mail:
asmp.peterhead@snp.org

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Salmond,

I am writing with regards to the tail docking ban in Scotland. I have owned and bred both working and show cockers for many, many years now with no problems whatsoever with regards to their tails. However, yesterday I had to make the gruesome decision to have one of my youngest dogs docked due to his tail being damaged. He is less than a year old and was bred for use as a gundog. I must confess, that before we mated the bitch I was sorely tried about breeding a litter of undocked pups; as I predicted the outcome would inevitably lead me to the vets at some point. But against my better judgement, I was persuaded otherwise. We were fortunate to have a stunning litter of pups with extremely good quality field trialling lines in their pedigree. But, as any country man will tell you, they are reluctant to buy a pup with a tail as they know the cost it could incur.

All the pups sold but I kept one - [REDACTED]. He has excelled himself in his training and been a real pleasure to have in the kennel, so you can imagine my distress when he returned to me after hunting under a thicket of brambles with his tail in shreds. Not only was I concerned, as any respectable dog owner would be, but I was furious that the dog had to suffer so unnecessarily. We tried various treatments. The tail healed over then burst open again until his discomfort eventually resulted in his tail being docked.

As this is the first instance I have experienced with a damaged tail, I was not exactly prepared for the shock I received on viewing the vet's bill! I am an old man, Mr. Salmond - retired long ago, yet very active when it comes to my dogs. I do not grudge them a penny, I feed them the best food and never scrimp with their care. However, I am only a pensioner and this cost that was due to the vet was, I thought, rather extortionate. Understandably, it was something that was utterly necessary, but I cannot help but think that had I had this litter of pups docked when they were a few days old, I could have had the whole litter done for £20, £50 pounds? Not over £160.

This is only one instance. I'm just curious as to how many others are now flocking to their vets to have this procedure done? When will we know - when there is enough evidence, enough suffering to establish a decent percentage of damaged tails to place before a group of people who think they know what's best? The people I am referring to obviously have no idea what they are talking about. Yes, the vets will produce fictional facts when the benefits are clearly on their side. But what about the honest folks of the community - the poor dogs who are really the ones most affected!

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

[1 page redacted exempt.]

Rùnaire a' Chaibneit airson Cùisean Dùthchail agus na h-Àrainneachd
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Ridseard Lochhead BPA
Richard Lochhead MSP

F/T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

Ms Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Ur faidhle/Your ref: [REDACTED]
Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2010/0001904

21st January 2010

Shirley-Anne

Thank you for your letter of 14 January 2010 on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED], concerning the ban on the tail docking of working dogs in Scotland.

The tail docking of dogs is an extremely controversial issue and strong views are held both by those who support the ban and those who think that an exemption should have been made for working dogs, as was the case in England.

I note [REDACTED]'s comments but there is a lack of robust scientific evidence to show whether tail injuries have increased since the ban. The Scottish Government contributed £10,000 towards a case control study to estimate the risk of tail injury to dogs. The aims were to document the risks of tail injuries in dogs in GB, to evaluate whether docking of tails reduces the risk of tail injury and to identify other major risk factors for tail injury. The study was undertaken by the University of Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College in North Mymms.

The study researchers have now completed the analysis of the returned questionnaires and a draft report, which had to be 'peer reviewed', was prepared.

The peer review has now concluded and I understand that the results are expected to be published within the next few weeks. Only when this report has been published will the Scottish Government be in a position to decide whether its policy on tail docking needs to be reviewed.

Richard

RICHARD LOCHHEAD

Taigh Naomh Anndrais, Rathad Regent, Dùn Èideann EH1 3DG
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.scotland.gov.uk

DOC 11

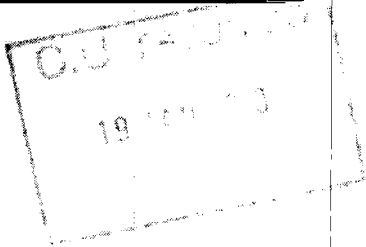


[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] on behalf of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Sent: 19 January 2010 11:44
To: Ministerial Correspondence Unit
Subject: FW: Letter from Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
Attachments: [Redacted]; [Redacted]

MCS please.

Thanks
[Redacted]



From: [Redacted]
Sent: 19 January 2010 11:35
To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Subject: Letter from Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

.....
This message has been received from an external party and
has been swept for the presence of computer viruses.
.....

[Redacted]

Dear Mr Lochhead,

Please find attached a letter from Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]
Parliamentary Assistant to
Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothians
(Scottish National Party)

Tel. [Redacted]
Fax [Redacted]

Room M4.10
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

www.shirleyannesomerville.org

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP adds all constituents who contact her to her newsletter list. If you do not wish to receive the newsletter please let us know by replying to this email. Thank you.

Mr Richard Lochhead MSP
Minister for the Environment and Rural Affairs
The Scottish Government



Ref: [REDACTED]
Thursday 14 January 2010

Dear Mr Lochhead,

I have been contacted by [REDACTED], who I represent in the Lothians region.

[REDACTED] has raised concerns regarding tail docking legislation. I have included the constituent's correspondence for your information and would appreciate your comments on the matters raised.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Somerville', written in a cursive style.

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothians (Scottish National Party)
Room M4.10, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

www.shirleyannesomerville.org

Doc 11

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 4:30 PM

To: Somerville S (Shirley-Anne), MSP

Subject: Tail docking

Dear Sir I write to you to ask if you can update me on the progress or otherwise of this cruel law that now plagues the working gundogs of Scotland.

I find it almost impossible to come to terms with a law passed with no regard to the damage done to our working breeds.

I work two springer Spaniels and one Cocker Spaniel ,one springer is an older dog who had one third of his tail removed at three days old the other two bitches have full undocked tails . On a shoot day the older docked dog has never had any tail damage in his twelve years of life , the two younger bitches with full undocked tails bleed from the ends of their tails almost every day they are worked .

[REDACTED]

Yours Sincerely [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DOC 07

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
Richard Lochhead MSP



T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

Mr Jamie McGrigor MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Our ref: 2009/0004478
28th February 2009

Dear Jamie

Thank you for your letter dated 12 February on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] concerning the ban on the tail docking of working dogs in Scotland.

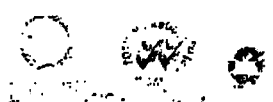
The tail docking of dogs is an extremely controversial issue and strong views are held both by those who support the ban and those who think that an exemption should have been made for working dogs, as was the case in England.

[REDACTED] comments and she and her dogs have clearly been through an extremely distressing and difficult time. Nevertheless, there is a lack of robust, scientific evidence to show whether tail injuries have increased since the ban so the Scottish Government is keeping the policy under review and has contributed £10,000 towards a case control study to estimate the risk of tail injury to dogs. The aims of the study are to document the risks of tail injuries in dogs in the UK, to evaluate whether docking of tails reduces the risk of tail injury and to identify other major risk factors for tail injury. The study, which commenced in October 2007, is being undertaken by the University of Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College in North Mymms. It will run for approximately 18 months and will involve some 60 veterinary practices in Scotland, England and Wales.

When the results of the study are known, I will be in a better position to decide whether our policy on tail docking needs to be reviewed.

*Regards
Richard*

RICHARD LOCHHEAD



DOC 07



The Scottish
Parliament

Jamie McGrigor MSP
Highlands & Islands

C.U. received

13 FEB 2009

RAE

13 FEB 2009

PRIVATE OFFICE

Thursday 12th Feb.

Dear Cabinet Secretary

I enclose correspondence in tail
docket which is self explanatory
& which I thought you should
see - Could you address my
workmen's concerns & get back
to me.

Kind regards

Jamie McGrigor

Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Tel:

E-mail:

Reply ser

9/2/09 detailing

Tory position &

Jamie's written Qs

& comments at

Public Petition

Committee

cc Alex Salmond First Minister John Farquhar Munro MSP, , Mary Scanlon MSP,
SSPCA.

Dear Jaimie,

You may remember we have met at conservative doe's for [REDACTED] and nowadays [REDACTED] and also out shooting in the past. The following is the letter I am sending re tail docking. Please could you ensure it gets proper consideration.

It is almost two years since the parliament passed the law banning the docking of working dogs tails. I am sure you all believed that you were acting in the best interests of the dogs concerned. Please read this letter carefully whilst I tell you exactly what it meant for my youngest springer spaniel.

I have three working springer spaniels. The two older were born well before the ban and were docked at three days after birth. The second I bred myself, and held each puppy as the tail was docked. They gave a brief wriggle, and were fast asleep before they were back in the whelping bed. I did not do this procedure lightly, but after careful thought.

My youngest spaniel [REDACTED] was born on the 1st Sept. 2007, and had a long tail. All was well until she started to work. The first time she went into cover she damaged her tail, and the second, and the third. At this point vet nary advice was that she would have to have the end of her tail amputated; she was placed on antibiotics to prevent infection, and operated on four days later. I should say that her tail was plainly sore prior to the op, and painful after. Normally things would start to improve after five or so days. [REDACTED] was plainly very uncomfortable throughout. At about nine days she managed to slice the tip of her tail off with the buster collar she was wearing to prevent injury! A second amputation was required. At four days when the bandage was removed her tail started to swell up. Back to the vet. A protective bandage was replaced. Two days later she was in to be checked, the tail was plainly painful, and there were concerns that there might be an infection. She was given more powerful antibiotics, and a further dressing. She had to be strongly restrained to allow all this treatment. On her return to have the dressing checked and changed, when it was removed the skin beneath it came away with the dressing, and she had abscess deep into the tail. She had an antibiotic resistant infection, incredibly

painful, and she was going to have to lose her whole tail. The vets were unable to operate until the infection was eliminated, and at this point there was a real risk to her life. She had to be sedated whilst a culture was taken and a dressing applied. She was placed on a powerful broad spectrum antibiotic which fortunately turned out to be the right one. She had to have the dressing changed every day, initially under sedation, and then with me pinning her down through sheer brute force. She found the whole thing extremely distressing and painful. After ten days the infection finally cleared up, and they were able to operate, She spent two nights in the vets being monitored before returning home. After six days she started to relax and the stitches finally came out after ten.

She now has no tail at all, spent seven weeks having treatment, wearing a buster collar, and suffering considerable pain and distress. I cannot believe that this was the Scottish parliament's intention. The reason given for the law was that docking was a cruel and unnecessary mutilation. Well what Poppy went through was undoubtedly cruel, and the end result a totally unnecessary mutilation. Although my vets kept costs down as much as they could, it cost about £600 which is a lot of money when you are on a pension

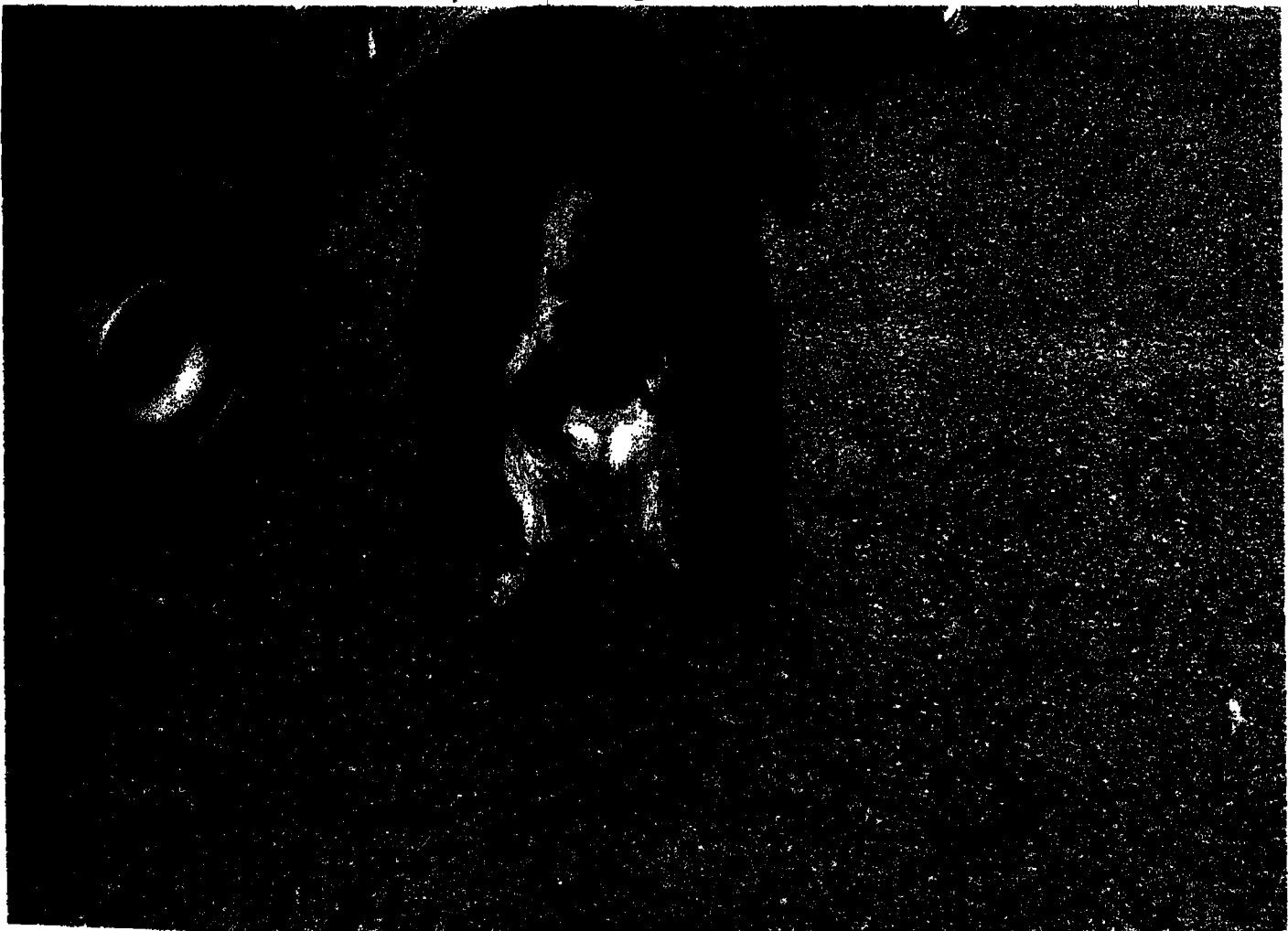
is not unique, although she did have a particularly nasty set of side effects. I have been involved in the training of two cocker spaniels this year. The first damaged her tail on the kitchen units at her home. She finally had to have the end amputated but was fortunate in that all went well. The second injured her tail repeatedly in training. The end was amputated, but after five days the stitches pulled away exposing the bone, and she had to have a second amputation. She now has a short stump. For ages she tried to avoid going into a car as she connected it with visits to the vet. It is also worth mentioning that of four puppies who started work on one shoot on Black Isle this year, two have already had amputations, and the other two are about to.

Please do something about changing this law which is doing nothing but cause misery to the dogs it was intended to help'

Yours truly,



'PUPPY' BEFORE



'PUPPY' AFTER