

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



F/T: [REDACTED]

Karen Gillon
 The Scottish Parliament
 EDINBURGH
 EH99 1SP

Ur faidhle/Your r [REDACTED]
 Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2011/0007201
 4th April 2011

Dear Karen,

Thank you for your further letter dated 21 March 2011 on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] concerning the ban on the tail docking of working dogs in Scotland.

As I explained in my last letter, I have decided that additional research should be carried out on working dog breeds in Scotland. The tender document for the research was issued and applications have now been received. These are currently being considered and, if one of the tenders is accepted, the research will commence as soon as possible. It will be some time before the results of the research will be available for consideration but, when they are, the current ban on tail docking in Scotland will be reviewed.

I have noted the points made by your constituent but it would be inappropriate to comment on these at this time. His points will be taken into consideration, however, when the research is concluded.

With regard,
Richard

RICHARD LOCHHEAD

Doc 30

RAF
22 MAR 2011
PRIVATE OFFICE



The Scottish
Parliament



Karen Gillon MSP

Member of Scottish Parliament for Clydesdale

Our Ref. [REDACTED]

21st March, 2011.

Richard Lochhead, MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment
The Scottish Government,
St. Andrew's House, Regent Road,
EDINBURGH, EH1 3DG

Your Ref. 2011-0001702

M.C.U.
22 MAR 2011
Received

I refer to previous correspondence and enclose herewith copy letter received from [REDACTED] dated 16th March, 2011.

I should be obliged if you could let me have your comments and responses to the further issues raised by [REDACTED] and I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible so that I can revert to the constituent and hopefully put his mind at rest.

Yours sincerely,

M.C.U.
[REDACTED]

KAREN GILLON MSP

7 Wellgate, Lanark ML11 9DS

Tel: [REDACTED]

Dear Karen,

Many thanks for passing on letters from Richard Lockard.

However there is a number of points I would like to point out.

As I mentioned before I have been and trained E.S.S. since 1962 or thereabouts.

In old days good practice to avoid damage to tail was to leave no less than $\frac{2}{3}$ of tail intact.

Present practice is to leave at best $\frac{1}{3}$ of tail intact as it is the thin last $\frac{1}{3}$ of tail that is damaged in unclashed dogs.

The word worthless is a bit inappropriate but is meant is that an unclashed dog should be put into cover where tail damage w/will occur. Any owner (who should know the likelihood of tail damage) who allows any animal to enter cover where he/she

PTO.

knows tail damage can occur should be prosecuted for cruelty as he/she knew that by their ~~own~~ actions injury would/ could occur.

Hemid and urinary incontinence, with nearly fifty years experience I have never come across or heard of) in ESS circles, that docking could cause same.

Balane, a docked tail (maximum $\frac{1}{3}$ of) will have very little effect on a deep balane.

I now understand that Scotland is the only U.K. country that does not allow docking of working-breed dogs under certain conditions. Mr Salward voted to allow ~~dog~~ tail-docking for working-breeds in England.

We now do not train undocked ESS as working dogs. Which puts us at a big disadvantage with the rest of U.K.

One can buy a puppie which has been gaily docked, but can not run as a litter of Scottish puppies to ascertain most suitable puppies to be retained.

Kùnaire 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]

Karen Gillon MSP
 The Scottish Parliament
 EDINBURGH
 EH99 1SP

Ur faidhle/Your ref: [REDACTED]
 Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2011/0001702
 31* January 2011

Karen

Thank you for your letter dated 21 January 2011 to Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] concerning the tail docking of working dogs in Scotland. I am replying as animal welfare falls within my portfolio.

I note that you sent an earlier letter dated 8 November 2010 on this matter but I am afraid my officials have no record of having received this, which of course explains why you did not receive a response. Thank you for enclosing a further copy of your letter.

I have considered [REDACTED]'s concerns and I note he believes that, as a result of recent legislation, the English Springer spaniel pups he breeds have become worthless as working dogs. I appreciate that he is content to ban tail docking for cosmetic reasons but there are a number of health and welfare problems which have been associated with tail docking in some dogs; for example, hernia and urinary incontinence. A dog's tail also aids balance in some activities and is used to communicate emotional state and mood.

I am aware, however, that if undocked dogs suffer serious tail damage which requires amputation, this is a far more serious procedure than tail docking a very young pup. I presume that [REDACTED] is concerned that his pups will sustain tail injuries if they are undocked and this is why he now considers them worthless as working dogs. It is well known that spaniels are particularly susceptible to tail injury because they wag their tails so much.

Continued/..

██████████ appears to think he would be prosecuted if the tail of one of his dogs was damaged when it was working. This of course is not the case so long as he got the injury properly treated.

If a vet considered that the injury was so severe that the tail had to be amputated then the treatment would be carried out for medical reasons which is permitted under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

I fully appreciate that ██████████ would like an exemption from the general tail docking ban for working spaniels and I note from your letter dated 8 November that you have explained to him that the arguments for and against tail docking were fully considered when the decision to implement a total ban was made by Parliament. This was indeed the case but those, like your constituent, who want the ban lifted for working dogs have continued to lobby the Scottish Government. This is an extremely controversial issue since equally strong and emotive views are held by those who wish the ban to remain in place.

Since there was a lack of robust scientific evidence to show whether tail injuries had 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 and covered England, Scotland and Wales.

The study researchers completed the analysis and produced a draft Report which was peer reviewed. The Report was then published by the British Veterinary Association in the Veterinary Record on 26 June 2010.

Links to the Report and Editorial in the Veterinary Record are below–

<http://veterinaryrecord.bvapublications.com/cgi/content/full/166/26/812>

<http://veterinaryrecord.bvapublications.com/cgi/content/full/166/26/800>

When the Report was published I provided interested organisations with an opportunity to comment on it before making my decision as to whether or not our current policy on tail docking is justified. As the tail docking ban is relatively recent, there were limited numbers of working dogs with undocked tails in the Bristol University/RVC Study which made it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions. The researchers actually suggested that further research be undertaken.

In the circumstances, my considered opinion was that the research was insufficiently robust enough and I decided that additional research needed to be carried out. New research, specifically targeted at working dog breeds in Scotland, will therefore be undertaken and this will allow a larger sample of undocked dogs to be investigated. It is anticipated that the research will examine the risk of tail injuries in working dog breeds, whether or not used as working dogs, and breeds included will be spaniels, terriers and hunt point retrievers.

Continued/..

The tender document will be issued shortly but it will take some time for an internal Panel to receive and consider the returned tenders, make a selection and get the research going. It will be some months, therefore, before the results of the research will be available for consideration. When they are, however, the current ban on tail docking in Scotland will be reviewed again.

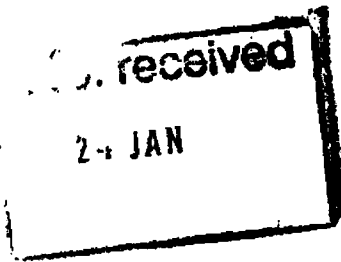
I hope this is helpful.

*Regards,
Richard*

RICHARD LOCHHEAD



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Our ref [REDACTED]

21st January 2011

Roseanna Cunningham
Minister for the Environment
The Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh

Dear Roseanna

I contacted you on the 8th November on behalf of my constituent [REDACTED] with regard to tail docking of working dogs. It would appear that I do not yet have a reply.

I would be grateful if you could look into this matter and let me have your response at your earliest convenience. I enclose a copy of my earlier letter for ease of reference.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

*Best wishes
Karen M. Gillon*

Karen Gillon MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Clydesdale (Scottish Labour)



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Our ref: [REDACTED]

8th November 2010

Roseanna Cunningham
Minister for the Environment
The Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh

I have been contacted by my constituent [REDACTED],
[REDACTED] with regard to tail docking of working dogs.

[REDACTED] breeds English Springer spaniels and is concerned that as a result of recent legislation the pups have become worthless as working dogs. [REDACTED] is more than happy to ban tail docking for cosmetic reasons but remains firmly of the view that tail docking for working dogs is humane and necessary. As you will appreciate I have explained to [REDACTED] that these arguments were fully considered when the decision to implement a ban was made but he was anxious that I put his points to you again so that you could reconsider the points again and in particular his view that should he put a dog into heave cover without docking its' tail and its' tail is damaged he would be prosecuted as this is inhumane treatment yet he is prevented by law from docking the tail of what is essentially a working dog. [REDACTED] is concerned that as a result his human rights are being infringed.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Karen Gillon MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Clydesdale (Scottish Labour)

7 Wellgate, Lanark, ML11 9DS
[REDACTED]

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit 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]

Dr Eilidh Whiteford MP
 House Of Commons
 LONDON
 SW1A 0AA

Ur faidhle/Your ref: [REDACTED]
 Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2011/1009088
 15th July 2011

Dear Eilidh,

Thank you for the letter dated 20 June 2011 on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] asking whether the Scottish Government has any plans to re-examine the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 (the Act) with particular reference to section 20 in relation to the tail docking of working dogs, in Scotland. You also ask for background information regarding this matter.

The Scottish Government has no current plans to re-examine the Act in general but the ban on tail docking in Scotland in relation to working dogs has caused considerable controversy since equally strong views are held by those who wish the ban to remain in place and those who would like an exemption made for working dogs. The background and current position relating to this issue is laid out below.

The decision to ban the tail docking of all dogs in Scotland was not taken lightly. The issue 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 (the Bill) was published. This issue attracted the most comments and responses. 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 its Stage 1 consideration of the Bill by a number of organisations, including the Scottish Gamekeepers Association and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation.

Continued/...

The Committee concluded in its report that it believed 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 lot to tradition. Concerns were also raised as to how an 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.

Nevertheless, the then Scottish Government provided interested parties with an opportunity to present evidence to support their case. Responses relating to tail docking were received from a wide selection of organisations representing the farming industry, animal welfare, countryside sports, veterinary surgeons and dog societies. However, much of the evidence was anecdotal and, following an analysis of the arguments for and against, the Government decided to uphold Parliament's decision not to exempt tail docking for working dogs.

When the Act came into force in 2006, section 20 made it an offence for any person to interfere with the bone structure or sensitive tissue of an animal, unless the procedure was for a medical reason or had been specifically exempted by Regulation. Since no exemption was made, the tail docking of all dogs was effectively banned in Scotland from that time.

The ban on tail docking of all dogs was welcomed by many organisations and had the full approval of veterinary associations and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. However, many organisations and individuals, like your constituent, who want the ban lifted for working dogs have continued to lobby the Government. Since there was a lack of robust scientific evidence to show whether tail injuries had 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 and covered England, Scotland and Wales.

The study researchers completed an analysis of their collected data and produced a draft Report which was peer reviewed. The Report, which was published by the British Veterinary Association in 2010, did not result in any policy changes. However, since the tail docking of working dogs has been, and still is, a very controversial issue, I gave interested parties an opportunity to comment on it before making my decision as to whether or not our current policy on tail docking was justified. As the tail docking ban was relatively recent, there were limited numbers of working dogs with undocked tails in the study which made it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions. In fact, the researchers actually suggested that further research be undertaken. In the circumstances, therefore, I decided that the results of the research already undertaken were insufficiently robust and that additional research needed to be carried out.

Continued/...

New research, specifically targeted at working dog breeds in Scotland, is therefore being undertaken by the University of Glasgow. This will allow a larger sample of undocked dogs to be investigated. The research will examine the risk of tail injuries in working dog breeds, whether or not used as working dogs, and breeds included will be spaniels, terriers and hunt point retrievers.

The research commenced in June this year and it is anticipated that the work will take about 12 months to complete. When the results are available for consideration, the current ban on tail docking in Scotland will be reviewed.

I hope this is helpful.

With best wishes
Richard

RICHARD LOCHHEAD



Eilidh Whiteford MP



Richard Lochhead MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs & the Environment
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH2 3DG

20 June 2011
Our R [REDACTED]

RAE
21 JUN 2011
PRIVATE OFFICE

Tail Docking

I have been contacted by a constituent, [REDACTED] relation to long-standing concerns he has about the banning of tail docking in dogs, under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

My constituent informs me that the procedure of tail docking can provide a range of therapeutic and aesthetic benefits aswell as practical advantages for working dogs.

I would be grateful if you could inform me of any plans the Scottish Government has to re-examine the Bill with particular reference to Section 20? Any background information you have in this matter would also be welcomed.

Many thanks for your assistance and I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

DR EILIDH WHITEFORD
MP for Banff & Buchan

M.C.U.
21 JUN 2011
Eilidh Whiteford

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit 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]

Mr Graeme Dey MSP
 The Scottish Parliament
 EDINBURGH
 EH99 1SP

Ur faidhle/Your ref: [REDACTED]
 Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2011/1009331
 7/1st July 2011

Graeme Dey

Thank you for the letter dated 21 June 2011 on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] concerning the ban on tail docking in Scotland.

I have noted the points in your constituent's email and I am aware that if undocked dogs suffer serious tail damage which ultimately leads to amputation, this can be a serious procedure. However, I understand that there are a number of health and welfare problems which have been associated with tail docking in some dogs; for example, hernia and urinary incontinence. A dog's tail also aids balance in some activities and is used to communicate emotional state and mood.

The ban on tail docking in Scotland, which became effective in 2006 when the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act came into force, has caused considerable controversy. Equally strong views are held by those who wish the ban to remain in place and those who would like an exemption made for working dogs. However, the decision to ban was not taken lightly. When the Animal Health and Welfare Bill was going through its Stage 3 debate the Scottish Parliament, after considering all the arguments for and against a ban, voted overwhelmingly not to exempt the tail docking of working dogs.

Nevertheless, the then Scottish Government provided interested parties with an opportunity to present evidence to support its case. Responses relating to tail docking were received from a wide selection of organisations representing the farming industry, animal welfare, countryside sports, veterinary surgeons and dog societies. However, much of the evidence was anecdotal and, following an analysis of the arguments for and against, the Government decided to uphold Parliament's decision not to exempt tail docking for working dogs.

The ban on tail docking of all dogs was welcomed by many organisations and had the full approval of veterinary associations and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. However, many organisations and individuals, like your constituent, who want the ban lifted for working dogs have continued to lobby the Government. Since there was a lack of robust scientific evidence to show whether tail injuries had 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 and covered England, Scotland and Wales.

The study researchers completed an analysis of their collected data and produced a draft Report which was peer reviewed. The Report, which was published by the British Veterinary Association in June 2010, did not result in any policy changes. However, since the tail docking of working dogs has been, and still is, a very controversial issue, I gave interested parties an opportunity to comment on it before making my decision as to whether or not our current policy on tail docking was justified. As the tail docking ban was relatively recent, there were limited numbers of working dogs with undocked tails in the study which made it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions. In fact, the researchers actually suggested that further research be undertaken. In the circumstances, therefore, I decided that the results of the research already undertaken were insufficiently robust and that additional research needed to be carried out.

New research, specifically targeted at working dog breeds in Scotland, is therefore being undertaken by the University of Glasgow. This will allow a larger sample of undocked dogs to be investigated. The research will examine the risk of tail injuries in working dog breeds, whether or not used as working dogs, and breeds included will be spaniels, terriers and hunt point retrievers.

The research commenced in June this year and it is anticipated that the work will take about 12 months to complete. When the results are available for consideration, the current ban on tail docking in Scotland will be reviewed.

I hope this is helpful.

*With best love
Richard*

RICHARD LOCHHEAD



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Graeme Dey
Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Angus South

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

Ref: [REDACTED]

RAE
23 JUN 2011
PRIVATE OFFICE

21st June 2011

Dear Richard,

[REDACTED]

I have been contacted by my constituent above in relation to the issue of tail docking, and whether the present legislation in Scotland takes sufficient account of the potential harm caused to working dogs when they do not have their tails docked. I have enclosed a self-explanatory email which I have received from [REDACTED] and in which she outlines her main concerns.

I would be grateful if you could look into the points she has highlighted and get back to me. I look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Graeme Dey MSP

[Faint, illegible signature or stamp]

We hope to have a constituency office fully opened in the very near future.

In the meantime please contact Graeme Dey MSP at:

The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

Tel. [REDACTED]

e-mail: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This email has been sent to Graeme Dey MSP from the Scottish Parliament's Internet site

Sender's Name: [REDACTED]

Sender's Address: [REDACTED]

Sender's Postcode: [REDACTED]

Sender's Email: [REDACTED]

Sender's Telephone Number: [REDACTED]

Sender's Message: Can you tell me if there is any chance that the law in Scotland on the docking of puppies tails will be revoked? I have worked in veterinary practice for the past 18y and own and work Hungarian Vizslas - a traditionally docked breed. In late 2007 we bred a litter and in line with the law were not able to dock their tails - of the 10 pups, 5 have had damage to their tails and 4 subsequent amputation - a long, arduous and painful procedure to heal. The same scenario is played out in Scotland for many dogs. I held many puppies for docking before the law changed and horror stories in the press of mutilated, screaming pups are simply untrue. Why can't we have the same (sensible) law as England and Wales where certain working breeds can be docked for their own safety? In passing this ridiculous law, the Scottish Government have inadvertently caused more dogs to suffer. Rather than bowing to the [REDACTED], why not listen to the owners and breeders who want to do what is the best for their chosen breed?

I would appreciate hearing from you if there is any hope/chance of a change in this law?

[REDACTED]

Ministear airson na h-Àrainneachd agus Atharrachadh Aimsir
 Minister for Environment and Climate Change
 Stiùbhart MacSteafain BPA
 Stewart Stevenson MSP



F/T
 E:

Mr Fergus Ewing MSP
 The Scottish Parliament
 EDINBURGH
 EH99 1SP

Ur faidhle/Your ref: FE/RD
 Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2011/1013625
 August 2011

Thank you for your email dated 5 August 2011, on behalf of one of your constituents, concerning the tail docking of working dogs in Scotland.

I appreciate that your constituent is concerned for the welfare of working dogs and I am aware that if undocked dogs suffer serious tail damage that requires amputation, this is a far more serious procedure than tail docking a very young pup. Tail docking of dogs is a controversial and emotive issue and has been the subject of considerable consultation: in March 2004, when outline proposals on new animal welfare legislation were first issued; again in May 2005 when the draft Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill was published, and again in October 2006, after the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 came into force, when draft Regulations (The Prohibited Procedures (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations) were consulted on.

As you are probably aware from your work in the last session of Parliament, responses relating to tail docking were received from a wide selection of organisations representing the farming industry, animal welfare, countryside sports, veterinary surgeons and dog societies. 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. However, much of the evidence provided was anecdotal and, following a detailed analysis of the arguments for and against, the Scottish Government decided to uphold the Scottish Parliament's decision not to exempt working dogs.

Cont/

The Scottish Government did, however, agree that if evidence came to light that the ban was compromising the welfare of dogs they would review the position. To this end, Scottish Government helped to fund a case control study by the University of Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College, aiming to document the risks of tail injuries in dogs in Great Britain, to evaluate whether docking of tails reduces the risk of tail injury and to identify other major risk factors for tail injury. The research was conducted during 2008 /2009 and the report was published by the British Veterinary Association in the Veterinary Record on 26 June 2010. Unfortunately the study was insufficiently robust enough to give guidance on whether working dogs should be exempted from the ban on tail docking due to the lack of sufficient numbers of un-docked working dogs available at that time. The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment decided that additional research needed to be carried out before the Scottish Government's position could be objectively reviewed.


The ban on tail docking has been in place in Scotland for several years and significant numbers of undocked dogs have now been trained and worked. In order to provide a greater insight into the situation, the Scottish Government has commissioned a further research project, from the University of Glasgow, to look at the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs in Scotland, specifically spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers. The study began in June 2011 and is due to report back by May 2012. Data on the incidence of tail injuries is being gathered retrospectively through a survey of working dog owners and by examining veterinary records for last year's working season and proactively through case studies following dogs throughout this working year.

The project is being supported and overseen by a steering group comprised of Scottish Government officials and representatives of the Scottish Countryside Alliance, the Scottish Gamekeepers Association, the British Association of Shooting and Conservation, the British Small Animals Veterinary Association and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. These organisations were chosen to provide a balance of opinion as well as practical and professional knowledge of the issue in question. The steering group will meet 4 times to discuss the project progress and any issues arising.

The study should provide clear evidence regarding the impact of the ban on tail docking on working dogs in Scotland and should therefore enable an objective review of the current legislation. If your constituent would like to be involved in the study, he/she can contact [REDACTED] Welfare Team leader for the Scottish Government, or any of the organisations listed above, any of who, I am sure, would be pleased to pass on contact details to the researchers. [REDACTED] would also be pleased to provide an update on the progress of the project on request.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely



STEWART STEVENSON

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



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 August 2011 11:01:22
To: Ministerial Correspondence Unit
Cc: Minister for Environment and Climate Change
Subject: FW: Tail Docking

For MCs please. Ministerial reply.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]
Diary Secretary/Minister for Environment and Climate Change
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Sent: 05 August 2011 10:57
To: Minister for Environment and Climate Change
Subject: Tail Docking

FE/RD
5th August 2011
Stewart Stevenson MSP
Minister for the Environment

Dear Stewart,

Re: Tail Docking

I am writing on behalf of a constituent who would prefer not to be named who has raised with me his belief that in Scotland we should enable action to be taken for the welfare of working dogs to have their tails docked at or shortly after birth as of course is the continuing permitted practice south of the border.

As you know this matter was the subject of debate in a previous session of the Scottish Parliament I believe around 2006 and legislation was introduced banning tail docking in Scotland in consequence.

In the last session of parliament I worked with the Scottish Gamekeeper s Association and their chairman [REDACTED] order to review this ban and consider whether there was evidence showing that the ban was not in the interests of either the animals or the good practice of gamekeeping.

I understand that a report has been commissioned by the Scottish Government from a university veterinary department I believe Glasgow University and that evidence is now being taken.

I understand that the SGA have a place on a steering group which is considering the matter. It would be very helpful if you could at this stage, set out in detail the procedure which you are following, how the steering group is comprised, who sits on it, what the remit of it is and when it is expected that evidence will be commissioned. I assume that those involved in using working dogs will have the opportunity to feed in to the review and it would be helpful if you could indicate how this is being done in practice.

Finally, I hope that if this review shows that the welfare of working dogs is being

adversely affected by the tail docking ban that the Scottish Government will introduce legislation to make legal this practice which of course remains legal south of the border.

My constituent believes that tail docking is a humane practice, one which does not cause suffering to the dogs and one which if not carried out will lead to the tails of dogs being injured by the conditions they encounter such as barb wire fences, abrasive undergrowth such as branches, twigs, and the like.

I await hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Fergus Ewing MSP
Inverness and Nairn



has been swept for the presence of computer viruses.

