

**Burns PD (Phil)**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 25 February 2014 14:14  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
**Cc:** Voas AP (Andrew); [REDACTED]; Communications Greener; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: MACCS 2014/0000732 - Accepting tail docking petition from Scottish Gamekeepers Association

[REDACTED]

Please find briefing attached for this event.



Tail docking  
BRIEFING.docx

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Scottish Government  
Rural and Environment Directorate  
Animal Health and Welfare Division  
P Spur  
Saughton House  
Broomhouse Drive  
Edinburgh  
EH11 3XD

[REDACTED]

[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
**Sent:** 24 February 2014 09:31  
**To:** [REDACTED]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment; Communications Greener;  
[REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Voas AP (Andrew); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: MACCS 2014/0000732 - Accepting tail docking petition from Scottish Gamekeepers Association

[REDACTED]

1 to 2 page brief is fine.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 21 February 2014 11:06  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment; Communications Greener; [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Voas AP (Andrew); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: MACCS 2014/0000732 - Accepting tail docking petition from Scottish Gamekeepers Association

[REDACTED],

I can pull together light policy briefing based around Andrew's recent submission on Monday.  
How long are you looking for? 1 page? 2 pages?

[REDACTED]

Thanks

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Scottish Government  
Rural and Environment Directorate  
Animal Health and Welfare Division  
P Spur  
Saughton House  
Broomhouse Drive  
Edinburgh  
EH11 3XD

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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<< OLE Object: Picture (Device Independent Bitmap) >> << OLE Object: Picture (Device Independent Bitmap) >>  
<< OLE Object: Picture (Device Independent Bitmap) >>

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**From:** [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
**Sent:** 20 February 2014 11:24  
**To:** [REDACTED]; Communications Greener; [REDACTED]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
**Cc:** Voas AP (Andrew); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** MACCS 2014/0000732 - Accepting tail docking petition from Scottish Gamekeepers Association

Guys,

Just to let you know that Cab Sec Really has accepted this engagement, time has been firmed up in the diary and a calendar request sent out.

[REDACTED] - Cab Sec will just need a really light briefing for this as he read Andrew's recent submission, so he'll be pretty up to speed. Think the intention is to present either out the front of parliament, or in the Main Hall – [REDACTED]

Any questions, happy to discuss.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]  
Assistant Private Secretary (Correspondence)

Richard Lochhead MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment

[REDACTED]  
Mail: 1N.08-09 | St Andrews House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## BRIEFING – TAIL DOCKING

### Accepting petition from Scottish Gamekeepers Association 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014

#### Tail docking process

- Tail docking involves the amputation of puppies' tails between two and five days old. The length of tail removed varies between and within breeds. Only vets are permitted to dock tails under the Veterinary Surgeons Act.

#### Tail docking ban

- Tail docking of all dogs was banned in Scotland in 2007 after considerable consultation:
  - March 2004 - outline proposals on new animal welfare legislation first issued
  - May 2005 - draft Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill published
  - October 2006 - draft Regulations (The Prohibited Procedures (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations) consulted on.
- It is also banned in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but exemptions are allowed for working dogs of various breeds. Field sports interests in Scotland campaigned for exemptions for dogs used for shooting or pest control in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government agreed that if evidence came to light that suggests that the ban compromises the welfare of dogs, we would review the position.
- To that end, we helped fund research by the Royal Veterinary College and Bristol University during 2008 and 2009. The project could not obtain sufficient data to address whether un-docked working dogs of particular breeds have a higher incidence of tail injuries than non-working dogs and did not provide sufficient evidence to warrant amendment of the Scottish legislation

#### Glasgow Research

- The Scottish Government commissioned a further research project from the University of Glasgow in 2011, to examine the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs in Scotland, specifically spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers.
- The steering group included those in favour of docking (Scottish Gamekeepers Association, British Association for Shooting and Conservation, Scottish Countryside Alliance) and those against (British Veterinary Association, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, British Small Animal Veterinary Association).
- This research has now been completed and two papers have been submitted to the Veterinary Record, on:
  - A survey of over 1000 owners of working dogs in Scotland that asked them to report injuries that had been caused in the 2010/11 shooting season.

- Investigation of records of treatments of tail injuries in working dog breeds at veterinary practices across Scotland (not necessarily dogs that had actually been used for working).
- Key findings:
  - Over 50% of undocked working spaniels were reported to have suffered a tail injury of some sort.
  - Docking Hunt Point Retrievers (HPR) and spaniels by one third would significantly decrease the risk of tail injury sustained while working in these breeds.
  - The number of puppies that would need to be docked to prevent one tail injury in these breeds was estimated to be somewhere between two and 18 dogs, depending on the number of puppies from a litter that go on to be used for shooting.

### **Significance**

- The research findings could be used to justify a change in the legislation to allow vets to dock spaniel and HPR pups by one third if they believe that they are likely to be used for working in future and that the pain of docking a pup is outweighed by the possible avoidance of injuries later in life.
- The research does not justify docking by more than one third and does not justify docking terriers or other breeds.

### **Views**

- This possible change in the legislation would be welcomed by SGA, SCA, BASC, although they may suggest that any exemption should also include terriers as it does elsewhere.
- RCVS, BVA, BSAVA and animal welfare groups such as SSPCA, Dogs Trust and Onekind are officially opposed to tail docking at present.

### **Next steps**

- Given the strength of feeling on both sides, it is vital that the research is properly peer reviewed and deemed sufficiently robust for the Veterinary Record to publish before the Scottish Government decides on further action on tail docking. We have no control over scientific journal processes but understand that the papers should be published in the next few weeks.
- A change to the legislation could be achieved by an amendment to the Prohibited Procedures on Protected Animals (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations 2010. As this was made under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, there is a requirement to consult those representing relevant interests.

**Burns PD (Phil)**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 March 2014 14:24  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Communications Greener; Pryce JM (Jonathan); DG Enterprise, Environment & Innovation; Voas AP (Andrew); Voas S (Sheila); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Potential exemption to ban on tail docking for working dogs - meeting with officials  
12 March 2014

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I thought it would be useful to summarise the action points from our meeting on Wednesday. Our understanding is that:

- Once the papers are published a letter should issue from you to those that have written to you over the last few months updating them on progress.
- Officials should set up meetings between officials and key stakeholders to discuss their views on the research
- Once views have been collated and considered, you will make a decision on whether a review of the legislation is required. A key factor in making this decision will be whether any of the key stakeholders have been convinced sufficiently by the research to change their anti-exemption position.
- A SCANCE note is required for Cabinet for the week of publication.

Regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Scottish Government  
Rural and Environment Directorate  
Animal Health and Welfare Division  
P Spur  
Saughton House  
Broomhouse Drive  
Edinburgh  
EH11 3XD

[REDACTED]

[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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

DOC SS



The Scottish  
Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

[REDACTED]

Mr Alex Salmond MSP  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP



LEGACY 2014  
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES  
SCOTLAND

Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2014/0003856  
March 2014

Thank you for your letter dated 29 January 2014, on behalf of your constituent [REDACTED]

concerning the tail docking of working dogs.

As you are aware, in 2011 the Scottish Government commissioned a research project from the University of Glasgow examining the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs in Scotland, specifically in relation to spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers. The project has now been completed and scientific papers have been submitted to the Veterinary Record for peer review and publication.

Although we have not been informed of a definite date yet, we expect these papers to be published soon. Once the research has been deemed robust and published, we will undertake to review the legislation on tail docking of working dogs in Scotland.

In terms of communication, representatives of the Scottish Countryside Alliance, the Scottish Gamekeepers Association and the British Association of Shooting and Conservation Scotland were on the steering group for the Glasgow project and are fully aware of the results of that research and the contents of the papers submitted.

In addition you may be aware, on 26 February 2014 I met with the Scottish Gamekeepers Association to receive a petition from them calling for an exemption to the ban for working dogs. We also had a brief discussion to update them on the current position.

/I...

Taigh Naomh Anndrais, Rathad Regent, Dùn Èideann EH1 3DG  
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)



I hope that this information is useful to you.

**RICHARD LOCHHEAD**



DOC SS

RAE  
31 JAN 2014  
PRIVATE OFFICE



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**R T H O N A L E X S A L M O N D M S P**  
**A B E R D E E N S H I R E E A S T**

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

Our Ref: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]/01/2014

Dear Richard,

**Tail Docking – Working Dogs**

[REDACTED]

I refer to my abovementioned constituent who visited my office in Inverurie this week seeking information on tail docking legislation and whether the Scottish Government is reconsidering exemptions in the case of working dogs.

My office staff explained to [REDACTED] that the issue would be reviewed in light of the commissioned research from the University of Glasgow, of which the constituent was not fully aware. I would be very grateful, thereby, if you could provide information on when this research will be published and how the Scottish Government will subsequently seek to take its conclusions forward.

Furthermore, I would be grateful if you could outline how the Scottish Government's approach to these matters is being communicated to those living and working in rural communities and to the Scottish gamekeeping lobby, particularly in the North East.

I look forward to your response.

*Yours for Scotland*  
*Alex Salmond*

Alex Salmond MSP

M.C.U.  
31 JAN 2014  
Received

Riùnaire ù Chàbairt ùs san Cùisean Dùthchail agus na h-Arainneachd  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
Ridseard Lochhead BPA  
Richard Lochhead MSP



[Redacted]

Mr Fergus Ewing MSP  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP



Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2014/0004142  
March 2014

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 January 2014 to Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, regarding the British Association for Shooting and Conservation asking for a meeting to discuss if the ban on the docking of working dogs' tails should be overturned in Scotland.

Mr Lochhead would be willing to meet with yourself and representatives of British Association for Shooting and Conservation. Although we have not been informed of a definite date yet, we expect these papers to be published soon. You may wish to arrange the meeting once this report has been published in the Veterinary Record.

I would be grateful if you could contact [Redacted], Mr Lochhead's Diary Secretary, by email at [Redacted] to make the necessary arrangements.

*[Handwritten signature]*  
[Redacted]  
PRIVATE SECRETARY





years ago we were assured that further research and publication would be completed within a strict time frame. We are disappointed that once again there have been unacceptable delays in the research being published in the Veterinary Record and for the new research to be considered by the Government. This is a big welfare issue for working dogs that needs to be addressed urgently.

Over 6 months ago you responded to a written question stating that the research would be available in the near future;

Question S4W-15834: Alex Fergusson, Galloway and West Dumfries, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, Date Lodged: 21/06/2013

To ask the Scottish Government when the findings of the research it commissioned from the University of Glasgow into the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs will be published.

Answered by Richard Lochhead (28/06/2013):

The research commissioned from the University of Glasgow in 2011 has now been completed. Drafts of the two papers intended for submission are currently being considered by the project steering group, which includes representatives from the Scottish Gamekeepers Association and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation. It is expected that the papers will be submitted for publication by the researchers in the near future.

Current Status: Answered by Richard Lochhead on 28/06/2013

Could you please provide an update on when the Government will be considering this research and when you expect it to be published in the Veterinary Record.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Press and Policy Officer  
The British Association for Shooting and Conservation  
Trochry  
Dunkeld  
PH8 0DY

[Redacted]

Email: [Redacted]  
Website: [www.basc.org.uk](http://www.basc.org.uk)<<http://www.basc.org.uk>>

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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À Fhàilidh a' bhith inneal airson Coisean Bùthichean agus na h-Àrd-òigridh  
Leòdhasair Seòrsaichean airson Buidheann agus an Ìomhaireachd  
Ridseard Lochhead BPA  
Richard Lochhead MSP



Mr John Lamont MSP  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP



Ur faidhle/Your ref: [Redacted]  
Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2014/0004469

14 March 2014

Dear John

Thank you for your email on behalf of your constituents [Redacted]  
[Redacted] concerning the practice of tail docking in working dogs.

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.

However, the Scottish Government did agree to review the ban should evidence come to light that it was having a detrimental welfare impact.

You may be aware that, in 2011, the Scottish Government commissioned a research project from the University of Glasgow examining the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs in Scotland, specifically in relation to spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers. The project has now been completed and scientific papers have been submitted to the Veterinary Record for peer review and publication.

Although we have not been informed of a definite date yet, we expect these papers to be published soon.

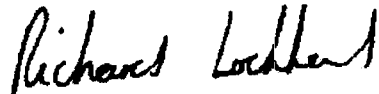
/Once...



Once the research has been deemed robust and published, we will consider undertaking a review of the legislation on tail docking of working Dogs in Scotland.

In addition you may be aware; on 26 February 2014 I met with the Scottish Gamekeepers Association to receive a petition from them calling for an exemption to the ban for working dogs. We also had a brief discussion to update them on the current position.

I hope this information is useful to you.



**RICHARD LOCHHEAD**

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 31 January 2014 15:34:01  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: to Richard Lochhead MSP re tail docking of working dogs

Richard Lochhead MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs  
Scottish Government

BY EMAIL  
January 2014

[REDACTED]

Dear Richard

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and their family run the [REDACTED]. They have a very well known and highly successful business producing Field Trial Champions. They breed working dogs including spaniels.

The ban on the docking of working dogs in Scotland has a very detrimental impact on their business and, indeed, on working dogs, who can suffer greatly if their tails are not docked.

[REDACTED] would like to see the regulations allowing this procedure to take place when dogs are used in the field to be brought into line with the rest of the UK. I hope that this is something that the Scottish Government will consider. I would welcome a note of the correct position.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

John Lamont MSP  
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire  
Scottish Conservatives

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ministear a' Chairdeil, Pàrson Eòisearn Duthchail agus na h-Àrainneachd  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
Ridseard Lochhead BPA  
Richard Lochhead MSP



The Scottish  
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Mr Duncan McNeil MSP  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

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GREENGLASS

Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2014/0008020  
20<sup>th</sup> March 2014

*Dear Duncan,*

Thank you for your letter dated 26 February 2014, regarding the publication of the research project from the University of Glasgow examining the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs in Scotland.

The project has indeed been completed and scientific papers have been submitted to the Veterinary Record for peer review and publication. Although we have not been informed of a definite date yet, we expect these papers to be published soon.

The Scottish Government has no control over the timing of publication in academic journals, or of the publication process; however, it is important that we await this review to ensure that the research is robust before considering any further steps.

In addition you may be aware; on 26 February 2014 I met with the Scottish Gamekeepers Association to receive a petition from them calling for an exemption to the ban for working dogs. We also had a brief discussion to update them on the current position.

I hope this is helpful.

*Richard Lochhead*

**RICHARD LOCHHEAD**





From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 26 February 2014 13:25:40  
To: Ministerial Correspondence Unit  
Subject: FW: Tail Docking - study carried out by Glasgow university vet school

MACCS

[REDACTED]  
Private Secretary to Richard Lochhead MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Sent: 26 February 2014 13:06  
To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Tail Docking - study carried out by Glasgow university vet school

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I understand that the Scottish Government promised to publish the findings of the study carried out by Glasgow University Vet School into tail damage of undocked working dogs.

I believe this study was completed and due for publication in June 2013. To this date nothing has been released despite repeated requests from various bodies.

I have received correspondence regarding this report from a constituent and I would be grateful if you could inform me when the study will be published so I can respond accordingly.

I would also appreciate if you could provide the reasons for the delay in publication.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

[Bluesig]

Duncan McNeil

From the Office of Duncan McNeil MSP  
for Greenock & Inverclyde  
[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



Mr Fergus Ewing MSP  
 The Scottish Parliament  
 EDINBURGH  
 EH99 1SP

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



Ur faidhle/Your ref:  
 Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2014/0007849  
 28 March 2014

Dear Fergus

Thank you for your correspondence of 7 March 2014 regarding the Scottish Gamekeeper Association, and your request for a meeting with the Association to discuss whether the ban on the docking of working dogs' tails should be overturned in Scotland.

As you are aware, in 2011 the Scottish Government commissioned a research project from the University of Glasgow examining the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs in Scotland, specifically in relation to spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers. The project has now been completed and scientific papers have been submitted to the Veterinary Record for peer review and publication.

We expect these papers to be published very soon and, once they have, we will consider whether to undertake a review of the legislation on tail docking of working dogs in Scotland. You may be aware that I recently met with representatives of the Scottish Gamekeepers Association in Edinburgh when they presented me with a petition supporting a review of the legislation. This meeting was helpful, and we agreed to speak again once the research has been published to discuss what the next steps may be. I'd be happy to keep you updated on progress and meet up in the future once things develop.

Yours sincerely

*Richard Lochhead*

**RICHARD LOCHHEAD**

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



From: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
Sent: 07 March 2014 16:01:35  
To: Ministerial Correspondence Unit  
Subject: Fw: Tail Docking research

Attachments: Tail Docking - Glasgow Uni stats.doc

Maccs.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, March 07, 2014 02:50 PM  
To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
Subject: FW: Tail Docking research

Dear Richard,

I would be grateful to have a meeting with you regarding tail docking with the SGA present, would this be possible in the near future?

Kind regards,

Fergus Ewing MSP  
Inverness and Nairn

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 2:32 PM  
To: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP  
Subject: Tail Docking research

Dear [REDACTED], I am sending on a copy of the Glasgow University research on tail docking which was kindly requested by Fergus. This is the only element of the research we have, but it is comprehensive in its summary. Please pass on our appreciation to Fergus for his work on this important animal welfare issue. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] PR and Communications Officer, The Scottish Gamekeepers Association.

[REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*

[REDACTED]


[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Press F11 key to move through the fields  
ADVICE FOR: RICHARD LOCHHEAD**

DOC 59

<b>MACCS Case Number:</b>	2014/0007849	<b>Respond by:</b> 04/04/2014
<b>Correspondent/Organisation:</b>	Fergus Ewing MSP	
<b>Date of Event:</b>	Date is flexible	Date
<b>Overview of invitation and audience profile:</b>	Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA) would like to meet with Mr Lochhead for an update on the report by the University of Glasgow into the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs which has still to be published in the Veterinary Record	
<b>Has the Minister been asked to attend of behalf of FM?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No X <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Reject	
	<p><b>Comments:</b> In 2011, the Scottish Government commissioned research 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.</p> <p>The project has now been completed and scientific papers have been submitted to the Veterinary Record. SGA are aware that the Scottish Government will be undertaking a review the legislation on tail docking of working dogs in Scotland following the papers peer review and publication. Representatives from SGA were originally on the research project steering group and have seen drafts of the scientific papers already.</p>	
		
	If recommendation is to accept, has this advice been agreed with your Head of Division? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Has another Minister been asked to attend:</b>	No Name of Minister: <a href="#">Right click here to select Minister</a>	

Press F11 key to move through the fields

<b>Main theme that the event supports:</b>	Right click here and select main theme	
<b>Main purpose of attending:</b> [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
<b>Main message to communicate:</b>	Type text here	
<b>Most appropriate type of Ministerial input:</b>	Right click here and select type of input	
<b>Private Office view:</b>	Right click here and select view	
	Private Office contact:	
<b>Communications Office view:</b>	Comments:	
	Communications Office contact:	
<b>Action Officer:</b>	[REDACTED]	Tel No: [REDACTED]

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



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the Homecoming



Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2014/0009311

7<sup>th</sup> April 2014

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter dated 28 February 2014 outlining your concern regarding a possible exemption in the tail docking ban for working dogs in Scotland

I understand and appreciate your concerns; the tail docking of working dogs has always been a controversial and emotive matter, with those both pro and anti-docking ultimately having the welfare of the working dogs at heart. The total ban on tail docking was only put in place after considerable consultation and debate and it was always agreed that if evidence came to light that the ban was compromising the welfare of working dogs the position could be reviewed.

In 2011, the Scottish Government commissioned a research project from the University of Glasgow examining the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs in Scotland, specifically in relation to spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers. The project has now been completed and scientific papers have been submitted to the Veterinary Record for peer review and publication.

Although we have not been informed of a definite date yet, we expect these papers to be published soon. Once the research has been deemed robust and published we will be inviting comments and will then consider what further action may be appropriate.

Any proposed change to the existing tail docking ban would be based on objective evidence of a welfare benefit, and not on pressure from any particular group.

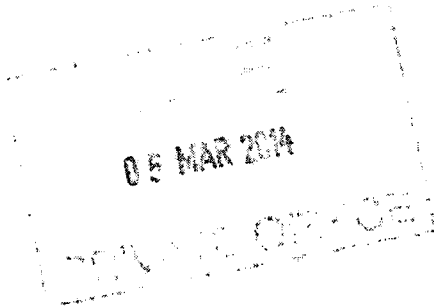
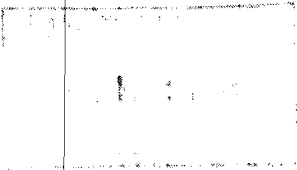
I hope this is helpful.

*With best wishes*

*Richard Lochhead*

**RICHARD LOCHHEAD**

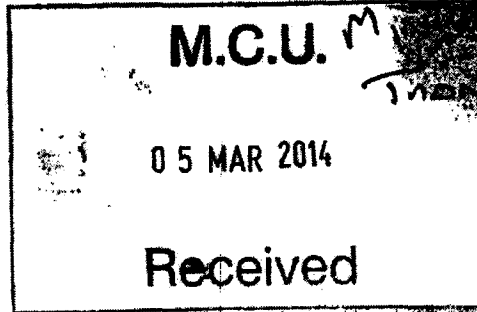
DOC 60



Tel: [Redacted]

28 February 2014

Richard Lochhead Esq, MSP  
Scottish National Party  
9 Wards Road  
Elgin  
IV30 1NL



PERIOD RESPONSE  
THANKS.  
Rory M'G.

Dear Mr Lochhead

I see that The Scottish Gamekeepers Association has presented a 4,158 signature petition calling for the ban on the docking of dog tails to be reversed on the grounds of animal welfare. In view of the fact that the activities of gamekeepers seem to me to be mainly connected to the slaughter of wildlife, I find their supposed concern for 'animal welfare' to be rather unconvincing. I assume that, when the dogs are directed into undergrowth, it is not only their tails which sustain injury and I do not hear calls for anything else to be cut off! The members of the SGA and the hunters/shooters they serve, presumably do not concern themselves with the arguments against docking, clearly set out in Wikipedia on 'Docking (dog)', and as the 'tail tax' levied on working dogs was repealed in 1796, that's no longer an excuse for the disgusting practice. Perhaps the keepers should direct their dogs into less dangerous undergrowth, even if it means that the shooters/hunters they serve have to make do with less of a 'bag'.

I am sure that, if a petition were submitted by genuine, normal dog-lovers, it would far outnumber 4,158, which is presumably the membership of the SGA.

You will no doubt realise that I oppose these activities, mainly because, in the 22 years I have been fortunate enough to live in this beautiful place (with the *misfortune* to be surrounded by a 'sporting estate'), I have increasingly come to dread the various hunting/shooting seasons, due to the increasingly yobbish behaviour of the participants in this so-called sport. I find it offensive that many people seem to regard Scotland as a rich-man's playground, with no concern for its people or its fauna.



I sincerely hope that, when you have studied the research, you will reject this call to repeal the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 and maintain the SNP Government's enlightened approach to this, as to so many other, matters.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Riaghaidh a' Chabineit airson Cùisean Dùnchaidh agus na h-Àrainneachd  
 Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
 Ridseard Lochhead BPA  
 Richard Lochhead MSP



Ms Alison McInnes MSP  
 The Scottish Parliament  
 EDINBURGH  
 EH99 1SP



Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2014/0013555  
 May 2014

Dear Alison,

Thank you for your letter dated 8 April 2014, on behalf of your constituent [REDACTED] concerning tail docking.

As you are aware, Scottish legislation has prohibited the tail docking of all dogs since April 2007. 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, 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.

The Scottish Government made a commitment to reviewing the ban in relation to working dogs if evidence showed that the ban was detrimental to welfare in this specific instance. You may be aware that, in 2011, the Scottish Government commissioned a research project from the University of Glasgow examining the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs in Scotland, specifically in relation to spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers. The project has now been completed and scientific papers have been published in the Veterinary Record.

The Scottish Government currently has no intention of reviewing the ban on tail docking of dogs in other non-therapeutic situations.

*Richard Lochhead*

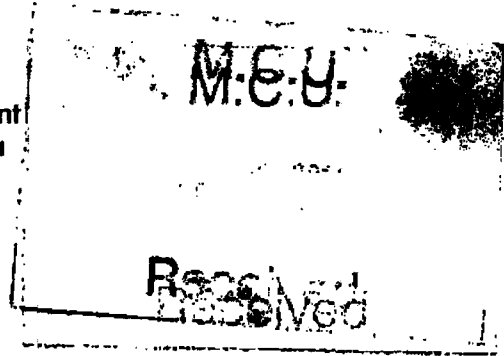
**RICHARD LOCHHEAD**

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





The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



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

8 April, 2014



Dear Richard

[Redacted]

I am writing on behalf of my constituent, [Redacted], regarding the docking dogs' tails. I have enclosed a copy of the correspondence in which she sets out her case in detail.

I would be grateful for your comments on what she has to say, and any further information you have on this which may be helpful.

I look forward to your response, so that I can reply to my constituent.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

pe Alison McInnes MSP  
North East Scotland (Liberal Democrat)

---

Alison McInnes MSP  
Member for North East Scotland Region  
Ellon Business Centre, Broomiesburn Road, Ellon AB41 9RD

[Redacted contact information]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 08 April 2014 14:05  
**To:** McInnes A (Alison) MSP  
**Subject:** FW: Docking Dogs

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Regional Office

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 08 April 2014 12:29  
**Subject:** Docking Dogs

I have just read this article <http://mrcvs.co.uk/en/news/11718/Tail-docking-ban-could-be-lifted-in-Scotland> and would really like to know why you are not asking pet owners for their opinions on docking?

I have a 7 yr old Field Spaniel (the breed not the generic working spaniel!) who is docked and has no problems with her short tail.

I had a male Field Spaniel who because of the Law had a full tail but before he was 6 months of age he was splitting his tail regularly, almost weekly but he was never worked, he was a family pet and show dog! At the age of 3 his tail was infected and needed amputation which was a very traumatic time for him and us! The wound got infected and took a good few weeks to heal causing him a great deal of distress and numerous visits to the vet and sedation so that he would leave the wound and not try to chew at it. We had to watch him the whole time he was awake so that he left his wound to heal. Sadly we lost him last year to an unrelated illness.

We now have a 14 month old Field Spaniel bitch who split her tail in the house and it is now infected. She has antibiotics and we are hoping it doesn't come to amputation but the vet has mentioned it and I am not convinced that she will keep her tail after what happened with my male dog.

These dogs are pets, they live in the house as part of the family and no one seems to be taking tail injuries in pet and show dogs into account when surveys and research is done!! I know my dog was miserable and in pain all the time he was splitting his tail because after amputation he was a totally different boy! I also know that 2 day old puppies are oblivious to having their tails docked whereas my dog was very aware of having his tail amputated as well as all the treatment he needed to the weeks following the operation. There are many pets and show dogs in the same situation as we are in. It's not just about working dogs, it's about pet dogs too, please, please, please take them into account in your figures! I'm off to wash all my kitchen cupboards and walls as they are covered in spots of blood all because I have a very happy young dog who loves lives and the government made the wrong decision re docking!!!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Posted: 08th April 2014

## Tail docking ban could be lifted in Scotland

**Dogs Trust raises concerns over research validity**

Tail docking could soon be allowed on certain dog breeds in Scotland after a study found that it could reduce the risk of injury.

In a move that has been criticised by the Dogs Trust, the Scottish Government has said it is considering lifting an existing ban to allow docking for working breeds.

It follows the publication of research by the University of Glasgow, commissioned by the Scottish Government, which found more than half of working undocked spaniels, had experienced a tail injury within the past year.

Of a total of 2800 working dogs included in the survey of 1,000 owners, 13.5 per cent had received tail injuries in the 2010/11 shooting season. Undocked spaniels were at the greatest risk with 56.6 per cent injured, while hunt point retrievers were not far behind with 38.5 per cent sustaining tail injuries.

Researchers suggested that docking at a young age could reduce the risk of injury.

Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead said: "It is clear to me that animal welfare is an extremely important issue and one which is close to many people's hearts.

"For that reason, any decision taken by the Scottish Government fully considers the welfare of each and every animal affected. In some cases, as in this one, there is no clear, straightforward answer and a balance needs to be struck.

"This research that we have funded has provided a sound basis for us to discuss with concerned parties where that balance point should be between protecting the welfare of puppies and protecting the welfare of adult working dogs, and whether further action is justified to protect working dogs from injury.

"I must stress that I have as yet taken no firm stance on this; we need to gain a clearer understanding of the views of interested parties in Scotland before any decision is made.

"I have therefore invited key interested parties to consider the findings of this research and to comment on whether they merit further consideration of a possible exemption to the ban on tail docking for specific working dogs."

Key organisations have been asked to feedback on the findings by May 23, 2014.

The Scottish Gamekeepers' Association backs the ban being lifted.

But the Dogs Trust questioned whether the reduction of a injury risk justified the pain involved with tail docking.

It said the university's research team had advertised the survey to more than 17,500 owners of working dogs, but received just 1,005 replies. This, the Dogs Trust said, may mean the risk of injury has been overestimated while those that did respond gave anecdotal accounts rather than details of verifiable injuries.

The survey had suggested that anywhere between 18 and 108 working puppies would need to be docked to prevent a single veterinary treatment taking place.

But a second piece of research by the university, which consulted with just eight veterinary practices in Scotland, suggested 232 working breed puppies would need to be docked to prevent a single veterinary treatment.

"Based on these points and others, Dogs Trust has grave reservations regarding the validity of the research, which we do not believe is representative or forms a sufficient evidence - base on which any possible changes to legislation should be formed," said a spokesman.

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The University of Glasgow study found more than half of working spaniels had suffered tail injuries in the past year. It recommended docking puppy tails to reduce injury risk.

## Spring issue

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**News Today**

**Vets and nurses asked about their experiences**

Veterinary surgeons, students and nurses are being asked to take part in an RCVS survey about their experience, ambitions, mental wellbeing, and their views on 24-hour cover.

The survey of the professors, carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies, will only be available to complete online.

The four-yearly, confidential survey provides useful data that helps the College to develop policy, plan activities and respond to questions from the government and media.

The survey also aims to find out more about individuals' working patterns and professional development, while questions about mental health will be used to track the mental well-being of the profession as a whole over successive years.

The answers to questions about 24/7 emergency cover will feed into the RCVS Standards Committee's current evidence-gathering exercise.

The deadline for completion of the survey is 30 April.

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Ràinigeir a' Chairinneil a-rson Còisean Dùthchail agus na h-Àrainneachd  
Minister Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
Ridseard Lochhead BPA  
Richard Lochhead MSP



Ms Angela Constance MSP  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2014/0014321  
26<sup>th</sup> May 2014

*Dear Angela,*

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11 April 2014 regarding tail docking and what the next steps in the process will be.

As you are aware, in 2011, the Scottish Government commissioned a research project from the University of Glasgow examining the incidence of tail injuries in working dogs in Scotland, specifically in relation to spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers.

We are currently gathering comments on the research which has now been published and how this affects the view point of key stakeholders on both sides of the debate. The closing date for comments is 23 May 2014.

I will advise of my decision to take further action or not in due course

*Best wish*  
*Richard*

**RICHARD LOCHHEAD**

