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American Kennel Club News Article
AKC Statement on AVMA Crop and Dock Policy

Date of Article: November 26, 2008

New York, NY (November 21, 2008) -- The American Kennel Club® was advised this week of the [AVMA's newly amended policy on ear cropping and tail docking](#) following its adoption by the AVMA Executive Board at the recommendation of their Committee on Animal Welfare on November 15, 2008.

Historically, the AKC has worked closely with the AVMA to ensure that the rights of individual dog owners, and breed standards, remain protected. However, the AKC was very disappointed to not have been consulted regarding this latest iteration of the policy, despite having been in frequent contact with the AVMA in recent months.

At a joint meeting this Wednesday AKC explained to the AVMA that we recognize ear cropping and tail docking, as prescribed in certain breed standards, are acceptable practices integral to defining and preserving breed character, enhancing good health, and preventing injuries. These breed characteristics are procedures performed to insure the safety of dogs that on a daily basis perform heroic roles with Homeland Security, serve in the U.S. Military and at Police Departments protecting tens of thousands of communities throughout our nation as well as competing in the field.

Mislabeling these procedures as "cosmetic" is a severe mischaracterization that connotes a lack of respect and knowledge of history and the function of purebred dogs. Breed standards are established and maintained by AKC Parent Clubs (each of the 158 AKC registered breeds is stewarded by a breed-specific Parent Club) keeping foremost in mind the welfare of the breed and the function it was bred to perform.

As a not for profit organization that has been devoted to the advancement and welfare of dogs for 125 years, the AKC believes that all dog owners bear a special responsibility to their canine companions to provide proper care and humane treatment at all times and that responsible dog owners, in consultation with their veterinarian, have the right to make decisions regarding appropriate care and treatment of their pets.

AKC's policy on the issue, which remains unchanged, states:

The American Kennel Club recognizes that ear cropping, tail docking, and dewclaw removal, as described in certain breed standards, are acceptable practices integral to defining and preserving breed character and/or enhancing good health. Appropriate veterinary care should be provided.

Dog owners who would like to contact AVMA directly regarding their policy should direct comments to Gail Golab, head of the AVMA Animal Welfare Division: ggolab@avma.org or 847-925-8070.



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