

**ADDITIONAL ROTTWEILER BREED COUNCIL MEETING WITH THE KENNEL CLUB AT CLARGES STREET,
LONDON
WEDNESDAY 16 JANUARY 2008 AT 12.30 P.M.**

PRESENT: BREED CLUBS

Joan Adams – Chairman of the Rottweiler Breed Council
Mary McPhail – Rottweiler representative KCLC Breeds Council
Karen Davies – Rottweiler Breed Council Secretary
Jane Heath – Midland Rottweiler Club
Kath Hindley – Eastern Counties Rottweiler Club
Stuart Wright – Eastern Counties Rottweiler Club
Elizabeth Harrap – The Rottweiler Club
Dave Parrish – The Rottweiler Club
Leanne Lewis – Rottweiler Club of Wales
Michelle Derbyshire – South Western Rottweiler Club
John Hubble – South Western Rottweiler Club
Maggie Bryant – North of England Rottweiler Club
Margaret Yates – British Rottweiler Association

KENNEL CLUB

Holly Lee – Public Affairs Manager
Heidi Lawrence – Education Manager
Dr Jeff Sampson – Accredited Breeder Scheme (part of the meeting)

APOLOGIES: London and South East Rottweiler Club
Scottish Rottweiler Club (although absent submitted a written statement)
Jenny Dennis – Rottweiler Breed Council Health representative

1. MEETING OPENED 12.30

Joan Adams, Chairman of the Rottweiler Breed Council, opened the meeting at 12.30 and thanked the Kennel club for the use of their facilities.

Holly Lee, The Kennel Club Public Affairs Manager, advised the meeting that Dr Jeff Sampson would be available to speak on the subject of The Accredited Breeder Scheme at 1.45 p.m.

2. OUTLINE OF REASON FOR MEETING

Joan said that owing to the casual language of 'e' mails there may have been a misunderstanding about this meeting. The meeting was requested by the Rottweiler Club to consider the present situation, and how usefully we could act in conjunction with the Kennel Club.

She went on to ask each club to make a short statement outlining their Club's thoughts and ideas and added that she hoped that the Kennel Club could consider some of these ideas and advice which could most usefully promote a more balanced public attitude. She advised that after these statements, the Kennel Club representative would make comments and then a general discussion could take place.

3. STATEMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL CLUBS

Joan Adams asked that each club representative introduce themselves and read their prepared statements to the meeting.

- **THE SCOTTISH ROTTWEILER CLUB**

The Scottish Rottweiler Club although absent from the meeting had submitted a prepared statement; this was read to the meeting by Karen Davies, Secretary of the Rottweiler Breed Council. Full statement attached.

Main points:

Cage fronts for benching at shows

Setting up of a website by the Breed Council solely for the purpose of educating potential buyers

Creation of a DVD to show people how to deal with certain issues i.e. dominance, socialisation – this could be run on the website

- **THE MIDLAND ROTTWEILER CLUB**

Jane Heath, Midland Rottweiler Club, introduced herself to the meeting. She advised that she did not have a prepared statement as the Secretary of The Midland had not been notified of the date of this meeting, therefore there had been insufficient time to consult the committee. Jane said that at the next committee meeting this will be discussed and a statement of their ideas will be produced in February.

After discussion about Clubs being notified of this meeting, it was seen that notification had gone out to all Breed Clubs on 5th January 2008 and it was thought that some confusion may have arisen concerning the date being similar to that of the next Breed Council meeting.

- **EASTERN COUNTIES ROTTWEILER CLUB**

Stuart Wright, Eastern Counties Rottweiler Club, introduced himself to the meeting. He advised that he had written notes to hand but had not got a written statement to share with the meeting.

Main Points:

- More support from the Kennel Club

- More Liaison between Breed Clubs

- More Discover Dogs scenarios not just at Crufts where the general public can meet well behaved rottweilers

- More guidance for the public concerning rescue dogs

- More education and general guidance for the public about the ownership of dogs

- More control of registrations of rottweilers by the Kennel Club

- Clubs to provide more Good Citizenship type training for owners

- Concern regarding the initial set up of the Accredited Breeder Scheme

- **THE ROTTWEILER CLUB**

Dave Parrish, The Rottweiler Club, introduced himself to the meeting. He read the statement prepared by the Rottweiler Club. Full statement attached.

Main points:

- Re-homed dogs in unsuitable homes have caused most of the problems over the last few years.

- Would like to see dogs to be re-homed to only be placed with families who have been assessed by local dog warden as to their suitability to manage a rescue dog

- Banned dogs list can be added to at any time without further consultation.

- Breed Clubs should take the initiative to prevent this happening.

- Possibility of all rottweiler owners being registered

- **THE SOUTH WESTERN ROTTWEILER CLUB**

John Hubble, The South Western Rottweiler Club, introduced himself to the meeting. He outlined the South Western's statement to the meeting. Full statement attached.

- Extend hip scoring to all working breeds

- Aggression in the ring to be penalised
- Urged all present to avoid using the phrase 'educate the public' to avoid it being seen as patronizing and cause antagonism.
- The organising of more public meeting sessions with rottweilers possibly at major public events
- KC to look seriously at reward based training methods

- **THE ROTTWEILER CLUB OF WALES**

Leanne Lewis, The Rottweiler Club of Wales, introduced herself to the meeting. She went on to read the statement prepared by the Rottweiler Club of Wales. Full report attached.

Main points:

- Would like to see in house restrictions on breeding rather than Government legislation
- Only rottweilers bred within the Kennel Club's Accredited Breeder Scheme to be registered with the Kennel Club
- Only puppies bred from parents who have been hip scored be registered with the Kennel Club.

- **THE NORTH OF ENGLAND ROTTWEILER CLUB**

Maggie Bryant, The North of England Rottweiler Club, introduced herself to the meeting. She advised that she did not have a prepared statement to read, but outlined the following points:

- Concern regarding control of alternative registrations
- Would like to see progress through working with other breed clubs
- Concern regarding the Accredited Breeder Scheme

- **THE BRITISH ROTTWEILER ASSOCIATION**

Margaret Yates, British Rottweiler Association, introduced herself to the meeting. She went on to read the statement prepared by the British Rottweiler Association. Full statement attached.

Main points:

- The British Rottweiler Association does not feel there is a great deal more they can do with regard to the media that the Kennel Club is not already addressing to some degree.
- Would urge the Kennel Club to continue and increase their efforts.
- Would welcome close and continuing dialogue with the Kennel Club to offset the growing anti dog feeling towards many of the larger breeds.
- Breed Clubs to take practical steps to emphasis a responsible attitude to breeding and owning rottweilers. This should include concern for healthy minds as well as healthy bodies.
- Concern regarding the Accredited Breeders Scheme i.e. anyone can join who fills in a form and pays a fee. Also the general public may see the scheme as a recommendation that members are to be preferred as breeders over non accredited breeders.

4. KENNEL CLUB PRESS OFFICE COMMENTS ON BREED CLUB STATEMENTS

Accredited Breeder Scheme

Holly Lee, the Public Affairs Manager at the Kennel Club, advised the meeting that the comments regarding the Accredited Breeder Scheme would be addressed by Dr Jeff Sampson when he joins the meeting at 1.45.

Recent incident involving the death of a child – press statement

Holly explained that with regard to the recent incident involving a rottweiler and the death of a child, from a Press Department point of view the timing had been difficult as it had occurred over the Christmas period. This prevented joined up communication as it was thought necessary to get a statement out to the press as soon as possible.

Joan Adams, Breed Council Chairman asked if the Kennel Club could give the breed clubs a named person's details as this would make communication easier. At this point Holly gave the meeting representatives her card containing her contact details.

Holly asked the breed club representatives to e mail her and let them know the contact details of their media representatives.

Cage fronts for benching at shows

On the subject of benching at shows she advised that this would be passed on to the shows department.

Restrictions on registrations

Holly explained that the Kennel Club could not deny registrations for legal reasons. On the subject of only registering puppies from hip scored parents, it was the Kennel Club's intention to eventually get all health tests necessary for a breed a requirement of the Accredited Breeder Scheme. DEFRA were keen to see the Accredited Breeder Scheme working.

Dangerous Dogs Act

Holly agreed that a breed could be added to the Dangerous Dogs Act but thought that this was unlikely. Dave Parrish, The Rottweiler Club, said that three breed were already listed and he felt we did have cause to worry.

Holly replied that the Kennel Club were working very closely with DEFRA and had been given assurances that there were no additions to the Act in the pipeline. DEFRA informed KC that DDA is the second most unpopular legislation in recent years.

Various proposed restrictions by London Councils were discussed.

Re-homing of dogs

Holly said that this was not her area of work, but she agreed that it needed looking at further.

Heidi Lawrence, Education Manager at the Kennel Club

Holly introduced Heidi Lawrence, Education Manager, to the meeting. Heidi explained to the meeting that she was responsible for the Kennel Club Good Citizen Scheme, also the Safe and Sound Scheme. John Hubble, South Western, thought that in the present climate it was not good practice to promote the Safe and Sound Scheme as it may present dogs in a bad light i.e. children needed protection from dogs.

Kennel Club Safe and Sound Scheme

Heidi outlined the Safe and Sound Scheme. She said that most bites occur in the home and are made by Labradors, Golden Retrievers and Westies. She advised that the Kennel Club were planning a series of adverts to be shown when children were at home i.e. Easter and Summer holidays, these will also be shown at Crufts. The message to be delivered will be aimed at parents and state that all children and dogs should be supervised. It was not intended to give out bad publicity for any breed of dog.

Heidi went on to say that it should be deed not breed, and the Kennel Club are trying to address this in legislation. If changes could be made to the Dangerous Dogs Act it may, in the future, be possible to prosecute grossly negligent owners.

Kennel Club Good Citizen Scheme

Heidi then went on to say that the Good Citizen scheme needs promoting to encourage all puppies to attend training classes. It was acknowledged that new owners require training classes near to home and at a time suitable to them; to this effect the Kennel Club have a list of all training clubs who participate in the Good Citizen Scheme and this was available to breeders to give out to new puppy owners.

Mrs McPhail, K.C. Breed Liaison representative, enquired if the Kennel Club inspects any of these training clubs as different clubs have different systems of training. Heidi advised that clubs are monitored and if a query is received they will be visited.

Stuart Wright, Eastern Counties Rottweiler Club, enquired if the Kennel Club could send out information such as puppy packs including information about training of puppies for the Good Citizen Scheme to breeders when registering their puppies and whether this information could be placed in pet shops. Mrs McPhail thought that perhaps this scheme information could also be placed in vets surgeries.

Michele Derbyshire, South Western Rottweiler Club, thought that some breeders were not interested in supplying new owners with puppy packs.

(Dr Jeff Samson, joined the meeting)

Dr Sampson advised the meeting that the Kennel Club would shortly be in a position to include breed specific information in correspondence when owners applied to transfer the puppy into their own name. This would bypass breeders who were not concerned about training for their puppies.

Kennel Club Foundation Course for prospective dog owners

Heidi outlined a Kennel Club Foundation Course for prospective dog owners recently held in Newcastle. This had been very successful, it encouraged people to look at why they wanted a dog, which breed, and would they make suitable owners. Quite a few of those who attended changed the breed they had first thought of and some did not buy a dog at all. It was hoped that this course could be repeated elsewhere.

Heidi Lawrence said that figures show that dog owners won't travel more than 5 miles to attend training classes.

It was noted that the Kennel Club do spend time and money trying to educate those who wish to buy puppies with advice to go to a reputable breeder. With regard to pet vending and internet sales, the Kennel Club are currently putting together a statement advising the public not to buy a puppy in this way.

LITERATURE GIVEN OUT BY HEIDI LAWRENCE – EDUCATION MANAGER

- Handling the Media Seminar – 30 October 2007
- KC Dog Bulletin – Nov 07 – December 07
- KC Dog leaflet – The Kennel Club Dog Owners Group
- KC Dog Welcome Pack

ACCREDITED BREEDER SCHEME – Dr Jeff Sampson

John Hubble, South Western, said that he felt the Accredited Breeder Scheme had been rushed into existence and a lot of people see it as a platform to sell puppies.

Dr Sampson advised that it had been necessary to get the scheme up and running quickly as there was a huge political agenda surrounding the welfare of pure bred dogs.

He went on to say that at present the world of dogs was self regulating and the Kennel Club were in consultation with DEFRA to keep this self regulation. It should be remembered that there was an active anti dog faction in parliament. The Government see the Accredited Breeder Scheme as a germ of a good idea; if the Accredited Breeders Scheme does not succeed as a means of self regulation then the DEFRA may impose tough regulations such as the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals. This convention includes the requirement that when breeding a co-efficient of only 6% would be allowed which in effect means that there could only be one grandparent in common.

A discussion took place regarding the qualifications necessary to go on the Accredited Breeders List such as the need for a dog to be micro chipped. Dr Sampson explained that a dog could be micro chipped, or DNA tested or tattooed and the breeder should have completed the health checks necessary for that breed i.e. hip scoring. It was noted that some health requirements were recommendations only i.e. elbow scoring.

Dr Sampson went on to explain the accolades attributed to breeders of experience, these demonstrated breeders length of experience, necessary health schemes adhered to such as hip scoring and whether recommended health checks such as elbow scoring had been completed. These accolades allowed a prospective puppy purchaser to see the breeders of experience who did everything to ensure their puppies were covered by the necessary health checks.

The question was raised concerning checks on breeders premises and whether any Accredited Breeders had been taken off the list for non compliance. Dr Sampson advised that Bill Lambert, the Accredited Breeder Scheme advisor, does inspect and completes around 50 visits per year. All breeders (mostly who own multiple breeds) who breed more than 10 litters per year have been visited and some removed from the list. All complaints regarding Accredited Breeders receive a visit. At present Mr Lambert is the only person who visits, but there will be more in the future.

A list of accredited breeders by breed is available from the Kennel Club.

A discussion took place regarding using a stud dog that does not satisfy Accredited Breeder requirements i.e. not identified by microchip etc. Dr Sampson advised that in a case such as this a letter to the Kennel Club scheme advising them of this fact would not stop registration of the puppies.

Dr Sampson said that the scheme needed more breeders, out of 30,000 breeders in the country only approximately 2,000 were on the list. He stressed the importance to the pedigree dog world of keeping self regulation, and the Accredited Breeders Scheme demonstrated to DEFRA that attempts to do this were ongoing.

Holly, Press Relations Manager, reminded the meeting that DEFRA were really interested in the Accredited Breeder Scheme, and are looking for improved regulation of the pedigree dog world.

5. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Jane Heath, Midland Rottweiler Club, read out a statement from Elvira's daughter, PR for the Breed Council, which included the need to promote positive stories regarding rottweilers, evangelising good ownership, and education.

John Hubble, South Western Rottweiler Club, outlined risk perception and dread factors and urged the meeting to not rush to do something to make the situation worse. He said to remember that when dealing with the media they often have hidden agendas.

Michele Derbyshire, South Western Rottweiler Club, thought it would be good PR if a high profile person could present a positive side of rottweilers.

Joan Adams, British Rottweiler Association, urged that rottweiler owners and breeders do not become complacent about their own areas.

Joan Adams, Chairman of the Rottweiler Breed Council, thanked Holly Lee, Heidi Lawrence and Dr Jeff Sampson for their input to a very positive meeting,

6. Meeting Closed
3.15