



The Augusta Kennel Club

an AKC Member Club

NEWSLETTER

January/February 2009



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB™

In This Issue

2009 Officers & Board.....	1
Spring Show Update.....	1
Kibbles & Bits.....	1
Article: Struvite Crystals.....	2-3
Event Calendar.....	4
Meeting Highlights.....	4
Next Meeting.....	4
New Members.....	4
Membership Dues.....	4
AKC News.....	5-6
AVMA Dock/Crop Issue.....	7-8

Board & Officers

President.....	Carol Cox
Vice President.....	Audrey Bye
Treasurer.....	Gloria Janda
Rec. Secretary.....	Debbie Metts
Corr. Secretary.....	Sara Martin
Board Member.....	Georgie Blackburn
Board Member.....	Angie Hubbard
Board Member.....	Nancy Kille
Board Member.....	Sarah Prince

MOST POPULAR MALE DOG NAMES

1. Bear
2. Blue
3. Max/Maximus/Maxwell
4. Duke
5. Buddy
6. Jack
7. Prince
8. King
9. Bailey
10. Rocky
11. Harley
12. Jake
13. Shadow
14. Lucky
15. Hunter
16. Dakota
17. Lou
18. Midnight
19. Cooper
20. Buster

2009 Officers and Board

At the annual meeting (held during the Christmas party), one vote was cast for the 2009 slate of Officers and Board of the Augusta Kennel Club:

President.....	Carol Cox
Vice President.....	Audrey Bye-Weygant
Treasurer.....	Gloria Janda
Corresponding Secretary.....	Sara Martin
Recording Secretary.....	Debbie Metts
Board of Directors.....	Sarah Prince
Board of Directors.....	Nancy Kille
Board of Directors.....	Angie Hubbard
Board of Directors.....	Georgie Blackburn

Diane Johnson declined nomination for a board position in 2009, leaving an open position. The nominating committee selected Georgie Blackburn, and the other current board and officers. The club would like to express our thanks to Diane for her service to the club while serving on the board.

Spring Show Update

The premium list is currently being proofed and will be submitted to Onofrio in early January. Show dates for 2009 are Thursday, April 9 (Valdosta KC), Friday, April 10, (Augusta KC), Saturday, April 11 (Atlanta KC) and Sunday, April 12 (Combined Specialty Clubs).

Entries were down significantly in 2008, and it is expected to be as bad if not worse in 2009, based on entries at other events in the region.

Volunteers are needed to help with our show day on Friday, and other days if you can. Club members who work a minimum of 4 hours on any day, can be reimbursed for their hotel room for that night.

Ring Stewards will be needed for obedience & rally. Provisions are made for you to exhibit your dog(s) when needed. If you can steward, please contact Audrey. Club members who steward in obedience/rally a minimum of 4 hours may have their hotel room reimbursed, or receive compensation (\$25 for the 1st 4 hours and \$5 hour for each additional hour). However, you can only request one or the other. If you are sharing a room with someone, we ask that you not "double dip" and request compensation/reimbursement for both of you.

This is a big show and it takes a lot of people pitching in for things to run smoothly, so if you can help out, PLEASE DO! We all like to go and show our dogs, but remember, we are the HOSTS, and the exhibitors are our GUESTS!

Kibbles & Bits

AKC Mentor Program

The American Kennel Club (AKC) New Exhibitor Mentor Program matches experienced dog fanciers and breeders with recent registrants of AKC dogs. Seasoned handlers and exhibitors share their expertise with those expressing an interest in entering the exciting world of AKC events competition.

If you are an experienced fancier and would like to serve as a mentor, please fill out an application, have a club officer sign it and return it to us at 8051 Arco Corporate Drive, Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27617 or fax to 919-816-4275. If you have questions or comments, contact AKC at 919-816-3712 or publiced@akc.org.

Struvite Crystals & Urinary Tract Infections

By Lew Olson, PhD Natural Health, LMSW-ACP
www.b-naturals.com

The question of struvites has come up numerous times in both private emails and on the K9Nutrition yahoo group list in the last few months. These questions concern finding struvite crystals in the urine, along with a possibility of infection and the recommendation to change the dog's diet. This recommendation most frequently is for a commercial dog food designed for crystals, stones and urinary tract infections.

This brings up the question, "Just what causes struvite crystals in the dog's urine?" Common symptoms include the dog urinating frequently, showing some pain with urination, squatting frequently only to leak a few drops, and the dog may have spots of blood in the urine. Often a dog that was perfectly housebroken will begin to have accidents in the house or become incontinent (leak urine while awake or sleeping).

A trip to the veterinarian may show struvite crystals in the urine. We learn that high pH in the urine accompanies struvites. Often, a glance by the veterinarian at the urine specimen under a microscope won't always show bacteria. At this point, the health care professional will suggest a change of diet to help change the pH of the urine, and perhaps prescribe a week to ten days supply of antibiotics.

The owner takes the dog home and things slowly get better and the matter is forgotten . . . until a few days after the antibiotics are completed and the symptoms resume. Or worse, the symptoms stop, but in a few months, the crystals develop into painful struvite stones, which may need surgery to be removed.

There is a problem with this common treatment. It misunderstands how struvites develop and how urinary tract infections almost always accompany them. **It isn't that struvites cause the urinary tract infection, but rather that a urinary tract infection causes struvites to develop.** When bacteria forms in the urine, it causes alkaline urine (high pH value). This is an ideal environment for struvites to grow. Struvites thrive in an alkaline situation. Trying to reduce the pH of the urine produces no results as long as a urinary tract infection is present. The solution is to get rid of the urinary tract infection. But what is the best way to go about this?

Once the symptoms described above are seen (frequent urination, blood in the urine, painful urination) a trip to the veterinarian is needed immediately. Just looking at a urine specimen under the microscope won't always reveal that an infection is present. The best method is to get a urine sample by a sterile method, called a Sterile Urine Culture and Sensitivity Test. This is done in house at the veterinarian's office. The urine is taken from the bladder by cysto (guided needle) and sent out to a laboratory to culture. The results of the culture will show what bacteria are present in about 3 to 5 days. The sensitivity test will also reveal which antibiotic will work for this infection. It is important to use the proper antibiotic, as urinary tract infections are specific and need the right antibiotic to work. It is often needed to use the correct antibiotic for four weeks. Then ten days off the antibiotic, repeat the sterile urine culture.

Urinary tract infections can be difficult to treat, and they must be treated as thoroughly and effectively as possible. Long term urinary tract infections can damage the kidneys. If the dog has had the struvites and infection for an unknown period, radiographs may be necessary to check for struvite bladder stones, which can form after long term infection with struvites present. These may need surgery to remove and cause great pain and distress to the dog.

The best way to avoid urinary tract infections (for struvite crystals and resulting stones) include:

Fluids: Keep water around the clock for your dog. Feed a moist diet, preferably raw or home cooked. Liquids in the diet flush crystals and bacteria.

MOST POPULAR FEMALE DOG NAMES

1. Lady
2. Belle/Bell/Bella
3. Princess
4. Mae/May
5. Rose
6. Daisy
7. Grace/Gracie
8. Baby
9. Molly
10. Maggie
11. Sadie
12. Ann/Annie
13. Star
14. Lily/Lilly
15. Angel
16. Coco/Cocoa
17. Sophie/Sophia
18. Lucy
19. Abby/Abigail
20. Marie



I OWN A DOG AND I VOTE

Display your support for legislators to promote responsible dog ownership. Available in both car magnets and lapel pins, your \$10 donation will be used to help support AKC's Government Relations department. Available in the online AKC store in the Collectibles section.

American Kennel Club Seeks Fanciers for 2009 AKC Internship Program

The American Kennel Club® is seeking interns for summer 2009. Students will be selected for paid eight-week internships running June 1 – July 24, 2009 at either the New York headquarters or the Raleigh operations facility.

The AKC's internship program aims to nurture the professional development of college students with a profound interest in purebred dogs. The program offers meaningful assignments that coincide with each student's area of study, offering challenging work that will help to build each participant's resume and complement his or her career goals.

"AKC's summer internship program is a wonderful opportunity for everyone involved," said Vicki Rees, AKC's AVP of Human Resources. "We get the chance to prepare qualified, enthusiastic interns for possible future careers with our company. And, the interns gain relevant work experience that complements their educational focus and love of purebred dogs."

Applicants should:

- Be accepted or enrolled in an accredited four year or two year college
- Have completed their first year of college before beginning the internship
- Have a competitive grade point average
- Have past involvement or profound interest in the fancy

Frequent Urination: Don't let your dog hold their urine for more than a few hours in between opportunities to urinate. This, along with a good intake of fluids, allows the body to flush crystals and bacteria. Holding urine for long periods can encourage bacteria and struvites to grow and flourish.

Good Diet: As mentioned previously, there is no special diet, or commercial diet that will prevent or treat struvites or UTI's. But dogs prone to these problems need the best nutrition possible. This would be either through a raw diet or home cooked.

Supplements: Supportive supplements for dogs with Urinary Tract Infections would include:

- B Complex- Helps to support the kidneys and fight infection
- EPA Fish Oil - fish oil contains omega 3 fatty acids, which are renal protective and help the immune system. Give one capsule per 10-20 lbs of body weight daily
- Cranberry Juice Capsules- these help once the bacteria is completely gone. Just like in humans, cranberry helps to stop new bacteria from adhering to the bladder wall
- Vitamin C and E
- Probiotics -probiotics contains beneficial bacteria that is composed of friendly flora and fauna needed for good digestion and the immune system. While antibiotics can help kill harmful bacteria, it will also destroy the good bacteria. Adding the probiotics will help maintain the good bacteria during stress and use of antibiotics.

Always take symptoms of incontinence, painful urination, increased thirst and blood in the urine very seriously. Have your veterinarian examine your dog, and ask for a Sterile Urine Culture and Sensitivity Test. Allowing urinary tract infections and struvites to continue can cause renal damage and great pain to your dog. Good diagnosis and treatment will get your dog back to health, and save you money in the long run and give your dog a healthy, long life!

Editors Note: After treating a UTI in one of my dogs a few years ago, the vet recommended surgery to remove possible struvite stones, and a lifelong prescription diet as a cure, even though no stones showed up on x-rays. Not willing to accept this solution, I did my own research. I consulted Lew Olson, who explained some additional things to me about struvites that not only avoided surgery, but cleared up the infection completely in a month. Four years later and she eats a normal diet, and the infection has never returned.

Struvite crystals form very quickly in a free catch urine sample. In Luna's case, it was a matter of minutes. Additional non-UTI related bacteria can also be picked up with a free catch, contaminating the sample. This is the reason why a sterile punch is critical, along with culturing the sample to determine the exact bacteria causing the infection. The sensitivity test determines the correct antibiotic to use to cure it.

It was also explained to me that struvite stones are made up of clusters of struvite crystals, which contain some of the infection causing bacteria. Treating the infection with antibiotics normalizes the urine pH, and the stones begin to dissolve. Struvite crystals have razor sharp edges that irritate the lining of the urinary tract and bladder wall. The bacteria released from dissolving stones alters the urine pH and the irritation makes an ideal environment for re-infection, if antibiotics are stopped while crystals/stones are still present. This is why antibiotic treatment must be continued while stones are dissolving. Otherwise it becomes a never ending cycle of treatment and re-infection. A sterile punch performed 10 days after antibiotics are stopped ensures the infection is cured, and struvites are no longer present.

Once the infection is cleared, use of cranberry capsules will help prevent future UTI infections, just like in humans. Cranberry will not cure an infection, and it will not prevent one if struvites are still present. However, it discourages bacteria from adhering to the walls of the urinary tract and bladder and may prevent one.

Our application package requires the following:

- AKC Application for the Summer Internship Program
- Cover Letter – including interest in the sport of purebred dogs and applicant's thoughts on future employment with the AKC Resume
- Copy of applicant's current academic transcript

The application deadline is February 27, 2009.

Applicants should mail the completed package to:

The American Kennel Club
The Intern Program
P.O. Box 900060
Raleigh, NC 27675-9060

Please visit the Employment Section of the AKC web site at www.akc.jobs for more information on the Intern Program, 2009 projects and instructions on how to apply.



AKC NATIONAL AGILITY CHAMPIONSHIP

The 2009 National Agility Championship will be held on March 28-29 in Concord, NC. Mark your calendars to attend! More information is available on the AKC website.

Event Calendar

CLUB EVENTS

Spring Show - The Augusta Kennel Club partners with the Atlanta Kennel Club, the Valdosta Kennel Club, the Combined Specialty Clubs of Atlanta, and the North Georgia Hound Assn. to host the Peach Blossom Cluster on Thursday, April 9th through Sunday, April 12th at the Georgia National Fairgrounds in Perry, GA. Four days of events all on one show site! Come join us for one of the largest events in the Southeast!

Fall Show – show dates are Saturday, October 3, 2009.

ATTS Temperament Test – The Augusta Kennel Club will host its 2nd American Temperament Test Society Temperament Test on Saturday, November 7, 2009. Spread the word, and mark your calendar to attend and help out!

AREA EVENTS

Atlanta Obedience Club, Norcross, GA - AKC Obedience & Rally Seminar - There will be a 2-day seminar, one day will be for obedience and one day will be for rally. These seminars will meet AKC obedience & rally judges' educational requirements. For More Information, contact Gail LaBerge, 3862 Morgan's Ridge Dr., Buford, GA 30519, (770) 271-7246.

Want to know what our club is up to? Check out the event calendar on our website at www.augustakennelclub.org. The event calendar is regularly updated with information on our future events, and also includes a handy list of upcoming shows in Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina.

Meeting Highlights

December Christmas Party

The annual club Christmas party was hosted by Toni & Danny Reese at their new home in Harlem. The officers and board for 2009 were announced. Many thanks to Toni and Danny for graciously opening their home

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 7, 2009. The February meeting will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2009. Meetings will be held at the Wachovia Bank Building in Daniel Village. Board Meeting will start at 7:00 pm, followed by the Regular Meeting @ 8:00 pm.

As always, the public is welcome at our Regular Meeting and at Education portion of the evening.

If you are interested in meeting for dinner, we meet at 6:00pm at the Village Diner in Daniel Village. RSVP to Carol Cox if you are coming.

New Members

Welcome to new club members joining in the last half of 2009: Sylvia Motzkus, Bill Weygant, Donna Evans, and Penny Gillette. An updated Membership List is attached.

Membership Dues are Due

Club membership dues for 2009 are due! If you have not paid, please send your check for \$10 made out to the Augusta Kennel Club to Gloria Janda immediately!

American Kennel Club News

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NOVEMBER AKC BOARD MEETING

Events and Entries

The number of events is up by 5%, but the number of entries is down 3%.

New Kennel Club Approved in GA

The application for membership of the Kennesaw Kennel Club of Kennesaw, GA was approved as an AKC member club.

STAR Puppy Program

The puppy version of the Canine Good Citizen (CGC) certification, named the AKC STAR Puppy Program is now available. It is a six-week training program given by CGC evaluators, with emphasis on socialization, training and responsible dog ownership.

AKC STAR was developed in response to CGC evaluator requests to address the need for early training to get puppies off to a good start. It is another educational outreach program to all dog owners featuring Responsible Dog Ownership. STAR will be offered during the puppy's developmental months and precedes the CGC. One goal of the program is for new owners to begin with STAR, then CGC and advance to Obedience training. Like CGC, STAR is open to all purebred and mixes, however unlike CGC this educational program requires owners to participate in a training course of at least 6 weeks as opposed to taking a one-time test. Classes will be taught by CGC evaluators. The lessons include basic health care, housebreaking, behavioral issues, lead training and simple commands. At the completion of the course, puppies and their owners will take a test and when passing they will earn, among other items, a STAR medal, frameable certificate and AKC handbook.

Junior Showmanship Changes

A change was approved to add a Participation Ribbon award (light blue) for Junior competitors in the Novice class for exhibitors that do not place.

Eligibility Requirements for Future Dog Shows

Eligibility requirements have been rewritten and expanded.

Rally as a Gateway to Obedience

Statistics from January 2005 through August 2008 show that 61.2% of dogs who earn their first title in Rally go on to compete in AKC obedience. Data also showed that when rally was introduced as a titling sport, the number of unique dogs entering obedience dropped dramatically.

Judging Exclusivity

AKC Staff was directed to prepare a report on what, if any, restrictions should be placed on AKC judges officiating at competing events.

AKC Suspensions and Co-Ownership

AKC Staff was directed to prepare a report on AKC's hardship transfer policy, to determine what, if anything additional should be done to accommodate co-owners when an individual is suspended from AKC privileges for a number of years.

Judging Exclusivity

Staff was directed to prepare a report on what, if any, restrictions should be placed on AKC judges officiating at competing events.

OTHER AKC NEWS

AKC/Eukanuba Invitational Format Change in 2009

In December 2009, the 9th AKC/Eukanuba National Championship will waive its invitational format and offer classes at the breed level along with championship points. National and regional breed clubs are planning to hold their specialty shows and supported entries in Long Beach, on Dec. 12th and 13th. This special event will be joined by the Bred-by-Exhibitor competition, Eukanuba World Challenge, AKC National Obedience Invitational and the AKC Agility Invitational.



AKC 125th Anniversary

2009 marks the 125th anniversary of the AKC. To help AKC mark this milestone year, AKC created a special commemorative AKC logo for use by the AKC and its clubs. AKC encourages all clubs to help celebrate AKC's 125th year. It's a unique and significant accomplishment that underscores our commitment to dogs.

Items that may come to the Board for a VOTE in January 2009:

- New Breed Applicant Requirements
- Changes to Match Regulations
- Additions to Regulations for Agility Trials
- Approval Requirements for Rally Judges
- Revisions to Lure Coursing Regulations
- Group Realignment (approval of rule change to go forward to the Delegates)

Items that will continue to be discussed by the Board in January 2009 and beyond:

- An AKC conformation ranking system
- Limited Registration
- AKC Performance and Companion Event Advisory Committees

Future Program

AKC introduced the concept of the Future Program, a collection of frozen semen of outstanding dogs to improve breeding programs and maintain access to quality breeding stock for generations to come. It was proposed that an annual activity fee of \$25 fee for each dog exhibited be paid to establish the program. Envisioned is a committee made up of breeders of the year, parent club representatives and one board and staff member charged with establishing criteria for the selection of participants. However any person or club within the AKC family is welcome to recommend dogs or bitches based upon pedigree or progeny for this volunteer program. The committee will have the ability to financially compensate participants, no one partaking in the program will bear any costs. Part of the blueprint of the program is to collect from multiple quality sires for the next 10 years before any breeding begins through this program. The program is still in the research stage.

In Session

Last month AKC created and distributed a new communications tool called In Session, AKC's Congressional Newsletter. The newsletter will be sent to all members of Congress and their staff bi-monthly and features news and information about the American Kennel Club and its affiliated clubs, as well as information about public education programs, charitable donations, and other grass roots initiatives that benefit all dogs, their owners and communities across the nation. It highlights AKC's government relations programs and services offered on the local, state and federal level. Members of Congress will be encouraged to contact AKC on all dog-related issues of concern and all aspects of canine legislation.

Canine Health Podcasts

New AKC/CHF Breeders Podcasts are available on the Canine Health Foundation website at www.akcCHF.org:

- Dr. Denis Little – Orthopedic Elbow Dysplasia
- Dr. Joseph Wakshlag – Nutrition
- Dr. Bruce Hammerberg – Skin Allergies
- Dr. Cheryl London – Canine Cancer

Group Realignment Committee Report

General input on Group Realignment is encouraged and should be sent to the Executive Secretary: James Crowley, Executive Secretary, American Kennel Club, 260 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, eMail: grouprealign@akc.org , Fax: 212-696-8252

Breed-specific comments should be submitted through the breed Parent Club. A copy of the report, including the proposed realignment is available on the AKC website. This will be considered by the AKC Board at its January 2009 meeting. Any input from clubs and the fancy should be received before then.

Education for Conformation Judges

New Breed Applicants will be required to attend a Basic Judging Institute, presented by the American Kennel Club, prior to requesting regular status.

Sweepstake and Futurity Judges

Effective January 1, 2009, Sweepstake/Futurity judges at dog shows may not exhibit within 200 miles of an assignment on the day of any assignment(s). Sweepstake/Futurity judges will continue to be allowed to exhibit the day before and the day after the event they judge. A multiday specialty is considered one event, and the restriction will apply for the duration of the event.

Obedience Regulation Changes

Multiple changes to the Obedience Regulations went into effect 1/1/09. Changes include new optional titling classes (Graduate Novice-GN, Graduate Open-GO and Versatility-VER), option for clubs to arrange obedience entries by jump height (the order – low to high, or high to low, must be indicated in premium list), and clarification/revision of class eligibility. The complete list of rule changes and their effective dates is available on the AKC website. Additional changes have been approved with effective dates in 2010 and 2011.

AVMA Opposes Ear Cropping and Docking of Dogs

In November of 2008, the AVMA stunned the world of purebred dogs by revising their official position on docking and cropping breeds of dogs, even where the breed standard requires it.

This change in policy is felt to be brought about by younger veterinary students and younger practicing vets, many of whom have had little or no exposure to anything other than pets, have no exposure to the fancy, and many of whom also are active members/supporters of organizations like the HSUS, and other animal rights organizations masquerading as animal welfare groups.

One AKC club had their annual scholarship contributions turned down by the veterinary school, because there was no interest amongst veterinary students in the fancy, or the breeding of purebred dogs.

Many feel that it is just a matter of time before removal of dew claws is included in the revised policy, and that the AVMA's opposition will become mandatory policy.

Even if your breed is not docked or cropped, this affects every single breed enthusiast in the country, and all one has to do is to look at what has happened in Europe to see what is coming our way.

I encourage you to work with your parent breed clubs to oppose this change in policy.

AVMA Policy

Ear Cropping and Tail Docking of Dogs

The AVMA opposes ear cropping and tail docking of dogs when done solely for cosmetic purposes. The AVMA encourages the elimination of ear cropping and tail docking from breed standards.

On December 4th, the AVMA released the following article on their website:

The AVMA opposes ear cropping and tail docking of dogs when performed for cosmetic reasons and calls on breed organizations to remove mention of the procedures from their standards.

The Association's Executive Board approved the revised AVMA Policy on Ear Cropping and Tail Docking of Dogs, Nov. 14. The statement reads:

EAR CROPPING AND TAIL DOCKING OF DOGS

The AVMA opposes ear cropping and tail docking of dogs when done solely for cosmetic purposes. The AVMA encourages the elimination of ear cropping and tail docking from breed standards.

The former policy, approved by the AVMA House of Delegates in 1999, pointed out that cosmetic ear cropping and tail docking afford no benefits for animal patients, and advised veterinarians that they should warn clients about related, inherent risks of anesthesia, blood loss, and infection.

The AVMA Animal Welfare Committee recommended the revised policy, which makes the policy of the Association consistent with those of the American Animal Hospital Association and the Canadian VMA.

The committee explained to the Executive Board in the recommendation's background that there is little scientific evidence that the cosmetic procedures of ear cropping and tail docking convey benefits for dogs.

Prior to the vote, Executive Board member Dr. Larry G. Dee of District IV spoke in favor of the revised policy. "Leaders take risks, and there's a risk in approving this policy, but it's a risk worth taking," observed Dr. Dee, a small animal practitioner from Hollywood, Fla.

No board member spoke against the proposal.

The American Kennel Club said labeling the procedures as cosmetic is a "severe mischaracterization that connotes a lack of respect and knowledge of history and the function of purebred dogs."

Tail docking of dogs, with some exceptions for working breeds, is banned in the United Kingdom, as is ear cropping. Australia and much of Europe prohibit both procedures.

"Because the AVMA is an organization that has determined it will create animal welfare policies based on science, committee members believe there is no reasonable basis on which to continue support for these procedures being performed for cosmetic reasons," stated the Animal Welfare Committee in the background of its recommendation.

Another reason Dr. Dee cited for approving the revised policy is the growing number of veterinary students uncomfortable with what they see as needlessly painful surgeries. Student AVMA President Emi Eaton, who was present at the board meeting, agreed. "The veterinary profession has been evolving, and many of the younger student body are behind ear cropping and tail docking only for medical reasons," Eaton, a fourth-year student at the University of Illinois, said later.

On November 26, the AVMA released the following Press Release:

AVMA revises policy on ear cropping and tail docking

Schaumburg, Ill. — The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Executive Board voted to strengthen association policy on two practices common in certain breeds of dogs—ear cropping and tail docking.

The revised AVMA policy states: "The AVMA opposes ear cropping and tail docking of dogs when done solely for cosmetic purposes. The AVMA encourages the elimination of ear cropping and tail docking from breed standards."

"For many years the AVMA has acknowledged that ear cropping and tail docking of dogs for cosmetic purposes are not medically indicated nor of benefit to our canine patients," explains Dr. Ron DeHaven, chief executive officer of the AVMA. "Our latest policy revision doesn't represent a change in perspective, but, rather, makes that perspective clear with a stronger statement."

The AVMA decided to adjust its policy on tail docking and ear cropping after a scheduled review of an existing policy. The review included an analysis of scientific literature and available data, an assessment of the practical experience of veterinarians, and deliberations by the AVMA Animal Welfare Committee.

"Why we perform certain procedures is one of the first questions we ask. Once that question is answered, committee members look at any associated welfare concerns," explains Dr. Gail Golab, director of the AVMA Animal Welfare Division. "'Cosmetic' implies the basis for these procedures is to alter the dog's appearance. Welfare risks identified included those associated with surgical procedures, i.e., anesthetic complications, pain, blood loss and infection. In the committee's opinion, the risk-benefit analysis supports professional opposition to performing these procedures for purely cosmetic reasons."

In recommending policy revisions, the committee was careful to distinguish ear cropping and tail docking performed for cosmetic reasons from procedures performed for therapeutic or preventive purposes. "If it can be responsibly demonstrated that the purpose of performing the procedure is to protect the health and welfare of the dog, then of course the Association would support the appropriate surgery," said Dr. DeHaven.

AKC's Response on AVMA Crop and Dock Policy

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.

Mislabeled 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.

See You At The January Meeting!