

D O G S

Animal Welfare (Dogs) Code of Welfare 2010

A code of welfare issued under the Animal Welfare Act 1999

11 June 2010

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National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

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Preface

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 came into force on 1 January 2000. It establishes the fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals. These obligations are written in general terms. The detail is found in codes of welfare. Codes set out minimum standards and recommendations relating to all aspects of the care of animals. They are developed following an extensive process of public consultation and are reviewed every 10 years, or sooner if necessary.

I recommend that all those who care for animals become familiar with the relevant codes. This is important because failure to meet a minimum standard in a code could lead to legal action being taken.

I issue codes on the recommendation of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. The members of this committee collectively possess knowledge and experience in veterinary science; agricultural science; animal science; the commercial use of animals; the care, breeding and management of companion animals; ethical standards and conduct in respect of animals; animal welfare advocacy; the public interest in respect of animals; and environmental and conservation management.

The Animal Welfare (Dogs) Code of Welfare 2010 is issued by me, by a notice published in the *Gazette* on 10 June 2010, under Section 75 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999. This code comes into force on 11 June 2010.

This code is deemed to be a regulation for the purposes of the Regulations (Disallowance) Act 1989 and is subject to the scrutiny of Parliament's Regulations Review Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'David Carter', written in a cursive style.

Hon David Carter

Minister of Agriculture

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is the purpose of this code of welfare?

Owners and persons in charge of dogs have a responsibility to understand and meet the welfare needs of their dogs. The purpose of this code is to encourage all those responsible for dogs to adopt the highest standards of husbandry, care and handling.

The code sets minimum standards for the care and management of dogs. It includes recommendations for best practice to encourage standards of care better than just the minimum. Advice is given to encourage a high level of welfare. Explanatory material is provided where appropriate.

1.2 Who does this code apply to?

This code applies to all persons responsible for the welfare of dogs, including dog breeders, those who show dogs, keep dogs as companions (pets), and use dogs for sport, as working animals, or for any other reason.

1.3 What animals does this code apply to?

The code applies to *all* dogs, including those kept as companions, for breeding, sport or for working purposes. Examples of working and sport dogs include disability-assist dogs, dogs used for guarding, dogs used for livestock management, sled-pulling dogs, racing greyhounds, dogs and hounds used for hunting and agility dogs.

NAWAC considers that the minimum standards and recommendations for best practice are generally applicable across all dogs in all situations. The way in which a minimum standard is achieved, however, may depend on the context in which it is being considered. This code does not cover dog fighting, which is an offence under the Act (see Appendix III: Legislative Requirements).

1.4 What happens if I do not follow the minimum standards in this code?

Failure to meet a minimum standard in this code may be used as evidence to support a prosecution for an offence under the Animal Welfare Act. A person who is charged with an offence can defend him or herself by showing that he or she has equalled or exceeded the minimum standards in this code.

The recommendations for best practice in this code have no legal effect and are included to encourage higher standards of animal welfare.

1.5 How does this code relate to other codes of welfare?

This code applies to all dogs in all situations. Other codes of welfare in existence or under development provide minimum standards and recommendations for best practice in particular circumstances, such as temporary housing or use in film and entertainment. These should be consulted where appropriate (see Appendix IV: Codes of Welfare, in this code and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry website at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare).

There is other legislation relevant to the keeping and welfare of dogs (see in Appendix III: Legislative Requirements).

2. Dog Ownership

Introduction

Dogs are valued within New Zealand society both as companions and working animals. However, if not properly managed and cared for, their welfare can be affected and they have the potential to impact negatively on other dogs, humans, animals and the environment.

Other national and local legislation pertains to dog ownership in New Zealand. For further information, see Appendix III: Legislative Requirements.

2.1 Purchasing or Adopting a Dog

Introduction

People thinking about acquiring a dog should choose one of a type that suits their situation and lifestyle, and the service or work that the dog will perform. Intending dog owners need to consider the facilities the dog will need including housing, the potential cost of keeping the dog, its exercise requirements and the amount of time that the owner can devote to it during its lifetime. Additional care should be taken when choosing a puppy of unknown or mixed parentage in regard to its likely size as an adult, its temperament, its coat and any potential health problems.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Before acquiring a dog, intending dog owners should seek advice from experts such as reputable breeders, veterinarians or the New Zealand Kennel Club on breed and lifestyle suitability, potential inherited medical problems and behavioural tendencies. Intending owners should be realistic about their ability to provide for the dog's needs, including its need for company.
- (b) When acquiring a dog, the new owner should be provided with information about:
 - i) settling the dog into its new environment;
 - ii) feeding requirements from puppy to adulthood;
 - iii) ongoing care;
 - iv) behaviour training including basic toilet training;
 - v) vaccinations, flea and worming treatments;
 - vi) current feeding regime, along with one or two days' supply of food, and an understanding of the importance of making gradual changes to the diet.
- (c) New owners should attend puppy or young-dog training courses to learn how to train a puppy to come when called, to sit and stay and to behave when visitors arrive.

General Information

Care should be taken when a new dog is introduced into an environment which already includes dogs or animals of other species, as aggression may occur. If there is confrontation, the new dog should be introduced gradually under supervision. It may be more appropriate to introduce dogs to each other on neutral ground to avoid territorial issues. Inexperienced owners should seek advice before introducing the new dog to other animals.

Educating children from a young age to respect dogs and how to interact with them can keep both dogs and children safe. Educational material can be found at www.dogsafety.govt.nz.

The Dog Control Act 1996 has requirements for registration and microchipping following purchase or adoption. See 'Other legislation relating to dog ownership' in Appendix III: Legislative Requirements.

2.2 Relinquishing (Changing) Ownership

Introduction

While ownership of a dog should be undertaken as a commitment for the entire life of that animal, sometimes it becomes necessary to relinquish ownership, such as following changes in financial or family circumstances or relocation.

General Information

Potential ways to find a new owner include contacting the original breeder, placing advertisements in newspapers, notice boards etc, or rehoming to a family member or friend who is prepared to undertake the commitment of ownership. The new owner needs to be prepared to take responsibility for the ownership of the dog, its health and well-being. It is a requirement of the Dog Control Act 1996 that, upon rehoming of the dog, both the previous and new owners advise the council/s concerned of the change of ownership.

If an alternative owner cannot be found, the dog should be relinquished to an animal shelter (such as the SPCA) for adoption to a new owner. It is an offence under the Animal Welfare Act to abandon an animal (including a dog) where no provision is made to meet their needs (see Appendix III: Legislative Requirements), and an obligation exists for the owner or person in charge to pass the dog into the care of a responsible person or animal welfare shelter.

3. Food and Water

3.1 Food and Feeding

Introduction

Dogs need a balanced daily diet in quantities that meet their requirements for health and welfare and to maintain their ideal bodyweight. Home-made diets may not contain all the nutrients required. A diet of lean-meat only is not balanced and is not appropriate for prolonged periods. Specialised diets are available for dogs with some specific health problems.

Food and nutrient requirements of dogs vary widely. Factors to be considered include the dog (i.e. its age, sex, size, state of health, growth rate, breed, level of activity and exercise, and physiological state), and the food (i.e. its nutritional composition, quality and frequency of feeding). Consideration should also be given to previous feeding levels, the introduction of a new food and any potential periods of food deprivation (e.g. during transportation).

Good quality, complete and balanced commercial dog foods usually provide all the nutrients required for a healthy dog. Supplementation with individual nutrients (e.g. calcium) is not recommended nor, in general, required if a dog is on such a diet. Pet rolls and pottled foods are generally unsuitable as a sole maintenance diet for dogs, as most are not complete and balanced. They can, however, be fed as one component in an overall balanced diet.

Most commercially available foods provide a guide to quantity to be fed. Owners need to be aware that individual variation means that recommended amounts will not always be appropriate, so growth rate in puppies, and bodyweight and condition score in adult dogs should be carefully monitored.

Minimum Standard No. 1 – Food and Feeding

Dogs must receive adequate quantities of nutritious food to enable each dog to:

- (i) maintain good health;**
- (ii) meet its physiological demands, including those resulting from the level of physical activity, growth, pregnancy, lactation and exposure to cold; and**
- (iii) avoid metabolic and nutritional disorders.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Puppies from time of weaning to four months of age should be fed small quantities at regular intervals three to four times throughout the day.
- (b) Puppies from the age of four to nine months should be fed two to three times a day.
- (c) Dogs over the age of nine months should be fed at least once a day; however, the optimum frequency of feeding will vary depending on the breed and the dog's level of activity. The feeding regime should be modified as necessary to maintain optimum body weight and health. If there is any doubt concerning feeding regimes, advice should be sought from an appropriate source.

- (d) Where a dog's body weight and condition score (refer to Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs) do not meet the norm for the breed, and particularly where a dog is overweight, expert advice should be obtained about a weight management programme.
- (e) Prescription diets for certain medical conditions should be fed as instructed by a veterinarian or other experienced person.

General Information

Maintenance ration (M) is the amount of food required to meet a dog's energy requirements and maintain its optimal body weight or condition. When a dog is growing, given significant exercise or work, or is lactating, its nutrient requirements increase above maintenance to meet the additional demands (see Table 1). The amount of food offered needs to be increased if a dog is losing condition, or decreased if it is becoming overweight. Up to twice maintenance ration may be required for dogs living outside in cold weather to provide the extra energy needed to keep warm.

Table 1 Guide to amount of food relative to maintenance ration (M) needed for dogs and bitches in work and breeding

Dogs in work	
Light exercise	1.5 x Maintenance (M)
Medium exercise	2.0 x M
Heavy exercise	3.0 x M
Bitches	
Late pregnancy	2.5 x M
Lactation	3.0 x M

Please note this is guidance only and expert advice should be sought where there is any uncertainty.

Food should be stored carefully, with dry food in a rodent-proof container and moist food (meat, dog rolls and opened cans) in a refrigerator.

3.1.1 Dogs with special nutritional requirements (see Table 1)

Pregnant bitches

A high quality puppy or performance food is an easy way to ensure that the nutrients required throughout pregnancy and lactation are received. Increasing amounts of food will be required as pregnancy advances so that the bitch maintains acceptable body condition and the pregnancy develops normally. In late pregnancy, food may need to be provided in three or four portions throughout the day.

Lactating bitches

Depending on the number of puppies being fed, a lactating bitch may require up to three times the maintenance amount to ensure her milk supply for the rapidly growing puppies and to prevent metabolic diseases such as eclampsia. Food may need to be provided in three or four portions

throughout the day. Peak lactation requirements decrease about three weeks after whelping as the puppies are introduced to supplementary food.

Unweaned puppies

Puppies are, in general, not physiologically prepared to be fully weaned until at least six weeks of age, although the optimum time will depend on the bitch's attitude towards the litter, the size of the litter and the breed. Weaning is assisted by offering easily-digested food to puppies (commercial feeds are available) from three weeks of age as a supplement to the bitch's milk. Feeding a supplement to puppies reduces demands on the bitch. This is important for her welfare, especially if she has a large litter.

Growing dogs

Young dogs need a diet balanced in calcium, protein, vitamins and energy for growth. Large amounts of calcium and overfeeding can cause problems. Commercial dog foods designed for growing dogs are available. If new owners have any doubt about what is appropriate, they should seek expert advice. Breeds at risk of developing joint disease, particularly large breeds, should not be fed in a manner that allows them to grow too rapidly. Bodyweight should be monitored and special diets may be necessary to ensure that a puppy gains weight at a healthy rate.

Working dogs

Working dogs with high work rates will require a higher food intake (refer to Table 1). Dogs should not be exercised hard soon after a large meal because this increases the risk of gastric (stomach) torsion occurring.

Desexed dogs

Dogs and bitches may have a lower maintenance requirement after desexing and the amount of food provided should be modified accordingly.

3.1.2 Risky foods and objects

As dogs are natural scavengers and tend to eat quickly, they may eat harmful material. Puppies are especially at risk because they like to chew. All food given to dogs should be free from harmful objects that could cause intestinal problems. Indigestible objects that can cause intestinal obstruction include wool (e.g. from unskinned sheep carcasses), plastic dog roll wrap, small toys and balls, and plastic bags. Sharp plastic or wooden objects can also be harmful.

Bones need to be fed with care. Cooked bones (including chicken) and fish bones are not recommended as they can cause bowel damage or constipation. Large, raw bones present fewer problems.

Refer also to 7.2 Disease and Illness Related to Diet and 7.9 Harmful Substances and to 'Disease Control Requirements' in Appendix III: Legislative Requirements.

3.1.3 Body condition

Introduction

An adult dog should be well-proportioned and have an observable waist behind the ribs when viewed from above and from the side. Ribs should be palpable (able to be felt), but have a light fat covering over them. The abdominal fat pad should be minimal - excessive fat here indicates obesity.

A body condition scoring system is provided in Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs.

Body condition varies between individual dogs and breeds and also depends on the dog's level of physical activity. Some breeds that are naturally thin (e.g. whippets, greyhounds) or that perform high levels of activity (e.g. some working dogs) may exhibit a body condition below that listed as 'ideal' in Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs.

Minimum Standard No. 2 – Body Condition

- (a) If a dog is exhibiting a body condition score “thin” (as defined in Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs in this code) in conjunction with any other physical or behavioural indicators of malnutrition, appropriate remedial action through veterinary attention or improved nutrition must be taken.**
- (b) If a dog is exhibiting a body condition score “grossly obese” (as defined in Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs in this code), veterinary advice must be sought and remedial action taken to decrease body weight using a planned exercise programme to increase energy expenditure and dietary modification to reduce energy intake.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) A dog's body condition score should be maintained at “ideal” as defined in Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs.
- (b) If a dog is “heavy” according to Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs in this code, appropriate remedial action should be taken to decrease body weight using a planned exercise programme to increase energy expenditure and dietary modification to reduce energy intake.

General Information

Obese dogs face serious health risks and are predisposed to conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Excessive weight can also damage joints, reduce mobility and exacerbate arthritis. The life expectancy of an obese dog is 25% less than that of a normal dog.

Exercise programmes need to be designed carefully so that the level of exercise increases gradually as the dog's fitness level increases and to take account of any co-existing conditions such as arthritis which might be exacerbated by exercise. Where there is doubt about how an exercise regime can be implemented, seek expert advice.

Body condition of long-haired dogs cannot be assessed by simple visual observation – the extent of fat deposits can only be accurately assessed by feeling the tissues over the dog's ribs, backbone, pelvis and abdomen.

3.2 Water

Introduction

Water is essential and regular access to good quality water is necessary for all dogs.

Minimum Standard No. 3 – Water

Dogs must have frequent access to water, appropriate to their needs, that is palatable to the dog, not harmful to health and available in quantities sufficient to maintain vital bodily functions.

General Information

Water requirements vary between individuals and also depend on workload, weather conditions (especially temperature), and requirements of lactation. As a general guide, dogs require 50-70 ml of water per kg body weight daily for general functioning with additional requirements during hot weather or when performing high levels of work.

Dogs that eat dry food need more water than those eating canned food or pet rolls. Milk is not essential for dogs and should not be the sole source of liquid. Dogs may lose the ability to digest milk after weaning and this can lead to stomach upsets and diarrhoea.

4. Containment, Tethering and Shelter

4.1 Containment

Introduction

Containment of unsupervised dogs prevents them injuring or otherwise harming themselves, other dogs and people. The length of time that dogs are contained or tethered, and the way that it is done, can have a significant impact on their welfare. Prolonged containment or tethering can have a significant negative impact on the physical and mental health of dogs and the need for exercise (see Section 7.8 Exercise), as well as access to food, water and shelter while in containment all have to be considered.

Minimum Standard No. 4 – Containment and Tethering

- (a) Dogs must not be contained or tethered in a way that causes them injury or distress.**
- (b) Collars must fit comfortably without damaging the skin or restricting breathing.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Owners should keep their dog under control at all times. This is best achieved by providing a secure but confined environment where dogs can roam. If a property is not appropriately fenced then the dog should be kept indoors or provided with an outdoor kennel with an attached run or a tether.
- (b) Dogs should not be left unattended or routinely tethered by choke-chains or other devices which tighten around the neck.
- (c) Collars should be checked frequently, particularly in young growing dogs, and loosened if they become tight to prevent effects such as chafing of the skin or restriction of breathing.

General Information

Long term confinement with minimal provision for exercise or social interaction can contribute to behaviour problems.

Where a tethered dog is unsupervised there should be nothing within reach of it that could injure it or with which the tether could become entangled. If the tether is long enough that the dog can climb onto nearby objects then, to prevent the dog hanging itself, the tether needs to be long enough that the dog can reach the ground on the other side of the object. Swivel clips and light, strong chains are less likely to become tangled than are ropes, and cannot be chewed through.

A correctly fitted collar allows space between the collar and the neck so that it does not restrict breathing or chafe against the hair and skin of the dog's neck, but is secure enough that the dog cannot slip its head from the collar.

A harness can be used to restrain a dog with the advantage of distributing pressure over the chest rather than just the neck. Other forms of head restraint are also available.

4.2 Kennelling, Shelter and Ventilation

Introduction

Dogs need access to shelter that provides warmth, and is free from draughts and excessive heat or cold, to meet their physical needs. They also need a dry bed and enough space to lie down, stand and turn around.

A dog may share a human dwelling, or be provided with shelter by a kennel, night box or crate. A kennel may be in a larger secure area or have an enclosed run attached so the dog has free access, or the dog may be tethered to the kennel. Working dogs and hounds, and dogs in breeding and boarding kennels, racing kennels, animal welfare shelters and pet shops may be housed close to each other or in a communal area. Attention needs to be paid to space allowance and congestion within such kennels to limit the opportunity for disease to spread and reduce the risk of confrontation.

Minimum Standard No. 5 – Kennelling, Shelter and Ventilation

- (a) Dogs must be provided with sheltered and dry sleeping quarters.**
- (b) Measures must be taken to enable dogs to keep warm in cold weather.**
- (c) Sleeping quarters must be large enough to allow the dog to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably.**
- (d) Dogs must be able to urinate and defaecate away from the sleeping area.**
- (e) Ventilation and shade must be provided in situations where dogs are likely to experience heat distress.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Kennels should be constructed of solid, non-permeable materials, preferably raised above ground level, be stable, draught-free and of sufficient size to comfortably house each dog.
- (b) Dogs should not be required to sleep on concrete or metal surfaces. Where kennel and run areas are made of these materials dogs should be provided with a raised platform, shelf or other type of bed made of a softer material on which to sleep.
- (c) Housing should be sited to provide shelter from cold, wet and windy weather, and to provide shade on hot sunny days, with the ideal area providing both shade and sun. Shade is especially important during the hottest part of the summer when artificial shade should be provided where no natural shade exists.
- (d) Where a number of dogs are kept together, such as in a boarding kennels or pet shops, ventilation should be controlled to manage dampness and noxious odours and to minimise the airborne spread of infectious diseases such as kennel cough.
- (e) Dogs should only be housed communally if they are known to interact well together, or are kept under observation to ensure that they do not fight.
- (f) Kennels and kennels with runs attached should be no smaller than the minimum kennel and run sizes given in Table 2.

Table 2 Recommended minimum sizes for kennels and kennels with runs attached

Size of dog	Kennel only	Kennel plus run
Small (<7Kg)	900mm x 700mm	500mm x 500mm plus 600mm x 1m
Medium (7-20Kg)	1.2m x 800mm	600mm x 700mm plus 800mm x 1m
Large (21-40Kg)	1m x 1.5m	800mm x 800mm plus 1m x 800mm
Extra large (>40Kg)	1m x 2m	1.2m x 1.2m plus 1.2m x 2.4m

Please note this is guidance only and expert advice should be sought where there is any uncertainty.

General Information

Information on appropriate design of kennels may be obtained from the New Zealand Kennel Club, a veterinarian, or an animal welfare organisation specialising in the care of companion animals.

Additional and specific information is to be found in the *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Care of Animals in Boarding Establishments* and in the *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Sale of Companion Animals*, or in any codes of welfare that replace these.

In general, the following considerations can help with kennel design:

- Toxic materials, such as lead-based paint, cause a risk of poisoning.
- The requirement for bedding depends on factors such as the body condition of the dog, the length of its coat, its age and the effectiveness of the housing. While metal and concrete sleeping areas are easier to clean, these hard surfaces may be cold and can cause pressure sores and exacerbate arthritis. Sleeping beds off the ground will increase comfort where dogs live in these types of kennels. Supportive bedding is of particular benefit to older dogs, dogs with arthritis, and short-coated lean dogs which may develop calluses or sores over the elbows and hocks.
- Metal kennels or kennels with a metal roof can become extremely hot in warm weather so dogs need access to a shaded area with effective ventilation.
- Kennels can be lined and floored with insulating material such as wood to reduce heat loss. This is particularly important for winter in colder parts of the country.
- The floors of runs should be solid or slatted with no gaps capable of injuring the feet.
- Dog-runs on the ground need to be well drained and kept clean of faeces and the area changed regularly to prevent a build-up of hookworms in the area (refer to Section 7.5).

In cold weather, additional measures to keep dogs warm include providing additional bedding or a source of heating, bringing the dog indoors or feeding it additional food.

5. Sanitation

Introduction

Good hygiene is important in order to maintain the health and welfare of dogs and to minimise disease and distress.

Minimum Standard No. 6 – Sanitation

- (a) Faeces and urine must not be permitted to accumulate to such an extent that they pose a threat to the health or welfare of the dog.**
- (b) Food and water containers must be kept clean of contamination that may pose a threat to the health or welfare of the dog.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Kennels and runs should be checked on a daily basis and any contaminated bedding, faeces and urine removed.
- (b) Where larger and/or changing populations of dogs are kept, hygiene measures should be of a high standard to minimise the risk of cross-infection.

General Information

Where dogs are housed in kennels or runs, and especially where they are grouped close together or housed communally, the environment needs careful attention. Giving dogs free exercise early each morning will help prevent fouling of sleeping areas.

Kennel and run surfaces, as well as food and water containers, can be kept clean by scrubbing with hot soapy water, followed by rinsing and disinfection. The design of food and water containers affects the ease with which they can be kept clean. Plastic containers need to be sturdy as some can become brittle and pose a danger if a dog chews them. Cleanliness is improved by keeping areas around containers clean, by allowing containers to dry before re-use and by using drying methods that prevent cross-infection.

Fixed soft furnishings and carpets may harbour parasites and infectious agents. Regular renewal or cleaning and disinfection of bedding improves hygiene and comfort.

6. Breeding

Introduction

Unplanned breeding can create a major animal welfare problem as the resulting puppies are often unwanted and so can experience insufficient care or inappropriate disposal, with detrimental effects.

Indiscriminate breeding without regard to inherited disorders can compromise dog welfare due to increased risk of conditions such as hip dysplasia, difficulty breathing and blindness, and of undesirable traits such as bad temperament.

Information on inherited disorders of specific breeds is available from the New Zealand Kennel Club and from veterinarians.

Minimum Standard No. 7 – Breeding

Breeders must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the genetic make-up of both sire and dam will not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of known inherited disorders.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Breeders should report the occurrence of inherited disorders to the New Zealand Kennel Club Canine Health committee to assist progress in reducing these disorders and identify carrier dogs.
- (b) Breeders should follow a documented scheme that allows for monitoring and eventual prevention of known inherited disorders.
- (c) Dogs and bitches should not be kept together if there is a risk of accidental mating.
- (d) All dogs being considered for mating should be tested for inherited disorders where such tests are available. For those inherited disorders where no suitable test is available, occurrence of inherited disorders in their genealogy should be assessed. Veterinary or other appropriate advice should be sought in this respect.

General Information

Persons considering undertaking dog breeding need to inform themselves about what is involved before they start, and take time to consider how they will manage the problems that can arise. Ensuring that there is a market for the offspring before breeding will reduce the risk of unwanted dogs.

There are believed to be at least 500 genetic diseases across more than 300 dog breeds, with testing available for only some of these conditions. The societies of the breeds most at risk from common inherited disorders (such as hip and elbow dysplasia and retinal atrophy) operate schemes which enable early detection and identification of carriers. Breeders should, by careful research and testing wherever possible, gain as much information as they can about both the dog and bitch before any mating is carried out.

6.1 Desexing

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Dogs not intended for breeding should be desexed before puberty.
- (b) Dogs that have or are likely to develop known inherited faults should be desexed as early as practicable once the condition has been identified.

General Information

Desexing of dogs is a significant surgical procedure under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and must only be carried out by a veterinarian or veterinary student under direct supervision.

The benefits of desexing far outweigh any negatives, as determined scientifically. Direct medical benefits include the fact that desexed animals live significantly longer than those that are not. Many diseases are reduced or eliminated, including infections and cancers of the reproductive system. Desexing also removes the hormonal influences that can contribute to inter-dog aggression and roaming. There is no scientific evidence that a bitch benefits from having a litter of puppies before she is desexed. There is scientific evidence that the risk of mammary cancer increases if dogs are desexed after the first heat (puberty).

A dog may reach puberty from approximately six months of age. Desexing is safely carried out before the onset of puberty. Although pre-pubertal desexing can be carried out safely from six weeks of age, this is only recommended in situations where re-homing with future population control is of the highest priority. Where dogs are in established homes, desexing from three to five months of age and before the first heat in the case of bitches is recommended.

Pre-pubertal desexing will not stunt growth, but rather is associated with a delay in closure of growth plates so that the growth period is prolonged by several months. This may increase the risk of skeletal disorders but can be managed by good diet. Desexing increases the risk of urinary incontinence in bitches irrespective of age, but this risk is greater when de-sexing occurs before three months of age. Desexing, whether of companion or working dogs, generally causes no significant increase in negative behaviours and it does not in itself make the animal become less active. There may be increased weight gain after desexing, but this can be controlled by adequate exercise and an appropriate diet.

Increases in rates of dog desexing will enable better control of the dog population, reduce the surplus of unwanted dogs and protect the dog's health and well-being. Veterinarians, pet retailers, dog breeders, local councils and animal welfare organisations can facilitate this process by continuing to encourage the dog-owning public to have their dogs desexed.

6.2 Bitches in heat and mating

Introduction

Bitches generally come into heat (oestrus) at intervals of about six to ten months. Each heat period lasts approximately three weeks.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Only dogs in good health and physical condition should be used for breeding.
- (b) Bitches should not be intentionally mated
 - i) at less than twelve months of age; or

- ii) on their first heat.
- (c) Veterinary advice should be sought before
 - i) mating bitches of seven years of age or more; or
 - ii) mating bitches for the first time at 5 years of age or more.
- (d) Bitches should be well grown before mating.
- (e) Bitches should not be mated so as to whelp and rear litters on consecutive seasons.
- (f) Bitches in heat should be carefully supervised or securely contained to prevent physical contact with male dogs and unwanted matings.
- (g) Preventative health care in the form of vaccination and parasite control should be carried out on bitches and dogs to be used for breeding, under veterinary advice.
- (h) Mating dogs should be allowed to separate naturally.

General Information

Age of maturity, and therefore the age at which breeding is appropriate, varies with the breed and the individual dog. It may be as early as 10 months in smaller breeds while in large breeds it may not occur until 16 to 18 months.

The scent produced by bitches in heat can attract dogs from far away. If an unintended mating has taken place, veterinarians can provide advice on preventing or terminating an unwanted pregnancy, with best success if consulted without delay.

Although desexing is the preferable option, bitches can be prevented from coming into heat by using pharmaceutical products which may be obtained after consultation with a veterinarian.

6.3 Pregnancy, Whelping and Lactation

Introduction

The length of gestation in the dog is about 63 days. Information about the stages of pregnancy, whelping and lactation can be obtained from experts such as veterinarians and dog breeders.

Minimum Standard No. 8 – Whelping

- (a) Bitches that are due to whelp, or are whelping, must be provided with a suitable whelping area in a safe, warm and quiet environment.**
- (b) Bitches that are due to whelp must be inspected frequently to ensure that they are not experiencing whelping difficulties.**
- (c) If a bitch is exhibiting any signs that indicate that she is experiencing difficulties at any point during whelping, expert assistance must be sought.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) If whelping boxes are used, they should be placed in a warm but well-ventilated environment. Advice on design should be obtained from an expert such as an experienced dog breeder, veterinarian or veterinary nurse.

- (b) The bedding material should be replaced after the birth has taken place and as frequently as needed to keep the area clean, but without causing unnecessary disruption to the dam and puppies. Cleaning will need to be more frequent as the puppies get older and the dam is less able to clean up after them.
- (c) After whelping, the dam should be allowed access to her puppies until the puppies are fully weaned.
- (d) Unweaned puppies should be individually checked each day and regularly treated for parasites.

General Information

The bitch will often exhibit a sharp drop in body temperature 12-24 hours before whelping. Monitoring the bitch's temperature during the last days of pregnancy can give an indication of when whelping may begin.

Close supervision of bitches with puppies, appropriate feeding and exercise, frequent cleaning of the area in which they live and supplementary feeding of puppies from the age of three weeks is beneficial for their welfare. Veterinarians can provide advice in relation to large litters where puppies may need supplementary feeding from a very young age. Section 3.1.1 of this Code covers food and water requirements of bitches.

6.4 Weaning and Removal of Puppies from the Bitch

Introduction

Puppies rely on the dam's milk to obtain all nutrients for the first few weeks of life. From 3-4 weeks they spend more time exploring their immediate environment and less time with the bitch. At this stage solid food can be introduced and the dam may begin to seek time alone. Puppies should be completely weaned onto solid food by age 6-7 weeks and before they are rehomed.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Puppies should remain with the dam to suckle during the first three weeks.
- (b) Supplementary feeding should not be commenced before the puppies are three weeks of age, except with veterinary advice in circumstances in which the bitch is unable to supply adequate milk to feed some or all of the pups.
- (c) Puppies should not be permanently removed from the dam to be weaned before 4 weeks of age. They should be given access to the dam for suckling until six weeks of age and removed before this only where the dam shows aggression to the puppies or where ongoing lactation could damage the bitch's health.

6.5 Supply of Puppies

Introduction

It is important that new owners are provided with information concerning proper care, socialisation and the consequences of not desexing the puppies.

Minimum Standard No. 9 – Supply of Puppies

- (a) Puppies must be able to feed independently and be in good health when made available for sale or rehoming, unless:
 - i) they have been orphaned and must be rehomed to ensure that they are able to obtain milk from another bitch or be hand raised; or
 - ii) early removal from the bitch is deemed necessary by a veterinarian.
- (b) People supplying puppies must, at the time of supply, disclose to persons receiving them, any known inherited disorders that the puppy or adult dog may be predisposed to which may cause health and/or welfare problems during the dog's lifetime.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Puppies should be at least eight weeks of age and should have begun socialisation with other dogs and humans when made available for sale or rehoming.
- (b) Owners of puppies to be rehomed need to be satisfied that the puppies are capable of independent life before moving them to new homes.
- (c) People selling dogs should allow the intending new owner to interact with the pup, its littermates and its mother, and father if possible.

General Information

Between the ages of three to 14 weeks, puppies go through a development phase in which they become socialised. For further information on the important process of socialisation, refer to Section 8 Behaviour.

7. Health

7.1 Ill Health and Injury

Introduction

Health and welfare are closely associated. Owners have a responsibility to maintain their dogs in good health and to treat injury and disease when it occurs. The health and welfare of the dog should be checked daily, including observing whether the dog is eating, drinking, urinating, defaecating and behaving normally.

Minimum Standard No. 10 – Ill Health and Injury

- (a) Owners, or persons in charge of dogs, who observe their dogs to be showing:**
- (i) signs of significant acute pain, suffering and distress; or**
 - (ii) signs of chronic pain, suffering and distress; or**
 - (iii) signs of rapidly deteriorating health; or**
 - (iv) serious injury**
- must seek immediate attention from a veterinarian or appropriately trained animal health practitioner.**
- (b) If a dog is suffering from pain or distress that is extreme or untreatable, then the animal must be euthanased.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) All ill or injured dogs should be examined by a veterinarian.
- (b) An attempt should be made to locate the owner or person in charge of dogs that are found injured.
- (c) Dogs of unknown ownership which are observed to be significantly injured should receive urgent veterinary attention to alleviate pain.
- (d) A veterinarian should be consulted immediately if bleeding is profuse or persists for more than a few minutes.
- (e) Owners and persons in charge who know that their dogs will be distant from veterinary care (e.g. when hunting, at sport or working) should carry a first aid kit appropriate for dogs.

General Information

Treatment can be provided by veterinarians or appropriately trained and experienced practitioners in other treatments. Injuries such as puncture wounds, which often appear relatively insignificant, can be worse than they look and advice sought if any doubts exist about their severity.

Courses on first-aid for animals are available through some veterinary clinics and polytechnics.

Section 10 of this code deals with euthanasia.

Dogs Injured by Motor Vehicles

Accidental injury to dogs while they are crossing roads is common and there is a recognised moral obligation for the driver of a vehicle who injures any animal, including a dog, to stop and give assistance.

Dealing with Injured Dogs

An injured dog, whether familiar or not, may be in severe pain and may bite during attempts to assist it. Care must be taken when handling injured dogs, and if in doubt, seek expert advice. An effective muzzle will prevent biting. If an injured dog is unable to walk and needs to be moved, a blanket or similar can be used as a stretcher to minimise movement of the body and reduce the risk of exacerbating serious injuries.

7.2 Disease and Illness Related to Diet

Introduction

Feeding unbalanced or inadequate diets to dogs can cause problems associated with abnormal growth, weight, reproduction and dental health.

Overfeeding leads to obesity. This is common in household pets and can lead to disorders such as heart and kidney disease, diabetes, arthritis and skin conditions. Generally less food and more exercise are required if overweight dogs are to lose weight.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Owners and those in charge of dogs are referred to Table 1 Guide to amount of food relative to maintenance ration (M) needed for dogs and bitches in work and breeding, in Section 3.1 Food and Feeding, of this code.
- (b) Veterinary attention should be sought for any dog that shows signs of food sensitivity which include, but are not limited to, skin disease (especially scratching or dermatitis), vomiting and diarrhoea.
- (c) Veterinary attention should be sought for any dog showing extreme or unexpected changes in appetite. Both decreased and increased appetite can indicate underlying disease.
- (d) Dogs' teeth and gums should be checked regularly by their owners and appropriate action taken where tooth and gum health deteriorate.

General Information

If a dog is suffering from an illness or disease, special attention to the dog's diet may be required. Diet also affects dental health in dogs. Dogs' teeth and gums will benefit from chewing on harder food, such as raw bones and dry kibble food, and from regular cleaning. There is a range of products available including diets and toys that are beneficial for dental health. Working or vigorous exercise too soon after a large meal can increase the risk of gastric (stomach) torsion.

Also see Section 3.1.2 regarding the feeding of risky foods and objects.

7.3 Prevention of Infectious Disease

Introduction

Vaccination is an important means of controlling infectious diseases such as parvovirus, distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis and kennel cough. Infectious diseases can rapidly spread among

unvaccinated dogs, with consequent negative impacts on animal welfare. Minimum standards and recommendations for best practice relating to ill-health (Section 7.1 Ill Health and Injury) also apply to the management of dogs with infectious diseases.

Minimum Standard No. 11 – Prevention of Infectious Disease

Dogs known to be infected with an infectious disease must be carefully supervised and securely isolated so as to prevent infecting other dogs.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Dogs should be provided with protection against infectious disease by vaccination according to veterinary recommendations.
- (b) When puppies are six to eight weeks of age, their owners should seek veterinary advice on a vaccination programme against relevant infectious diseases.
- (c) Puppies should be kept away from public places until approximately two weeks after their final vaccinations, but it is also important not to compromise socialisation during this period. Contact with other dogs should be limited to those known to be vaccinated, and puppies should be restricted to areas that are not accessible to unvaccinated dogs.
- (d) Preventative health plans for breeding bitches and their litters should be carried out according to veterinary recommendations.

General Information

Puppies are particularly susceptible to infectious diseases. Vaccination programmes normally begin at six to eight weeks of age, and are complete by 12 to 16 weeks of age depending on individual circumstances. Thereafter, an annual veterinary health check is recommended, including an assessment of any need for a vaccination booster.

7.4 Parasitic Disease

Introduction

Parasite infestation can cause disease and death. Where environmental conditions permit, parasite populations can become large, while animals suffering ill health may also have more parasites. Dogs can develop hypersensitivity to parasites and show extreme skin irritation, even with very low parasite numbers. Some canine parasites present a public health risk.

Regular worming should be performed to maintain health. Failure to maintain a regular worming schedule can result in the dog losing weight and condition and can cause a gradual deterioration of the health of the dog.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Dogs should be given regular and effective treatments to prevent internal and external parasite burdens, as recommended by veterinarians or product manufacturers.
- (b) Bitches should be treated for roundworms during pregnancy to prevent their spread to the pups.

- (c) Puppies should be wormed with an effective roundworm treatment at two-week intervals from two to 12 weeks of age. Thereafter they should be wormed every three months, using a broad spectrum wormer, or as recommended by a veterinarian.
- (d) If dogs are tethered or in runs on bare earth, they should regularly be moved to fresh ground and the area kept clear of faeces, to prevent the build-up of hookworms.
- (e) Dogs should be checked regularly for signs of infestation with external parasites e.g. scratching, chewing or hair loss, and should be treated appropriately.
- (f) Dogs to be wormed should only be treated with products intended for dogs.

General Information

Many diseases, including worm infestations, can be related to poor hygiene.

Internal parasites, such as intestinal worms, are a major disease problem and also a public health risk (see Section 7.6 Diseases Transmissible to Humans (Zoonoses) below). Regular worming prevents large infestations. Products for worming can be toxic, especially when products not intended for dogs are used on them, and need to be used according to instructions or label directions.

External parasites that live on the skin of dogs include fleas, mites and lice. Cattle ticks are prevalent in some parts of the country and may attach themselves to dogs. The presence of external parasites may be indicated by rubbing, scratching, fur loss, scabs or scale. Fleas or flea dirt (black coils that turn red when moistened with water) may also be seen in the coat. Long-haired dogs may have more difficulty with external parasites if their fur becomes knotted through lack of grooming. Matted areas provide a haven for fleas, and may cause severe discomfort for the dog.

Fleas are common. 95% of the flea's life cycle is spent, not on the dog, but in its environment, therefore carpets and bedding should be cleaned and/or treated. Routine cleaning such as vacuuming does not kill fleas, their eggs or larvae. Where there is infestation, advice on appropriate treatment of both environment and animals should be obtained. Effective treatment of fleas requires that all animals in the household, including cats, should be treated at the same time.

The signs of mange, which is caused by mites, include hair loss, flaky skin, redness, sores and sometimes itchy skin. Treatment can be difficult particularly in advanced cases, and it is important to seek veterinary help at an early stage of the disease. Some types of mange also affect humans.

The ears of dogs, especially young dogs, should be checked regularly for ear mites. An infestation may cause excessive scratching of the ears and a dark-brown discharge inside the ears.

7.5 Diseases of the Skin

Introduction

Skin diseases are common in dogs, and may cause considerable pain and distress.

Recommended Best Practice

Dogs with minimal hair covering and/or pale skin on the nose or ears should be protected from sunburn and skin cancer by keeping them out of direct sunlight during the sunniest times of the day. The application of appropriate animal sunscreen on nose and ears is helpful but not fully preventative.

General Information

There are many causes of skin disease in dogs including allergies, parasitic diseases, fungal infection such as ringworm, bacterial infection, nutritional imbalances and hormonal disorders. Few of these conditions are resolved without appropriate treatment. Delays in seeking help may lead to worsening of the condition as the dog damages its skin further by chewing and scratching, and to complications such as secondary bacterial infections which may then require additional treatment.

7.6 Diseases Transmissible to Humans (Zoonoses)

General Information

Some diseases (e.g. ringworm, roundworm, mange, leptospirosis and campylobacter) can be transmissible between dogs and other species, including humans (zoonotic diseases). Owners and handlers can act as a vehicle for transmission and unknowingly transfer diseases from dog to dog. Veterinarians, veterinary nurses, the SPCA and other animal welfare agencies, breeders and pet retailers should take every opportunity to help dog owners understand the health risks they run from their association with dogs and direct them to where appropriate advice can be obtained.

Where a zoonotic disease has been diagnosed, a discussion with a veterinarian is recommended to enable the owner of the dog to make an informed decision on the best course of action for both dog and owner. Misunderstandings may result in the owner being unaware of the potential public health risk of a condition, putting the owner and their family at risk, or alternatively, having a dog unnecessarily euthanased.

7.7 Care of Claws and Coat

Introduction

Neglected coat and claws can cause considerable distress and suffering. Hygiene around the perineum, anus and tail is particularly important in dogs with long hair to reduce soiling and the risk of flystrike.

Minimum Standard No. 12 – Care of Claws and Coat

- (a) The coats of long-haired dogs must be groomed and/or clipped at a frequency that will prevent suffering and distress due to matting or infestation by parasites.**
- (b) Claws must be clipped when necessary to avoid penetration of the skin and/or foot pads.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Dogs should be groomed regularly so as to prevent matting.
- (b) Claws, including dew claws if not removed, should be clipped as required.

General Information

Mats of hair harbour external parasites and dermatitis is likely to develop in the underlying skin. Mats can be brushed out or clipped off. Long haired dogs may require regular clipping or their hair tied back to ensure they can move freely and see where they are going.

Long hair can predispose to grass seeds penetrating skin and ears. Owners should regularly check dogs for grass seeds during the late summer period.

Shampooing and bathing dogs is generally not necessary if the dog is kept in a clean environment, but it can reduce unpleasant odours. Shampoos formulated for dogs should be used as human products may dry out the skin.

Dew claws, the claws of older dogs, and the claws of dogs that get little or no exercise on hard surfaces, may become overgrown. Long claws need careful trimming with sharp clippers taking care not to damage the quick of the nail (the nail bed) which will be painful and result in bleeding and possibly infection. Sharp nail tips can be removed with an emery board or nail file. Veterinarians, veterinary nurses or professional dog groomers and breeders can provide assistance and advice on trimming claws.

7.8 Exercise

Introduction

Exercise is extremely important for both physical and mental health, particularly where dogs are confined for prolonged periods, and also helps to meet dogs' social needs. Insufficient exercise can contribute to the development of behaviour problems. Exercise is usually a matter of walking and running on or off a leash, but dogs are also exercised in other ways, eg by swimming or using exercise equipment such as treadmills.

Minimum Standard No. 13 – Exercise

- (a) Dogs must receive daily exercise sufficient to maintain their health and well-being.**
- (b) Dogs must be supervised at all times when exercising with exercise equipment such as treadmills, to limit the risk of injury or over-exercise.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Dogs should have at least 60 minutes every day off the lead or chain or out of the run, with freedom to explore their immediate environment. However, owners should seek advice on the appropriate amount of exercise for their dog according to its age, breed and individual circumstances.
- (b) Dogs being exercised should be under control at all times, or exercised in an enclosed area where they cannot come to harm.
- (c) People training dogs for agility competitions or other impact sports should consider the stage of skeletal development, follow a structured training process and seek advice from skilled professionals. This is particularly important for dogs under the age of 18 months.
- (d) The level of exercise should be appropriate for the age and level of fitness of the dog.
- (e) Bitches should not be worked or exercised hard in the last two weeks of pregnancy.
- (f) Bitches should not be worked until their puppies are close to weaning.

General Information

Exercise requirements vary with age, breed and individual circumstances. Over-exercising of growing dogs, especially those of larger breeds, may result in muscle or joint problems. Older dogs require relatively less exercise but physical activity remains important for both health and mental stimulation.

Regular exercise is important for working dogs to maintain their fitness, especially during periods of little or no work.

Gentle exercise is appropriate for pregnant bitches until the last two weeks prior to whelping.

Lactating bitches do not require regular exercise while their puppies are very young.

When exercising dogs beside a vehicle, due regard needs to be taken for the dog's fitness and safety.

Exercise on hard surfaces such as tarmac and long working hours can lead to worn footpads, especially where dogs are unaccustomed to this. Extremely hot surfaces, such as sandy beaches and hot asphalt in summer, can burn footpads.

7.9 Harmful Substances

Introduction

As natural scavengers, dogs are susceptible to accidental poisoning by many substances e.g. vertebrate pest baits, poisonous plants, illegal drugs, prescription medicines, household cleaners, and contaminated water. Dogs can also be poisoned by eating carcasses of poisoned animals.

Minimum Standard No. 14 – Harmful Substances

- (a) Owners and persons in charge of dogs must take all practical steps to ensure that dogs are not exposed to poisons and harmful substances.**
- (b) Owners and persons in charge of dogs known to have eaten a harmful substance or showing signs indicative of poisoning (e.g. tremors, fitting, frenzied behaviour, sudden vomiting, sudden drowsiness or collapse) must seek immediate veterinary attention.**

General Information

Dogs are commonly poisoned by baits containing poisons that prevent blood clotting laid to control rats, rabbits and possums, and by the carcasses of the poisoned animals. Slug bait poisoning is also common.

Dogs are particularly susceptible to 1080 poison, which can remain active for many months in the carcasses of poisoned rabbits and possums. Signs of 1080 poisoning in dogs include frenzied behaviour, fear and panic, howling, cowering and eventually fits and death. They may appear immediately or several days after ingestion. Dogs can recover if veterinary treatment is sought immediately. Agencies which carry out 1080 operations often sell wire mesh muzzles and can provide capsules to induce vomiting. Owners of dogs in areas near 1080 operations should contact

their Regional Council for advice. Councils normally advise of poison operations by signage and dogs entering these areas should wear muzzles.

Dark chocolate is toxic to dogs, even in small amounts.

Dogs can be poisoned by drinking water polluted with toxins such as sheep dip, horticultural sprays, antifreeze etc, and care should be taken to cover polluted water or prevent access to it.

If a dog has eaten a poison which is strongly acid, alkaline or a petroleum product, or if the dog appears to be losing consciousness, it should not be made to vomit as this could cause further harm.

Further advice can be obtained from the National Poison Centre at 0800 764 766 (0800 POISON).

7.10 Care of Older Dogs

Introduction

Heart disease, metabolic disease, cancers and arthritis are common age-related diseases of dogs. Difficulty standing up, weight change and excessive drinking and urination are common signs of age-related disease.

Some diseases of older dogs may be interpreted by the owner as part of the natural ageing process but in many cases the difficulties of advancing age can be managed by treatment and/or nutrition. Veterinary advice and specific treatments may help the aging dog.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Dogs over the age of seven years should be provided with a diet appropriate for their health.
- (b) Dogs over the age of seven years should receive regular veterinary checks to ensure that their health and welfare is maintained by early diagnosis and treatment of age-related diseases.

General Information

As dogs age, their need for warmth, free access to water and nutritious and easily-digested food increases. Commercial foods for older dogs are available and ensure a balanced diet to meet nutritional requirements.

Older dogs require less exercise and are less tolerant of high workloads than younger dogs, but this will vary with factors such as breed, health, size and working history. Nevertheless physical activity remains important for good bowel function, prevention of constipation and general well-being.

7.11 Surgical Procedures

Introduction

Surgical procedures need to be conducted in a manner that manages likely pain and distress. Puppies that still have their eyes closed are developmentally immature and less likely to experience pain in the same way as dogs that are older; however the long term impacts of painful procedures conducted on young puppies are not fully understood.

The Act limits “significant” surgical procedures to a veterinarian or a veterinary student under direct veterinary supervision. The Act also places requirements on surgical procedures that are not “significant” (see Appendix III: Legislative Requirements). If in doubt about a surgical procedure, veterinary advice should be sought.

It is an offence under Section 21(2)(a) of the Animal Welfare Act to crop, or cause to be cropped, the ears of a dog.

7.11.1 Debarking

Debarking of dogs is a restricted surgical procedure under the Act (Section 2(1)) and may only be undertaken by a veterinarian, or veterinary student under direct veterinary supervision, who must first satisfy themselves that the procedure is in the best interests of the animal (Section 17(2)).

Minimum Standard No. 15 – Debarking

Dogs must only be taken to a veterinarian for debarking after other suitable means of treating inappropriate barking have been attempted and have failed.

7.11.2 Removal of dew claws

Dew claws are vestigial digits found on the inside of the lower limbs of a dog.

Minimum Standard No. 16 – Dew Claws

- (a) **Where dew claws are to be removed from puppies by a person other than a veterinarian, it must be done before the eyes have started to open or before four days old, whichever comes first.**
- (b) **Where dew claws are removed by a person other than a veterinarian, that person must possess the knowledge, training and competence, in relation to that procedure, that is necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the pup.**
- (c) **Dew claws on dogs after their eyes have begun to open or after four days of age, must only be removed by a veterinarian.**
- (d) **If dew claw removal is not performed, care must be taken to manage any consequential risks to animal health and welfare.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Jointed dew claws should not be routinely removed.
- (b) Dew claw removal, when conducted, should be carried out by a veterinarian.

General Information

While most front dew claws are firmly and closely attached to the leg, hind dew claws may be large and loosely-attached and therefore more likely to be injured. In these cases preventive removal may be justified, particularly in working dogs. Negative impacts on the health and welfare of the dog can be reduced by having this procedure conducted at the same time as desexing.

7.11.3 Tail docking

Voluntary tail docking, as opposed to tail docking performed to manage existing injury or disease, is performed in order to ensure that dogs meet breed standards, or because it is believed that it prevents damage from occurring to the tails of working dogs in particular situations, or to reduce soiling around the anus and tail. Tail docking of dogs is restricted or prohibited in several countries, including England, Wales, Scotland, Germany, Australia, Israel, Finland, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway.

Tails may be docked surgically by a veterinarian for therapeutic reasons, or by means of an elastic ligature or band that constricts blood supply (see Appendix II: Interpretation and definitions 'tail band (tail banding)' and 'tail docking') in accordance with the minimum standard below.

Tail docking is a painful procedure when performed on puppies older than four days of age. The method of removal may also influence the pain experienced. Veterinarians can provide advice on whether tail docking is needed for particular dogs.

Minimum Standard No. 17 – Tail Docking

- (a) Tails may only be shortened or removed by using a tail band—**
 - (i) in puppies that are less than four days old in which the eyes have not started to open; and**
 - (ii) by a person who possesses the appropriate knowledge, training and competency necessary to do so effectively, and who is acting under a documented quality assurance scheme that assures compliance with this minimum standard; and**
 - (iii) the remaining length of the tail must be sufficient to avoid compromising health and welfare when the dog is mature.**
- (b) Tails that need to be shortened or removed to manage existing injury or disease, must only be shortened or removed by a veterinarian using appropriate pain relief.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Tail docking should not be performed at all unless it is required for treatment of an existing injury or disease.
- (b) Injury of the tail can lead to serious complications and any injury to the tail, as with other injury, should be assessed by a veterinarian to determine the best course of treatment.

General Information

Tail injury in many breeds has traditionally been prevented by tail docking according to breed standards and practical requirements. Tails can be injured in the home and while dogs are working. Tail injury can be painful and debilitating and will not necessarily resolve itself. Care needs to be taken to ensure that damage to the tail is minimised and that any injury or damage is treated appropriately. See Section 7.1 Ill Health and Injury.

Hygiene around the tail and anus has traditionally been managed by tail docking in some breeds. Careful attention to hygiene prevents risks to animal welfare arising from soiling in dogs with tails, particularly those with long hair. See Section 7.7 Care of Claws and Coat.

Any organisation representing dog owners can establish quality assurance schemes. These schemes may allow for the organisation to monitor training and procedures, rectify problems, and document problems and solutions for future reference or education. The New Zealand Kennel Club manages a scheme to accredit tail banders. Information about joining this scheme is on the New Zealand Kennel Club website.

The New Zealand Veterinary Association has a policy that dogs should not be tail-docked for non-therapeutic reasons. This is on the grounds that surgical alteration to the natural state should only be conducted where it is in the best interests of the animal or has some management function.

8. Behaviour

Introduction

Inappropriate behaviour, such as straying and excessive barking, is a major reason for euthanasia of dogs less than two years old. All dogs have the same set of innate behaviours but they differ as to the threshold at which different behaviours are exhibited. Genetics, socialisation, training, desexing and level of supervision all contribute to the manner in which a dog will behave. Where a behavioural problem occurs, advice should be obtained from an animal behaviourist or a veterinarian. The earlier that behavioural problems are addressed, the greater the chance of correcting them.

Positive training techniques that are based on the understanding that inherent dog behaviour is a consequence of their evolution as pack animals, are widely used. Problems occur when the dog misunderstands its hierarchical position as a subordinate member within its human 'pack' (its human family and contacts).

Minimum Standard No. 18 – Training

Training techniques must be appropriate for the individual dog.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Puppies should be well socialised to minimise the development of behavioural problems. Socialisation should be appropriate to the circumstances in which the individual dog will be kept as an adult (e.g. dogs likely to come into contact with livestock should be socialised accordingly).
- (b) Dogs should be given the opportunity to socialise with other dogs on a daily basis.
- (c) Dogs should be trained to minimise the risk of inappropriate behaviour and so that they are under control at all times.
- (d) Dogs should be trained or taken to reputable training classes from the age of 16 weeks to learn basic commands.
- (e) Appropriate advice (e.g. from a veterinarian, dog trainer or dog behaviourist) should be sought at the early stages of a behavioural problem.
- (f) Where an owner or person in charge of a dog is at all uncertain how the dog will respond to other dogs, livestock or wildlife, the dog should be restrained in a manner that keeps all parties safe.
- (g) Training sessions should be short and regular and should be determined by the animal's reactions and condition, without over-working the animal.
- (h) The owner's dominant position should be enforced calmly and patiently using recognised techniques that provide positive reinforcement for acceptable behaviour as part of the training process. Dominance should not be established by physical punishment or processes that are psychologically harmful to the dog.

General Information

Between the ages of three to 14 weeks, puppies go through a development phase in which they become socialised. During this period it is important to expose puppies to a large range of stimuli

including gentle, but not excessive, handling by people, exposure to novel experiences, vaccinated dogs, cats and other animals, vehicles and household appliances. This will assist them in learning how to communicate and interact with humans and other dogs, and how to adjust to novel situations and environments. Puppies that have little opportunity for such contact should attend socialisation classes ('puppy pre-school') at an early age once vaccination programmes have begun.

Some dogs develop habits that annoy their owners and others, including persistent barking, territorial barking, separation anxiety, aggressiveness, chasing cars and destructive behaviour. There is usually an underlying reason for nuisance behaviour. Boredom, insufficient exercise and inappropriate training are frequent predisposing factors. Altering or enriching the environment or improving training techniques may provide an effective remedy.

The dog is, by nature, a predator and will naturally chase animals that run from it. The instinct to chase is greater for some breeds, especially hunting and guard breeds. Uncontrolled dogs can be a danger to other companion animals, livestock, wildlife and people.

8.1 Aids for Behavioural Modification

Introduction

A range of devices is available to assist training and modify behaviour. These include choke chains, prong or pinch collars, electronic collars (remote transmission and bark-activated), electronic boundary control devices and muzzles. Training devices, especially electronic devices, have the potential for misuse and abuse. If used incorrectly, they can significantly reduce the long term welfare of a dog. They should only be used by competent operators as a training aid for serious behavioural faults when other methods have proved ineffective, and when, without the use of such a device, the dog is likely to be euthanased.

Minimum Standard No. 19 – Aids for Behavioural Modification

- (a) Training aids, including electronic training devices, must not be used in a way that causes unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress to the dog.**
- (b) Pinch or prong collars must not be used.**
- (c) Muzzles must fit comfortably without chafing the skin or impeding breathing and must allow the dog to open its mouth sufficiently to enable panting or drinking.**

8.1.1 Choke chains

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Choke chains can be harmful if misused and owners and persons in charge should seek advice on their appropriate use.
- (b) Choke chains should be fitted so that they are comfortable and hang slack when not being used to correct the dog.
- (c) Choke chains should be used only during training sessions, when the dog is on a lead and supervised.

General Information

Choke chains can become caught on objects then cause distress or strangulation. On long haired breeds they may become entangled in the fur causing pain and/or restricting breathing.

8.1.2 Electronic devices

Introduction

Electronic training devices are punishment-based devices that work by supplying an instant noxious stimulus for an unwanted behaviour. This is contrary to the philosophy of most animal behaviourists, who recommend reward-based training methods. Electronic training devices can be harmful if misused, but used carefully they can be very effective against unwanted behaviours.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Electronic devices should be used carefully and only when other training methods have failed.
- (b) Operators of electronic devices should be trained and knowledgeable, aware of the early signs of distress in the dogs being trained, and able to alleviate these.
- (c) Electronic devices should not be used on dogs with a nervous disposition.
- (d) Electronic devices should only be activated during or immediately after (within a few seconds of) the offending behaviour.
- (e) Electronic devices should not be left on unsupervised dogs because they can cause serious harm if they malfunction or are accidentally remotely activated.
- (f) Electronic devices should only be used to control barking where the problem being addressed is intractable to other training methods.

General Information

Electronic training devices include:

- Remote control transmission – a collar delivers an electric shock or warning tone activated by a radio signal from a hand-held radio transmitter.
- Bark activated (anti-barking devices) – when the dog barks, a disc located in the collar detects vibration from the voice box, activating the delivery of an electric shock, citronella spray, water vapour, air pressure or a high frequency sound. Because these devices inhibit inherent natural behaviours, they should be used only as a last resort in cases of a dog barking excessively in its own territory (territorial barking). If it is necessary to use an electronic device for this purpose, a citronella collar spray device is preferred over an electric shock device.
- Boundary containment – a transmitter emits a radio signal along an underground wire, forming a defined boundary. The animal wears a receiver attached to a collar, which delivers an electric shock or citronella spray, usually preceded by a warning tone, when the dog approaches this boundary.

8.1.3 Muzzles

Introduction

Muzzles are used for a number of reasons including to prevent a dog biting or eating, to safeguard wildlife or to protect dogs from poison baits. They are also a legal requirement in respect of certain breeds or classifications of dog under the Dog Control Act 1996.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) There should be a period of preconditioning with supervision by the handler as dogs may initially find the muzzle frightening or distressing.
- (b) Trainers of racing dogs may use industry approved muzzles at their discretion.

8.2 Fireworks

Introduction

Many dogs find the sound and sight of fireworks very frightening. Lightning, thunder and gunshots may also have a similar effect.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Dogs that are fearful of fireworks should be kept in an area with the least possible exposure to the sight and sound of fireworks.
- (b) Dogs kept outside when fireworks are in use should be kennelled, and the kennels should be covered.
- (c) Veterinary advice should be sought for particularly nervous dogs and medication may be appropriate if the dogs cannot be physically removed from the area.

General Information

Dogs can be kept indoors with curtains drawn to restrict exposure to the sight and sound of fireworks and with music or other distractions to muffle the sound.

Medication and 'remedial training' may be appropriate for some dogs in order to manage ongoing or severe behavioural problems arising from or during exposure to fireworks.

9. Transportation

Introduction

Dogs are frequently transported in a variety of vehicles. The Animal Welfare Act 1999 requires that every person in charge of a vehicle must ensure that any animal carried in a vehicle is secured and its welfare attended to (Appendix III: Legislative Requirements). Additional information about transport will be in the *Animal Welfare (Transport of Animals in New Zealand) Code of Welfare* when it is issued.

Minimum Standard No. 20 – Transportation

- (a) Dogs must be provided with adequate ventilation when being carried in a vehicle.**
- (b) Dogs must not be transported loose in a stock crate with livestock.**
- (c) If dogs are carried in a purpose-built transport box fixed to a vehicle, it must be well-ventilated and free from exhaust fumes and road dust.**
- (d) Except for working dogs at work, dogs must not be carried on the open rear of a moving vehicle unless they are secured or enclosed in a crate.**
- (e) Dogs must not be left unattended in a vehicle in conditions where the dog is likely to suffer from heat stress.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Dogs should be transported using a specially designed, climate-controlled travelling crate if possible.
- (b) Dogs should not be carried in the closed boot of a car unless they are injured and this is the most appropriate manner in which to transport them over a short distance.
- (c) When dogs are transported on the back of trucks or in vans, non-slip surfaces should be provided.
- (d) If a dog is transported on the back of or on the fuel tank of a farm motorbike, the driver should provide a non-slip cover for the dog to assist it to retain balance when the vehicle is moving at speed or cornering.
- (e) Dogs should not be left unattended in vehicles. If a dog must be left in a vehicle even for a short time, the vehicle should be parked in shade with more than one window left open to allow air to circulate so that heat stress will not occur.
- (f) Dogs should not be carried on the open back of vehicles during extremes of weather unless shelter is provided.
- (g) When dogs are tethered on the back of an open vehicle for transport, the securing lead or chain should be attached so that the cab provides protection against the wind.
- (h) When dogs are tethered on the back of an open vehicle for transport, the securing lead or chain should be long enough to permit the dog to stand, lie down and move about but short enough to

prevent the dog's legs from reaching the side of the tray so that it cannot fall off or enter the cab of the vehicle.

- (i) When groups of dogs are transported together, submissive dogs should be protected from those that are more dominant by physical separation or restraint that prevents aggressive interaction.
- (j) When dogs are transported together in a group, there should be easy and safe access to all dogs by the owner or person in charge.
- (k) Dogs awaiting loading onto aircraft should be kept in a secure, tranquil and quiet environment and should be sheltered from the elements.

General Information

Dogs can be seriously injured if allowed to travel with their heads out of the window of a moving vehicle.

The temperature in a closed vehicle in full sun can reach 50 degrees Centigrade in less than 15 minutes. This will cause an enclosed dog's temperature to rise rapidly, followed by extreme distress and rapid death. Dogs that have been stressed in this way should be cooled by wetting down and providing cool water, then veterinary assistance should be sought.

Brachycephalic dogs (those with shortened noses such as pugs and bulldogs) are less able to regulate their temperature so are more prone to heat stress during periods of high temperatures.

Puppies which are transported by car, and continue to be transported at regular intervals as they age, will, in general, develop a higher tolerance for travel than dogs not introduced to cars at an early age.

Dogs being transported over long distances, either by road or by air, have additional requirements such as appropriate ventilation, and provision of water. Where dogs are to be transported over long distance, veterinarians and animal transport agents can provide useful advice. For air travel the IATA provides guidelines, which all domestic carriers follow.

Sedation of dogs for transportation is not generally recommended. Veterinary advice should be sought in the first instance where there are concerns that a dog may not settle.

Any person wishing to export a dog from New Zealand to any country, including New Zealand dependencies, should seek advice from MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, their veterinarian or a licensed animal transport agent.

10. Euthanasia

Introduction

It is an offence under the Act to kill any animal such that it suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress (see Appendix III: Legislative Requirements).

Minimum Standard No. 21 – Euthanasia

- (a) When a dog is euthanased it must be carried out in such a way as to ensure that death occurs quickly and that pain and distress is minimised.**
- (b) Dogs of any age must not be killed by drowning.**

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Dogs should be euthanased by a veterinarian.
- (b) Where a veterinarian is not available and the dog is to be shot, this should be undertaken only by a fully competent person, taking special care to safeguard people and other animals in the area.

General Information

The preferred method of euthanasia for dogs is by a veterinarian using an intravenous injection of a drug registered for this purpose. Dogs which are difficult to handle may need to be tranquilised first.

The Animal Welfare Act provides for the euthanasia of a severely injured or sick dog by a veterinarian, *without the permission of the owner*, where delay in finding the owner would cause unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress to the dog. In an emergency situation, a warranted inspector or auxiliary officer under the Act (e.g. an SCPA inspector or auxiliary officer) may also euthanase a dog, if a veterinarian is not immediately available.

It is inhumane to kill a dog, including a puppy, by drowning. Puppies, in common with many newborn mammals, have a diving reflex which prolongs the time they can survive without breathing. They therefore experience a prolonged period of distress before death.

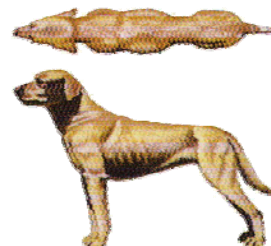
Information on humane killing can be obtained from veterinarians, animal welfare inspectors and Local Authority animal control officers.

Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs

1. **EMACIATED** Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.



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2. **THIN** Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.



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3. **IDEAL** Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.



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4. **HEAVY** Ribs palpable with difficulty, heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be absent.



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5. **GROSSLY OBESE** Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distension.



(Source: Purina Pet Care Centre)

Appendix II: Interpretation and definitions

Act	The Animal Welfare Act 1999.
animal	As defined in the Act: (a) Means any live member of the animal kingdom that is – <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) A mammal; orii) A bird; oriii) A reptile; oriv) An amphibian; orv) A fish (bony or cartilaginous); orvi) Any octopus, squid, crab, lobster, or crayfish (including freshwater crayfish); orvii) Any other member of the animal kingdom which is declared from time to time by the Governor-General, by Order in Council, to be an animal for the purposes of this Act; and (b) Includes any mammalian foetus, or any avian or reptilian pre-hatched young, that is in the last half of its period of gestation or development; and (c) Includes any marsupial pouch young; but (d) Does not include – <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) A human being; or(ii) Except as provided in paragraph (b) or paragraph (c) of this definition, any animal in the pre-natal, pre-hatched, larval, or other such developmental stage.
available technology	NAWAC takes to mean technologies which are used practically to care for and manage animals, for example, existing chemicals, drugs, instruments, devices and facilities.
bitch	A female dog.
body condition score	A scoring system used to classify the condition of animals, based on the assessment amount of fat and/or muscle covering they have (see Appendix I: Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs).
choke chain	A chain of metal links which, when looped through an eye at the end, forms a noose with a free-running end. The chain tightens around the neck when the free end is drawn.
dam	A nursing bitch.
dangerous dog	As defined in the Dog Control Act 1996.
disability assist dog	As defined in the Dog Control Act 1996. Includes dogs that assist the sight- and hearing-impaired.
dog	Member of the species <i>Canis familiaris</i> . Refers to any dog, whether a companion or a working dog. Includes a puppy unless otherwise stated.
dog behaviourist	A person experienced in dog psychology, biology and behaviour who is able to provide advice on training and correcting behavioural problems in canines.
euthanasia	Induction of death in a humane manner.

good practice	NAWAC takes to mean a standard of care that has a general level of acceptance among knowledgeable practitioners and experts in the field; is based on good sense and sound judgment; is practical and thorough; has robust experiential or scientific foundations; and prevents unreasonable or unnecessary harm to, or promotes interests of, the animals to which it is applied. Good practice also takes account of the evolution of attitudes about animals and their care.
heat	Oestrus. The time in the reproductive cycle when a bitch shows an interest in mating. Normally around ovulation (release of the egg).
ill-treat	As defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, means causing the animal to suffer, by any act or omission, pain or distress that in its kind or degree, or in its object, or in the circumstances in which it is inflicted, is unreasonable or unnecessary.”
kennel	A container that provides shelter for the animal to rest and sleep. Also known as a nightbox or dog house.
maintenance feeding (m)	That required to maintain a dog’s optimal body weight or condition.
menacing dog	As defined in the Dog Control Act 1996.
microchip	A microchip transponder that complies with regulation 4(1) of the Dog Control (Microchip Transponder) Regulations 2005.
minimum standards	Minimum standards provide the details of specific actions people need to take in order to meet the obligations of the Act. They are identified in the text by heading, and generally use the word ‘must’ or similar. They are highlighted in boxes within the text.
night box	A kennel, with no run, designed principally for the dog to sleep in.
owner	As defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, includes the parent or guardian of a person under the age of 16 years who – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) owns the animals; and (b) is a member of the parent’s or guardian’s household living with and dependent on the parent or guardian.”
person in charge	As defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, includes a person who has an animal in that person’s possession or custody, or under that person’s care, control, or supervision.”
physiological state	Relates to the functioning of the body, its organs and body systems.
prong collar (or pinch collar)	A chain made of metal or hardened plastic links with prongs positioned against the neck on each link.
puppy	A dog less than 12 months of age.
racing dog	A greyhound dog or bitch registered with the New Zealand Greyhound Racing Association for the purposes of racing or breeding.

recommended best practice	<p>NAWAC takes to mean the best practice agreed at a particular time, following consideration of scientific information, accumulated experience and public submissions on this code. It is usually a higher standard of practice than the minimum standard, except where the minimum standard is best practice. It is a practice that can be varied as new information comes to light. Recommendations for best practice will be particularly appropriate where it is desirable to promote or encourage better care for animals than is provided as a minimum standard.</p> <p>Recommended best practices are identified in the text by a heading, and generally use the word “should”.</p>
registration	The registration of dogs with a local authority, as required by the Dog Control Act 1996.
run	An enclosed area which allows the animal space in which it can urinate and defaecate.
scientific knowledge	<p>NAWAC takes to mean knowledge within animal-based scientific disciplines, especially those that deal with nutritional, environmental, health, behavioural and cognitive/neural functions, which are relevant to understanding the physical, health and behavioural needs of animals. Such knowledge is not haphazard or anecdotal; it is generated by rigorous and systematic application of the scientific method, and the results are objectively and critically reviewed before acceptance.</p>
shelter	Cover or protection from weather including sun, rain, wind and snow.
sled pulling dog	A dog used for pulling a sled for sport.
sporting dog	A dog that is used for sporting or recreational activities.
stray dog	A free-roaming dog that relies on humans either directly or indirectly for food.
tail band (tail banding)	An elastic band or ligature, which may be made of rubber, tied around the tail to sever blood supply and cause tail removal. Tail banding is a method of tail docking.
tail docking	The removal of the tail by any means, with the removal occurring either directly after application of the method (eg by surgery), or at any stage afterwards (eg banding). Includes tail banding.
tethering	Securing a dog to an object by a collar, harness, headcollar or secure restraint around the neck.
veterinarian	A person who is registered under the Veterinarians Act 2005 and holds a current practising certificate
veterinary nurse	A person who holds a veterinary nursing qualification recognised by the New Zealand Veterinary Nurses’ Association (NZVNA)
weaning	The process that begins with the introduction of supplementary food to puppies and ends when the puppies are nutritionally independent of the dam.
whelping	Parturition. A bitch in the act of giving birth.

working dog

A dog whose primary purpose is to provide practical assistance to humans, as defined in the Dog Control Act 1996. Includes disability assist dogs, dogs kept primarily for the purpose of driving and managing livestock, and security/guard dogs.

zoonoses

Diseases that are transmissible from animals to humans (e.g. hydatid disease).

Appendix III: Legislative Requirements

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) imposes obligations on every person who owns or is in charge of an animal. This code has been issued pursuant to Section 75 of the Act and will provide guidance on how to comply with the legislative requirements. However, this code does not provide an exhaustive list of the Act's requirements, and owners and those in charge of animals should note that they must comply with the minimum standards in this code *and* the general provisions in the Act. A copy of the Act is accessible at: www.legislation.govt.nz. A 'Guide to the Animal Welfare Act 1999' is available at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare.

Contents of Codes

Section 69 of the Act provides that a code of welfare may relate to one or more of the following:

- a species of animal
- animals used for purposes specified in the code
- animal establishments of a kind specified in the code
- types of entertainment specified in the code (being types of entertainment in which animals are used)
- the transport of animals
- the procedures and equipment used in the management, care or killing of animals or in the carrying out of surgical procedures on animals.

In deciding to issue a code of welfare, the Minister must be satisfied as to the following matters set out in Section 73(1) of the Act:

- that the proposed standards are the minimum necessary to ensure that the purposes of the Act will be met; and
- that the recommendations for best practice (if any) are appropriate.

Despite the provisions of Section 73(1), Section 73(3) of the Act allows NAWAC, in exceptional circumstances, to recommend minimum standards and recommendations for best practice that do not fully meet the obligations of:

- Section 10 or Section 11 – obligations in relation to physical, health and behavioural needs of animals
- Section 12(c) – killing an animal
- Section 21(1)(b) – restriction on performance of surgical procedures
- Section 22(2) – providing comfortable and secure accommodation for the transport of animals
- Section 23(1) and (2) – transport of animals
- Section 29(a) – ill-treating an animal.

In making a recommendation under Section 73(3), Section 73(4) requires NAWAC to have regard to:

- the feasibility and practicality of effecting a transition from current practices to new practices and any adverse effects that may result from such a transition
- the requirements of religious practices or cultural practices or both
- the economic effects of any transition from current practices to new practices.

This code provides for the physical, health and behavioural needs (as defined in Section 4 of the Act) of dogs. These needs include:

- proper and sufficient food and water
- adequate shelter
- opportunity to display normal patterns of behaviour

- physical handling in a manner which minimises the likelihood of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- protection from, and rapid diagnosis of, any significant injury or disease,

being a need which, in each case, is appropriate to the species, environment and circumstances of the animal.

This code also takes account of:

- good practice
- scientific knowledge
- available technology.

“Significant surgical procedures”, including “controlled” or “restricted surgical procedures”, are defined and covered by the Animal Welfare Act. They are not covered separately by this code (see Section 7.11 Surgical Procedures for further information).

Legal obligations of Owners and Persons in Charge of Animals under the Animal Welfare Act 1999

“Owner” and “Person in Charge” are defined in Appendix II: Interpretation and definitions above. Under the Act, the “owner” of an animal or the “person in charge” is responsible for meeting the legal obligations for animal welfare. It should be noted that the “owner” is not always identical with the “person in charge”, which may change according to the particular circumstance (e.g. when responsibility for the animal is assumed by a person/s who is not the owner e.g. in boarding kennels or is under the instruction of a trainer).

The owner or person in charge of a dog has *overall* responsibility for the welfare of the dog(s) in his or her care. The legal obligations set out below are not an exhaustive list of the obligations in the Act.

The owner or person in charge of dogs must:

- (iii) ensure that the physical, health and behavioural needs of the dog are met in a manner that is in accordance with both good practice and scientific knowledge
- (iv) where practicable, ensure that a dog that is ill or injured receives treatment that will alleviate any unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress being suffered by the dog or that it is killed humanely.

The owner or person in charge of a dog must not without reasonable excuse:

- (i) keep a dog alive when it is in such a condition that it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- (ii) sell, attempt to sell or offer for sale, otherwise than for the express purpose of being killed, a dog, when it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- (iii) desert a dog in circumstances in which no provision is made to meet its physical, health and behavioural needs.

No person may:

- (i) ill-treat a dog
- (ii) release a dog that has been kept in captivity, in circumstances in which the dog is likely to suffer unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- (iii) perform any significant surgical procedure on a dog unless that person is a veterinarian, or a veterinary student under the direct supervision of a veterinarian or, in the case of a controlled surgical procedure, a person approved by a veterinarian

- (iv) perform on a dog a surgical procedure that is not a significant surgical procedure (as defined by the Act) in such a manner that the dog suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- (v) kill a dog in such a manner that the dog suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

It is an offence under Section 31 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 to allow animals (including dogs) to participate in fighting ventures or to aid in providing animals for such ventures.

Regulations Review Committee of Parliament and Process for Complaints

Codes of welfare are deemed to be regulations for the purposes of the Regulations (Disallowance) Act 1989. As such, they are subject to the scrutiny of the Regulations Review Committee of Parliament.

Any person or organisation aggrieved at the operation of a code of welfare has the right to make a complaint to the Regulations Review Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

This is a parliamentary select committee charged with examining regulations against a set of criteria and drawing to the attention of the House of Representatives any regulation that does not meet the criteria.

Grounds for reporting to the House include:

- the regulation trespasses unduly on personal rights and freedoms;
- the regulation is not made in accordance with the general objects and intentions of the statute under which it is made; or
- the regulation was not made in compliance with the particular notice and consultation procedures prescribed by statute.

Any person or organisation wishing to make a complaint should refer to the publication *Making a Complaint to the Regulations Review Committee*, which can be obtained from the website:

<http://www.parliament.govt.nz>, or by writing to: Clerk of the Committee, Regulations Review Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

Strict Liability and Defences

Strict Liability

In the prosecution of certain offences under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 committed after 19 December 2002, evidence that a relevant code of welfare was in existence at the time of the alleged offence and that a relevant minimum standard established by that code was not complied with is rebuttable evidence that the person charged with the offence failed to comply with, or contravened, the provision of the Animal Welfare Act to which the offence relates. (See Sections 13(1A), 24(1) and 30(1A) of the Animal Welfare Act 1999, as amended by the Animal Welfare Amendment Act 2002.)

Defences

It is a defence in the prosecution of certain offences under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 if the defendant proves that there was in existence at the time of the alleged offence a relevant code of welfare and that the minimum standards established by the code of welfare were in all respects equalled or exceeded. (See Sections 13(2)(c), 24(2)(b) and 30(2)(c).)

If a defendant in a prosecution intends to rely on the defence under Section 13(2)(c) or Section 30(2)(c), the defendant must, within seven days after the service of the summons, or within such further time as the Court may allow, deliver to the prosecutor a written notice. The notice must state that the defendant intends to rely on Section 13(2) or Section 30(2) as the case may be, and must specify the relevant code of welfare that was in existence at the time of the alleged offence, and the facts that show that the minimum standards established by that code of welfare were in all respects equalled or exceeded. This notice may be dispensed with if the Court gives leave. (See Sections 13(3) and 30(3).)

The strict liability provisions and the defence of equalling or exceeding the minimum standards established by a code of welfare apply to the following offences:

Failing to Provide

Section 12(a): A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or a person in charge of, an animal, fails to comply, in relation to the animal, with Section 10 (which provides that the owner of an animal, and every person in charge of an animal, must ensure that the physical, health and behavioural needs of the animal are met in a manner that is in accordance with both good practice and scientific knowledge).

Suffering Animals

Section 12(b): A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or a person in charge of, an animal, fails, in the case of an animal that is ill or injured, to comply, in relation to the animal, with Section 11 (which provides that the owner of an animal that is ill or injured, and every person in charge of such an animal, must, where practicable, ensure that the animal receives treatment that alleviates any unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress being suffered by the animal).

Section 12(c): A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or a person in charge of, an animal, kills the animal in such a manner that the animal suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Surgical Procedures

Section 21(1)(b): A person commits an offence who, without reasonable excuse, acts in contravention of or fails to comply with Section 15(4) (which provides that no person may, in performing on an animal a surgical procedure that is not a significant surgical procedure, perform that surgical procedure in such a manner that the animal suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress).

Transport

Section 22(2): A person commits an offence who fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with any provision of Section 22(1) (which provides that every person in charge of a vehicle or an aircraft, and the master of or, if there is no master, the person in charge of, a ship, being a vehicle, aircraft or ship in or on which an animal is being transported, must ensure that the welfare of the animal is properly attended to, and that, in particular, the animal is provided with reasonably comfortable and secure accommodation and is supplied with proper and sufficient food and water).

Section 23(1): A person commits an offence who, without reasonable excuse, confines or transports an animal in a manner or position that causes the animal unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Section 23(2): A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or the person in charge of, an animal, permits that animal, without reasonable excuse, to be driven or led on a road, or to be ridden, or to be transported in or on a vehicle, an aircraft, or a ship, while the condition or health of the animal is such as to render it unfit to be so driven, led, ridden or transported.

Ill-treatment

Section 29(a): A person commits an offence who ill-treats an animal.

Inspection of Premises

Section 127(1): Inspectors appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 have the power to enter any land or premises (with the exception of dwellings and marae), or any vehicle, aircraft or vessel, at any reasonable time, for the purpose of inspecting any animal.

Inspectors include officers of MAF Compliance and Enforcement Group, inspectors from approved organisations (e.g. Royal New Zealand SPCA) appointed by the Minister, and the Police.

Other legislation relating to dog ownership

There is also other legislation relevant to the keeping and welfare of dogs, including, but not limited to, the following:

Dog control requirements

Dog owners also have to meet the requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996. Local authorities can provide more information on these requirements.

Disease control requirements

The feeding of offal to dogs is currently controlled under the Biosecurity Act 1993, for the management of hydatids and sheep measles. For information on current requirements, see www.biosecurity.govt.nz ('Domestic Standards and Regulations').

Consumer rights

The Consumer Guarantees Act 1993 ensures the right of purchasers who are consumers (within the meaning of that Act) to receive puppies or dogs that are "fit for purpose" and "free of defects".

Appendix IV: Codes of Welfare

Process for Code Development

The Act established the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) and provided for the issue of codes of welfare with legal effect. One of the responsibilities of NAWAC is to advise the Minister of Agriculture (the Minister) on the content of codes of welfare following a process of public consultation.

A draft code may be developed by anyone, including NAWAC or the Minister. It is then submitted to NAWAC. Provided the draft meets criteria in the Act for clarity and compliance with the purposes of the Act, and provided representatives of persons likely to be affected by the code have been adequately consulted, NAWAC publicly notifies the code and calls for submissions. NAWAC is then responsible for recommending the form and content of the code to the Minister after having regard to the submissions received, good practice and scientific knowledge, available technology and any other relevant matters.

NAWAC may recommend standards that do not fully meet the obligations in the Act if certain criteria specified in the Act are met.

The Minister issues the code by notice in the Gazette.

This draft was developed by a group designated through the New Zealand Companion Animal Council and includes representatives from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), the Companion Animal Society of the New Zealand Veterinary Association, the Auckland Veterinary Society, the New Zealand Kennel Club (NZKC), Federated Farmers, the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). In addition to the groups mentioned above, it has also been reviewed by representatives of Local Government, Massey University, dog training groups, sporting clubs, the New Zealand Boarding Kennel and Catteries Association, New Zealand Police, Guide Dogs for the Blind, animal behaviourists, pet retailers, the Department of Conservation and the Department of Internal Affairs. NAWAC publicly notified the draft code of welfare on 17 September 2007.

Revision of the Code

This code is based on the knowledge and technology available at the time of publication, and may need to be varied in the light of future advances and knowledge. In any event, this code will be reviewed no later than 11 June 2020 (being 10 years from the date on which this code was issued by the Minister).

Comments on this code are always welcome and should be addressed to: The Secretary, National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, PO Box 2526, Wellington 6140 or animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz.

Further information can be obtained from the website: www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare.

Codes of Welfare

- Animal Welfare (Broiler Chickens: Fully Housed) Code of Welfare 2003
- Animal Welfare (Rodeos) Code of Welfare 2003
- Animal Welfare (Pigs) Code of Welfare 2005
- Animal Welfare (Layer Hens) Code of Welfare 2005
- Animal Welfare (Zoos) Code of Welfare 2005
- Animal Welfare (Circuses) Code of Welfare 2005
- Animal Welfare (Painful Husbandry Procedures) Code of Welfare 2005
- Animal Welfare (Companion Cats) Code of Welfare 2007
- Animal Welfare (Deer) Code of Welfare 2007
- Animal Welfare (Dairy Cattle) Code of Welfare 2010

- Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010

Codes of welfare under development

- Animal Welfare (Sheep and Beef) Code of Welfare
- Animal Welfare (Transport) Code of Welfare
- Animal Welfare (Goats) Code of Welfare
- Animal Welfare (Temporary Housing of Companion Animals) Code of Welfare

Codes of Recommendations and Minimum Standards

- Sea Transport of Sheep from New Zealand, September 1991
- Welfare of Sheep, July 1996
- Welfare of Deer During the Removal of Antlers, July 1992, amended August 1994, August 1997
- Welfare of Horses, February 1993
- Care of Animals in Boarding Establishments, August 1993
- Sale of Companion Animals, September 1994
- Welfare of Animals Transported within New Zealand, November 1994, amended June 1996, August 1998
- Welfare of Animals at Saleyards, May 1995
- Emergency Slaughter of Farm Livestock, December 1996
- Welfare of Dogs, May 1998
- Welfare of Ostrich and Emu, September 1999

Guidelines

- Welfare of Stock from which Blood is Harvested for Commercial and Research Purposes, March 2009
- Welfare of Yearling Fallow Deer During the Use of Rubber Rings to Prevent Antler/Pedicle Growth, September 1997
- Welfare of Red and Wapiti Yearling Stags During the Use of Rubber Rings to Induce Analgesia for the Removal of Spiker Velvet, September 1998

<p>Codes and Guidelines may be obtained from:</p> <p><i>Executive Co-Ordinator Animal Welfare MAF Biosecurity New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry PO Box 2526 WELLINGTON 6140 Tel: 04 894 0366 email: animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz</i></p>	<p>Or can be inspected at:</p> <p><i>Animal Welfare Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Pastoral House Reception Level 10 25 The Terrace WELLINGTON 6011</i></p>
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Codes and Guidelines are available on MAF's website.

The web page address is: www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare