

BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
INTERVIEW WITH THE SCOTTISH GAMEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

7 September 2011

Key Message	[REDACTED]
Who	Scottish Gamekeepers Association
What	<p>The SGA wishes to interview you for an article in their magazine on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED]
Why	The SGA have requested an interview to discuss several topics
Where	Room T3.04 – Scottish Parliament
When	12:00pm – 12:30pm 7 September 2011
Supporting Official	[REDACTED]
Attached documents	<p>Annex A - [REDACTED]</p> <p>Annex B - [REDACTED]</p> <p>Annex C - Tail Docking</p> <p>Annex D - [REDACTED]</p> <p>Annex E - [REDACTED]</p>

ANNEX C

TAIL DOCKING OF WORKING DOGS

Background

- The tail docking of all dogs was prohibited in Scotland in April 2007 under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.
- This is a highly controversial issue. Veterinary and animal welfare organisations are totally opposed to tail docking and are supportive of the current legal position in Scotland.
- Country sports organisations, the Scottish Gamekeepers Association, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation and the Scottish Countryside Alliance in particular, maintain that prophylactic tail docking of puppies that may become working dogs is essential to prevent tail injuries in working dogs later in life and have continued to lobby the Government.
- Since there was a lack of robust scientific evidence to show whether tail injuries had increased since the ban, the Scottish Government contributed £10,000 towards a case control study, undertaken by the University of Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College in North Mymms, to estimate the risk of tail injuries to dogs.
- The aims of the study were to document the risks of tail injuries in dogs in GB, to evaluate whether docking of tails reduces the risk of tail injury and to identify other major risk factors for tail injury.
- The Report of the study was published by the British Veterinary Association in 2010 but since the tail docking ban was relatively recent there were limited numbers of working dogs with undocked tails in the study to allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn.
- The Report of the study did not result in any policy changes but it recommended that additional research be carried out.

Scottish Position

- The Glasgow study began in June 2011 and is due to report at the end of May 2012. It aims to provide robust evidence on the incidence, causes and type of tail injuries in spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers, both in working dogs, and those not worked.
- ██████████ Chairman of the SGA took part in the first steering group meeting for the research project in July and the SGA have been involved in encouraging their members to complete a questionnaire on injuries to working dogs as part of the project.
- A steering Group will oversee the study, and includes representatives of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the British Veterinary Society, the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, the Scottish Gamekeepers Association, the British Association of Shooting and Conservation and the Scottish Countryside Alliance.

- The output from the study will provide evidence for an objective review of the current ban in 2012.

UK Position

- Tail docking is still permitted in England and Wales for certain "working dogs".

Key Messages

- Scottish Government's position on tail docking remains the same. The existing ban on tail docking will remain in place for the foreseeable future.
- A study has been commissioned from the University of Glasgow to investigate the impact of the ban on working spaniels, hunt point retrievers and terriers. If there is conclusive evidence that the ban has resulted in increased injuries to such dogs, the current position will be reviewed.

Contact: [REDACTED]