

COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY AND DOG SLEDDING

The CoE Report and SAFSS Response – Dog racing is not not Dog Sledding

After explaining the connection of dog racing and dog sledding to the Head of the CoE, Prof. Elisabeth Snyman – Van Deventer, and to the *Department of Trade and Industry (dti)*, we have received the report "RESEARCH ON THE IMPLICATIONS FOR POSSIBLE LEGALISATION OF GREYHOUND RACING IN SOUTH AFRICA" from 31/03/2009.

The report of 170 pages actually captures the positions of the various stakeholders and serves as information to Parliament to decide on this matter.

References to dog sledding or sled pulling can be found on only two pages and in connection with animal welfare concerns. Language and argumentation hints to the NSPCA as the author. The presence and argumentation of Cindy Foggitt as SAFSS President in a public hearing on dog racing in Pretoria was not mentioned at all. [The members of the CoE stated at that meeting, that dog sledding has nothing to do with the case of greyhound/dog racing.]

We formulated a reply to the CoE and the dti in which we pointed out the differences between (greyhound) dog racing and the sport of dog sledding. We replied point-by-point to the alleged welfare concerns in the South African context and raised our concern to the CoE and dti, that the legislation might be abused or better continues to be abused due to "accidental association" of dog sledding with dog racing.

The CoE replied with the promise to look into this matter after Easter. Let's watch this space!

Waking up sleeping dogs? Is it really necessary to get again involved into the dog racing issue?

Honestly, I think if we do not act now and achieve the differentiation of dog racing and the sport of dog sledding, we will not only have missed a great opportunity but possibly the last one! If the legislation remains ambiguous, the NSPCA (and everybody else) has the backup to interrupt our timed events and make our lives miserable.

Where to go from here?

This will sound now like a commercial for SAFSS... but the thinking is right... whether it is SAFSS, SADSAs or any other organisation. Two points are important:

- 1.) The sledding community must be united to resolve the issue of dog racing and dog sledding.
- 2.) One body has to be recognised as representing the interest of the sledding community - "recreational" and "competitive" alike. This body leads the discussions and liaises with the respective authorities.

A split and torn community is a much easier target or victim and will also be counter-productive to the application for SASCOC membership. Please, do not stay without affiliation for the wrong reasons.

What else can be done?

Importantly, the NSPCA is not the enemy! We all certainly support its mission for the welfare of animals and acknowledge the good and hard work that the organisation has done and continues to do. And some or even many of us – me included – got help from the NSPCA in one or another form.



Simply wiping the raised concerns off the table is not constructive. Trying to manage these concerns is surely the better option. One of the fears of the NSPCA is a potential explosion of breeding if dog racing is allowed. As a suggestion we could openly promote registered and responsible breeders in South Africa and – equally openly – condemn backyard breeding.

They are various (respectful and non-violent, of course) ways to educate the public, starting with discussing the issue with vets to get support and with pet shop owners to placing advertisements in relevant magazines or newspapers. Wouldn't it be great if the number of sled dogs on the doorstep of Husky Rescue etc. gets smaller and smaller?

Let us know your opinions and suggestions, please. You can use the contact form on the SAFSS website or simply email a SAFSS Board member.

Wishing you well and a happy sledding season

Wolfgang and the SAFSS Board

N. b.: The CoE report and our response are available to SAFSS members on request.

DOG HEALTH

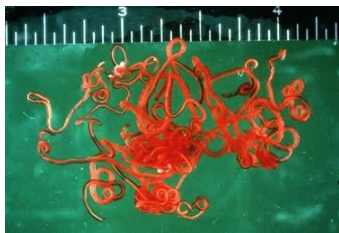
New Medication for Spirocerca Lupi

Our vet informed us about the introduction of a new drug **Advocate® for dogs** for treatment and prevention of spirocercosis caused by the worm Spirocerca lupi.

I checked on the internet and found various articles but could not figure out whether the solution is orally administered or used externally "spot-on". If anybody knows more about it, please, share with us.

Some info and common treatment

Dectomax injections (drug: Doramectin) are used to eradicate these life-threatening worms. As preventative measure a small oral monthly dosis of Dectomax can be given to the dogs. It is, however, not really clear whether this is really working. The medicine was developed for cattle, sheep and pigs in the first place. Dung beetles and bird droppings (Hadida?) are believed to be the carriers/source of the worms. The deworming Milbemax tablets prevent heartworms (Dirofilaria immitus) but not Spirocerca lupi.



The infection might occur without any symptoms and can occasionally result in a sudden death if the aorta ruptures. A sign of the infection or rather of the tissue

Source: <http://www.merckvetmanual.com/mvm/index.jsp?cfile=htm/bc/23501.htm>

damage (granulomas) in the esophagus area is the difficulty of the dog to swallow food.

UPCOMING EVENTS

15 April 2012, Gauteng

The fastest mile (no-points event) is hosted by ICS. Will be fun! Please, contact Wolfgang for directions and intention to participate. wolfgang.meyer@sasol.com

13 May 2012, Gauteng

ICS is hosting a 3-4 km points run, details as above.

The following events with longer distances (6 km) will be hold by Wondermutts in Nigel, details later.

22 – 22 July 2012

SAFSS Championship, details to be announced.

Please, let us know about upcoming events, like your regional sledding events or dog shows.

CLASSIFIED

We invite breeders to advertise as well as equipment manufacturer or any other sledding related item of interest. (No used cars or mother's old tea set.)

Free advertising for SAFSS members, otherwise R 20.

SAFSS NEWS

SAFSS Board Composition and Changes to the Constitution

Regrettably, our Vice-President, Vanda Gilbert, has resigned from the Board due to personal reasons. We understand the situation and wish her all the best. We like to express our gratitude to Vanda for her work, support and dedication not only as a member of the SAFSS Board but also as a member of SAFSS and of Wondermutts for many years. Thanks, Vanda, and good luck, hope to have you back soon!

The Board has now two vacancies to fill which includes the representative from the Cape.

Current Board composition:

Wolfgang Meyer (president)

Sarah Harkness (secretary)

Alan Witherden (treasurer)

Limbani Nkhoma (trail boss)

Louis van der Westhuizen (Durban/KZN representative)

We like to highlight some relevant changes to the Constitution as accepted at the last AGM:

Every region with an active sledding community votes for a representative on the SAFSS Board which is automatically accepted as a Board member. The current regions are Gauteng, Durban/KZN and the Cape. We would welcome if the Cape region takes this opportunity to nominate their representative.

As the second important addition, the location of the SAFSS Championship is now defined in the Constitution as having to be equally distant and accessible to the SAFSS membership. We did not fix the event in e.g. the Colesberg area as this would not be fair to the SAFSS members e.g. in the case that there are no members in the Cape region.

Deadline for membership application: 11 April 2012.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

We are busy compiling a list of registered breeders, also in support of the drive to responsible ownership of sled dogs (aimed at the public but also to our community as information). A list of equipment suppliers will be added, too.

The feature will be on an international sledding organisation.

AND FINALLY...

The intention of this newsletter is to inform our community about topics relevant to our dogs and the sledding sport. Your input e.g. in form of a column or just giving feedback and suggestions are welcome. ☺