

## Additional information for the members of the Petitions Committee

- 1) The signatories on the petitions are not opposed to the control of commercial breeders and puppy farmers. All want effective legislation that will be effectively enforced.
- 2) This is a recent quote from one of our members on the Facebook group which succinctly elucidates what the majority of caring hobby breeders fear will happen ***“Any inspection is only as good as the person doing the inspecting. On our annual breeding licence inspection we get someone from the local council office who just happens to be doing that job. They just do the "tick" boxes and that's it. ... Not once has she questioned anything specific about the dogs and never goes any closer than 6 ft from the kennels. These "inspections" really should be done by a vet or at least have a vet in attendance and then the standard tick exercise is replaced by a physical one too. It should also be un-announced so that there isn't time for "breeders" to move dogs/bitches about/off premises and there is nothing to stop them being inspected more than once. In the early days of moving here we had two inspections a year - both un-announced!”***
- 3) There would appear to be a significant disconnect between the political process and grass-roots non political Constituents This is evidenced by the number of people who were unaware of the legislation only 6 days before the consultation period closed.
- 4) Approximately 95% of the signatures on the petition and also resident in Wales were shocked to be told of this legislation. They felt disenfranchised in that they had been unable to review in a considered way, the new legislation which would adversely affect them.
- 5) There is legislation in place to register & inspect licensed kennels. This is not being properly enforced at the present time through either Budgetary constraints or political expediency
- 6) Hobby breeders are diametrically opposed in their aims to commercial breeders. Commercial breeders are breeding for production of a ‘cash crop’ of puppies without breed specific knowledge
- 7) The differential between hobby breeders and commercial breeders has been blurred.
- 8) Health checks are already undertaken by hobby breeders whereas there is no requirement in this legislation for commercial breeders to do the same.
- 9) Health issues have not been addressed in this legislation and it is likely to have a detrimental effect on those who wish to improve the health and welfare of pedigree dogs
- 10) The Kennel Club Accredited Breeders Scheme requires a higher standard of welfare, of which many of the hobby breeders in Wales are members of.
- 11) Numerous anomalies in legislation eg how many females before requirement to become licensed breeder. Most responsible hobby breeders normally retain their stock into old age even though they have no intention to breed from it.

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- 12) Breeding guidelines cannot be determined by puppy numbers in litters as this is determined by nature not regulation. Only actual litters can be a correct measure. Some breeds will produce 11 or 12 puppies in a litter (e.g. Irish Setters, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Great Danes)
- 13) There is no indication of what is being advocated by the Welsh Assembly for litters with over 10 pups. Is this disposal to be by culling the excess puppies so that the breeder can comply with the proposed legislation.
- 14) This proposed legislation does not show regard to profit allegedly generated from a litter of puppies by hobby breeders which other Government departments would not regard as the action as a commercial enterprise. (EG Inland Revenue)
- 15) There is a conflict with the definitions in the proposed legislation and that already used in other existing legislation.
- 16) There are dog shows almost every weekend. These shows range from Companion where all proceeds go to a nominated charity to large championship shows of 8000 to 10000 dogs. It was estimated by local businesses that one of the large Welsh Championships shows generated an extra £500k for the local economy.
- 17) If all interested parties **in Wales** had been consulted, a far more accurate picture of the activities of your constituents who are hobby breeders would have been achieved and as a result a more balanced legislation would have been proposed.
- 18) Certain elements possibly contrary to Human Rights Act and Anti Discrimination laws.

**Elin Jones AM/AC**  
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig  
Minister for Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-313  
Ein cyf/Our ref EJ/00272/11

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16 March 2011

*Dear Christine*

Thank for your letter of 19 January 2011 containing the petition submitted by Mr Colin Richardson on dog breeding. Please note that this was not received in my Office until the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

I issued a written statement on 8 March about the dog breeding consultation and draft legislation. I attach a copy for information. You will note that I do not intend to bring forward legislation this Term because of the number of responses and the issues raised.

Mr Richardson and his Welsh Dog Advisory Group have issued a press notice welcoming my statement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Elin Jones'.

**Elin Jones AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig / Minister for Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

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**Title:** Consultation on the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2011 – interim outcomes

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**By:** Elin Jones, Minister for Rural Affairs

Members will be aware that last October I launched a consultation on proposals to change dog breeding legislation in Wales. The consultation sparked considerable interest amongst a wide range of groups and we received over 500 responses. Many people have given serious thought to the proposed legislation and made constructive comments, and I am grateful for their input.

The draft Regulations and consultation document were themselves the product of a considerable amount of work across a number of groups. I established a Task and Finish Group on dog breeding with representatives from the veterinary profession, local authorities, welfare organisations and the Kennel Club. Their recommendations formed the basis of the consultation document and draft Regulations. The Companion Animal Welfare Enhancement Scheme also funded two projects which identified gaps in the legislative process and licensing regime.

The central proposals in the consultation document and draft Regulations were:

- Changes to qualifying criteria for licensing including the number of breeding bitches, number of litters in a 12 month period and the advertising of 10 or more puppies for sale in a year;
- Staff:dog ratio with a suggested maximum ratio of 20 dogs per full time attendant, and
- Mandatory microchipping of all puppies prior to sale or rehoming.

My officials have now completed an initial analysis of the responses and these will be placed on the Welsh Assembly Government website at <http://www.wales.gov.uk/animalwelfare>. Whilst we received a wide range of responses there were some clear overall messages:

- there is general consensus that welfare of dog breeding has a high priority and that irresponsible breeding in so called “puppy farms” should be brought to an end;
- the welfare of all breeding dogs (stud dogs and bitches) and their offspring is paramount;

- there are concerns over whether the legislation as currently drafted is sufficiently targeted to control dog breeding businesses, that some of the criteria for being licensed was too narrow.
- there is strong support for microchipping to become compulsory, but there are issues that need to be clarified such as the impact of compulsory microchipping in Wales on legitimate trade to England.

Given the responses we have received, I have asked my officials to work with the dog breeding and welfare sectors in order to bring forward amended legislation. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to improving the welfare standards of animals and I know there is cross-party support for this. My priority is to ensure that we get the legislation right. Given the timescale needed to do this, it will not be possible to bring forward the final draft legislation within this government term. I have instructed officials to continue to work on a co-operative basis in developing the final draft Regulations in preparation for early action by a new government should they wish.